

EDITORIAL

Kant claimed to have been awakened from his dogmatic slumber by the writings of Hume. Some philosophy students have been heard to joke that the outcome of his awakening was the even more profound slumber of the "Transcendental Anaesthetic". Perhaps what this feeble jest indicates is that awakening is an uncertain process. In the course of its first eleven issues, PINS has delivered some pricks to the sleeping mass which have (hopefully) contributed to the stirrings we have seen during the past few years. It is essential that we continue to do this as a vital element of our efforts to promote relevant psychological practices in South Africa. One of the most powerful instruments in this task is the Uncomfortable Question which, if correctly posed, becomes an irritant to the sleepers. The articles, debates and reviews published in our first eleven issues have posed many, and we hope that these in our twelfth continue to do the same, lest the snoring becomes loud and deep once more.

This issue of **Psychology in society** presents three articles which deal with aspects of a fundamental and difficult issue in contemporary South African psychology, namely the understanding of the development and the experiential world of children growing up in a society afflicted by violence and widely seen as "culturally diverse". If one begins to regard the two options of "cultural diversity entails cultural relativism" and "cultural diversity is a mere screen concealing psychosocial universals" as both being problematic, then the current debate on the effects of violence on children must be seen to be fraught with conceptual and methodological difficulties. The same would apply to the debates on cultural deprivation, education, mental health and so on. The reason is that these debates, and associated research, are caught in the tension between the relativist and universalist perspectives. While we cannot claim that they unambiguously present the way forward, two of these articles (Levett, Miller) do explore the tension and the pitfalls of naive research and help our readers into the discourse which is essential to progress. The third article (Dawes & Tredoux) presents valuable information for the debate on children in violence and also reminds us of the reality that while we talk, children are living in crisis.

We happily publish a debate on the psychology of detention in this issue. In PINS -11 Kevin Solomons looked behind the descriptive category of post-traumatic stress disorder in detainees and started to theorise about some of the psychodynamic aspects of working with ex-detainees. David Edwards has

replied to Solomons' article raising some objections to Solomons' **methodological** formulations and the conclusions that he (Solomons) draws. Kevin Solomons tries to answer Edwards, while finding that much of Edwards' criticism misses the point of the original article.

We would like to encourage readers to debate and discuss some of the issues that appear in **PINS** in the form of short articles, replies, discussions, comments and so on.

We also present three book reviews. **Not either an experimental doll** has already been reviewed in **PINS** (Gillian Eagle in **PINS - 10**) and we sought a second review by Letlaka-Rennert because we felt that she could valuably add to the earlier review and provide an interestingly different perspective. Jeffrey Masson has achieved notoriety for his earlier criticisms of Freud and psychiatry; his new book **Against therapy: Emotional tyranny and the myth of psychological healing** is a wide ranging attack on a variety of therapies. Cloete's review suggests that these criticisms include many valid points but are constructed in such a way as to render them unable to contribute to a useful restructuring of psychotherapy. The third review of **The psychological complex** is by Susan Van Zyl. Working from Rose's position on the development of psychology, Van Zyl suggests that psychotherapy may be transforming into a "non-psychological" helping activity. This transformation will be recognised by many psychologists who are directly involved in helping victims of oppression and members of the proletariat. Van Zyl's argument should provide them with food for thought and shows a need for a conscious and careful redefinition of what we mean by "relevant psychotherapy".

Masson accuses psychology of being uninterested in the world outside of its small domain (see Cloete's review). A colloquial expression sometimes used to mean "asleep" is "dead to the world". Perhaps Kant would have accepted this expression as a description of dogmatic slumber. In any event, we might stretch the metaphor and describe a relevant psychology as one which is alive to the world in the sense implied by the lengthy quote from Marx given in Miller's article. We must hope that you, our readers, are not satisfied to be passive recipients of what we manage to publish, but wish to be lively constructors of your conceptual world (see Miller's article again).

This number - **Psychology in society - 12** - comes out a long time after **PINS - 11**. As we said in the editorial of **PINS - 2** (already), independent projects like **Psychology in society** are run by moonlight and one of the unfortunate consequences of "working in poor light" are our irregular production intervals. We thank our subscribers and readers for their patience. **PINS - 13** will be out early next year.

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