

The CPS and World and Political Concerns

There is so much fog around the moral high ground.

-Peter Carey, from his novel, Theft

In the last years there has been an increasing expectation for organizations to respond to serious world events by publishing a position statement with regard to the situation in the moment. The Canadian Psychoanalytic Society has felt this pressure, and has sought to respond previously. On the surface it can be argued that it is reasonable given unjust attacks that may serve an ideology or narrative, but ultimately harm the innocents, those persons who are seeking to live, work, and love in relative safety wherever they may be. And it may also be argued that silence, too, is a response which risks being seen as complicity with the aggressor.

The Canadian Psychoanalytic Society is not a political organization; we serve to provide a community for our members, a safe space to celebrate psychoanalytic thought and debate; also, a community and space where we invite interested non-members to explore our ideas with us. As we try to respond to world events, as much as we may seek to support good and to be a critical voice against tyranny or terrorism, we risk ultimately failing in promoting a psychoanalytic spirit. If we speak out in one situation, what about the multitude of other similar world events constantly happening? If we endorse one position, we risk ignoring the nuances within a greater framework. If we focus on human conflict, we might forget all the other challenges facing the planet that ultimately affect our wellbeing just as significantly.

The Canadian Psychoanalytic Society does condemn the use of violence, the acting out of aggression, particularly against innocent civilians. This violence is an attack on the mind, on the internal space needed for the sense of security and integrity of the person. These traumas are not only on the individual that experiences them in the moment, but on populations that risk experiencing its effects over generations. It endorses othering and intolerance of difference rather than fostering understanding and acceptance of shared individualities amongst our fellow human beings. While the Canadian Psychoanalytic Society will refrain from comment on specific events, we continuously endorse refraining from violence if at all possible, fostering peaceful dialogue, and promoting individual security and the freedom of thought.

It must also be stated that in many areas affected by war or terror or other disasters there are psychoanalytic colleagues who may be directly affected, and who, if able, are still trying to provide the deep care to their analysands. We will always stand by our colleagues in their project of maintaining a safe space for the mind of the individual and the freedom of their thought and emotion.