If there is anything the struggle over registration shows, it is the lack of unity within the various practices of psychoanalysis. Even worse than a lack of unity is a lack of collegiality among the various approaches symbolized by the long-standing canard started by Freud: ‘That’s not psychoanalysis’, not infrequently followed by ‘it’s psychotherapy’.

In the UK, the Institute of Psychoanalysis has defended tooth and nail its exclusive right to use the term psychoanalyst to describe the graduates of its training. And, as opposed to practice in the USA, this ground has been ceded to the Institute of Psychoanalysis with other psychoanalytic trainings taking on the title of psychoanalytic psychotherapists.

This hierarchy has worked against us in dealing with registration. Instead of a unified front defending the proven efficacy of the talking cure and the value of the disciplined explorations of the human inner world that the analytic hour provides, the politicians have found practices so widely divergent in presentation that it has been easy for them to be won over to CBT as the treatment of choice for mental pain.

The destructive effects of the dismal history of sectarian infighting in psychoanalysis are now apparent to all of us. It is no longer good enough for each of us to go our own way – a live-and-let-live approach to professional development that has characterized the last two decades. The isolation of Bowlby within psychoanalysis by both Anna Freud and Melanie Klein may be a thing of the past, but what is lacking is a disciplined engagement with each other with a view to resolving long-standing disputes. Is there really, when all is said and done, a death instinct? How are we to decide? At bottom, is the human being pleasure seeking, as Freud thought, or relationship seeking, as Fairbairn
thought? How are we to decide? Is aggression innate, as Klein thought, or is aggression a response to threat, as Bowlby thought? How are we to decide?

The next three issues of the journal will be devoted to an exploration of difference within psychotherapy with a view to weighing up practice-based evidence for many aspects of clinical work. The first special issue will be devoted to Klein, the second to CBT, and the third to attachment and relationality. We encourage readers to send us their ideas for articles, for ideas they would like to see explored, and to suggest possible contributors for these three special issues. Who would you like to hear from? And what would you like to see explored? Write to the editor at josephschwartz@btinternet.com