

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I was disturbed by John Rowan's reply to Adrian Zakrzewski's article: "Bioenergy: Reality or Delusion?"

In the closing paragraph he comes to the alarming conclusion that:

*'The fact that humanistic practitioners often choose to have good incomes and live in nice places merely indicates that we practice what we preach - doing what you really want, instead of submitting to oppression.'*

Presumably John Rowan, as a humanist, would argue that we are **all** free to choose. Is he therefore implying that the unemployed person has somehow **chosen** to be unemployed and **chosen** to live in a less than 'nice' place?

His statement seems to me to show a surprising lack of sensitivity and no doubt he will defend it by explaining that he has been misunderstood.

I find myself more frequently questioning the whole ethos of the humanistic psychology movement in this country - a movement which seems to be moving more and more rapidly towards becoming a 'cult', with an institutionalised set of beliefs, values and attitudes; a language of its own and a curious intolerance of those 'outside' of the movement.

Yours sincerely,

**Philip Burnard**  
Coulsden, Surrey

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Dear Editor,

May I take the opportunity to comment on John Rowan's reply to my article which appeared in the last issue of Self and Society (May/June).

In general John's reply amounts to a very constructive criticism, many points of which will certainly receive serious consideration from me. However, there are one or two other points which I feel need further elaboration.

Firstly, perhaps I failed to explain myself adequately but when I stated that I faked my responses I do not mean that I was intentionally inauthentic in the group but merely that in **retrospect** that is what I believe my behaviour amounted to. At the time I felt I was being quite genuine. In other words the experience was very much the reverse of John's example. Certainly some people may feel that their life has changed in the area in question following initial doubts and thus conclude that it "must have

been all right", but for me it was not alright three months later. On the contrary, it seemed to me that much was wrong.

Secondly, whilst John suggests that I should not make sweeping generalisations he fails to take his own advice. To say, "The whole behaviourist enterprise is philosophically hopeless and practically very limited indeed" sounds suspiciously like a sweeping statement to me. The so-called behaviourist school is by no means a small one; there happens to be some very eminent psychologists who subscribe to its major tenets. Does John maintain that these people are all idiots?

I used to share John's view of behaviourism until a couple of years ago when I took the trouble to check it out for myself rather than accept vicarious criticism of it which is what I believe many people do. My expectations of it were greatly exceeded; I found it's method sound and it's content more pertinent than popular opinion would have us believe - likewise with Marxism. It is far from "philosophically hopeless" as John asserts; and to suggest that it is practically very limited seems rather short-sighted given the vast number of clinical psychologists who use the method. I

am sure that John is well aware that it is the most widely adopted form of therapy within the N.H.S.

Furthermore nowhere do I say that I favour behaviour therapy - I merely contend that it is more scientifically based; in any case my own preferences are irrelevant to the requirements of the argument.

Moreover, contrary to John's contention many of my references (to label and pigeon-hole them as John seems to prefer) are to the 'social learning' school of thought. Surely by his own argument John should not have been so totally dismissive of the evidence on offer. He asserts that bioenergetics is better than behaviour therapy but offers no evidence nor even argument to support the claim as he does in other sections of his paper.

I am dismayed that a critic so capable as John should resort to a blanket rejection of my evidence simply because he labels it with a term he chooses to use pejoratively. Such a tactic surely amounts to an evasion of the substantive argument.

Yours fraternally,

Adrian Zakrzewski  
Poole