

Dear S&S

There's nothing like having that 'Oh yes, that's it' response to an article. As I read Chris Scott's piece 'Christ as Archetype' my enthusiasm kept on growing. Certain phrases gleamed: 'a belief system that encourages dependency not maturity...encourage people to think for themselves....not for those requiring security more than reality.' I recently attended a local equivalent of an Alpha class, driven by my own insecurities during a desolate time. But still, I didn't want to be told. Once there, I wanted to explore, and certainly didn't appreciate being threatened with exclusion when I argued - not from the class, from entry to heaven. This was all too familial and familiar. I stuck out the term but left disappointed and a little scared.

I scamped on through the article, eagerly searching for reference to the sacrifice part of Jesus' story, for this is the bit I struggle with, and I wanted to know where that fit in to Chris Scott's truth.

Brought up to rate self-sacrifice as the highest virtue, my habit of self-deprivation still has immense power long after it's stopped making sense. I understand sacrifice to mean giving up/going without, not simply giving, so resentment seems inevitable once the quick-fix glow of pride wears off. And isn't the receiver of sacrificed goods required to be grateful and likely to feel guilty? I'm sure an interpretation has been fed into the crucifixion story to give humans the means to wield power over other humans; guilt is a very powerful motivator of conforming behaviour.

Until an idea comes to me that makes sense of Jesus' death - let alone conception - I'll settle for continuing to wonder, glad I can venture beyond the safety of believing all I'm told and feel the scare that comes with growing up.

With thanks to the author for more to wonder about and a request for a ps on the question of sacrifice.

Yours sincerely

Jane Barclay

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Dear S&S

First a confession. It is August – holiday time – and I've just got round to an 'in-depth eading of the Dec. 02 – Jan 03 edition of S&S!

And wow! Was it worth waiting for! Four excellent articles around the subject of integration. I particularly resonated with Roger Horrocks – 'The Tyranny of Object Relations' – and will be looking out for his books. And I so agreed with Peter Lomas and the idea of a 'Unified Psychotherapy' however difficult or even implausible the quest for that would be. His article reminded me to enquire of at leats one member of S&S's Editorial Board, Hilde Rapp – the last known Chair of the British Institute for Integrative Psychotherapy – what happened to *our* organization which I once so treasured and served in some small way?

I hope this edition of S&S and at the very least, my appreciation of it, goes some way to answer John Buckle's queries about 'why AHPB'?!

Both the journal and the organization are *essential*.

Yours, appreciatively
John Sivyer

To Tony Morris, AHP Chair and Ethics Editor

Dear Tony,

On the closing of the Ethical Issues column: 'And so it goes' as Kurt Vonnegut used to say. Pity. Thank you, for I enjoyed it.

On your Chair's page, S&S is not so much 1) a Forum for Contemporary Psychology as 2) a Forum for Integrative Psychology

I think you will find that 1) comes across as a dated title whereas 2) makes people feel good.

Better still 3) S&S for Integrative Psychology

I guess you will stick to what you have done rather than keep chopping and changing

I value your and the Editors' hard work and my hope is that you do not find it at all thankless.

Yours sincerely,

David Jones
Past Editor of S&S

This month we have begun to hear from you about our new strapline, 'A Forum for Contemporary Psychology'.

Let us have your thoughts on this, and anything else, before 1st December for inclusion in the next issue.

Dear Editors

Could I ask you please to reconsider the new editorial positioning of Self & Society? The reasons I request this are:

Accuracy: S&S is not a forum - which might most generically perhaps be described as an interactive space - but a publication. We could argue over whether it's a journal, a magazine, a fat newsletter or whatever but the fact remains it is not an interactive space: it is a number of printed pages whose contents and writers have been chosen on behalf of the rest of us by one, two or a few individuals.

Affiliation: I may be out of touch with this one, but doesn't AHP(B) subsidise S&S? I notice there is still an AHP(B) Magazine Sub-committee. As a member of AHP(B), why would I want to subsidise a general magazine on contemporary psychology?

Marketing: A key aspect to successful marketing is positioning. The more tightly positioned you are, the more you can dominate that marketplace. Words like 'forum' and 'contemporary' are so general as to provide no position at all and therefore no reason to read the - er - forum.

Content: If S&S is to become truly representative of contemporary psychology it will devote 94% of its pages to electro-stimulating rats and humans. The remaining six percent might go to Maslow's pyramid of needs, with a quick reference to Saint Carl of Rochester NY, and a historical footnote discussing outdated terms like 'authenticity', and 'unconditional positive regard'. Love will only be referred to as part of a discussion on the use of fashion in adolescent mating rituals.

Far from being part of the mainstream, as Tony writes in his column, humanistic psychology is pretty much dead in the water. There are discernible reasons for this but a major one is fear of being separate from the mainstream. Yet humanistic psychology will always be a minority creed. It defines itself that way. A self-actualized person is by definition a rarity and you can't buy into actualized beliefs without being (largely) actualized yourself.

So please consider modifying your editorial position to bring S&S back to being the magazine dedicated to the few of us rather than being an undirected space addressed to no-one in particular.

Thanks for reading this and for holding the faith in your inner pages at least.

Love (hush!)

Christopher

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