

You may have noticed the change in our strapline, to 'A Forum for Contemporary Psychology'. Christopher Coulson started the discussion ball rolling in the last issue, and in this issue we have more responses, including those from Tony Morris, Chair of AHP(B), and your editors. If you want to join the discussion, or to write to us about anything else, please send your contribution before 1st February to *Maxine Linnell, Commissioning Editor, selfandsoc@aol.com*

*Dear S&S,*

Congratulations on 'Working with Children' edition! I think it is an excellent example of what the magazine stands for, and one which can help us think clearly about the name debate. I also had the impression that, instead of appealing for contributions, the editors knew exactly what they wanted, and went out and got it.

The guest editorial was refreshing and well crafted. Lee Saunders' 'Foot in a Sock in a Shoe' was amongst the most moving and well written pieces I have ever read in S&S. The theme was ably continued with subsequent articles. I was excited by the notion that S&S can present as a humane journal, combining easy-read format with professional quality. Lee's article shows that good therapy and good writing can go together, and really ought to in a journal (note the repetition of the word journal - it reveals my own my bias) that we want to be proud of.

In this context, the only niggle I have is that Ann Cattanach's piece, while interesting, felt like a first draft. What a shame the editors didn't build on their obvious directiveness in this edition and send it back for a little more attention. Sentences like 'Play is the space where ...'; and 'One of the processes explored in sensory play is that of hunger, eating, digesting, eliminating', simply need to be reworked in deference to the reader.

So is it important how S&S is subtitled? I think so. I don't like the new strapline, and largely agree with Christopher Coulson. I think the old subtitle positioned the magazine accurately and gave something to aim for: that is to say, the human and the professional - the latter signified by the word 'journal'.

When I was studying psychoanalysis with Bob Young he once replied to some comment of mine, which revealed my own eclecticism, with the following advice: 'But you have to pitch your tent somewhere, Nick.' I have found this a useful guideline. So I recommend we re-embrace what we had and knock our pegs in firmly, lest our good little tent should blow away one day.

Yours,

*Nick Duffell*

[nick@genderpsychology.com](mailto:nick@genderpsychology.com)

*Dear Editor,*

The question of the subheading to Self and Society and the inclusion or otherwise of the words 'Association for Humanistic Psychology' is an example of the ongoing dialectic we all have within us between being our selves and presenting our selves in words to the world. It seems to me that the ideal humanistic way is to be yourself and at the same time present yourself in a way that can be seen as embracing all others.

Given that it seems to me that the subheading 'A Forum for Contemporary Psychology' embraces all and ignores our selves. Also just saying 'The Journal for Humanistic Psychology' says where we are, but tends to ignore all those who may not even be aware of the word 'humanistic', have a particular and narrow view of what it means, and/or feel excluded by its use. We need something in between and so I welcome the continuing debate.

I was therefore particularly interested-when David Jones (Letters Vol 31 No 5) suggested-that the subheading be, after 'Self and Society', 'for Integrative Psychology' which seemed to have more of a feel of being true to ourselves than 'a Forum for Contemporary Psychology'. However to my mind it did not go far enough in that it lacks a recognition of the dynamic natural drive within us that can produce real love — the self actualisation process.

Christopher Coulson relates to self actualisation and love but then more or less draws up the drawbridge saying 'you can't buy into actualised beliefs without being (largely) actualised yourself' and that the 'the magazine (should) be dedicated to the few of us rather than be an undirected space addressed to no-one in particular'.

I have heard of no one who wishes to change our main head 'Self and Society'. I think there is a case for change. I would suggest a broader one that includes nature. Our relationship to nature hardly features in articles in Self and Society and it is particularly important that we should as we move ever and ever closer towards ecological disaster as a result of the greenhouse effect and need to ameliorate that.

To return to the subheading I would want to keep the 'Human' part of the word 'Humanistic' because as 'Humanistic Psychologists' we originally felt the need to emphasise this as against the then and, to some degree, continuing tendency for psychologists to reduce psychology to an experimental, fragmented, behavioural and/or other species discipline that ignores the fullness of ourselves.

Speaking of the fullness of ourselves, I do not think it is a good idea to emphasise that we have somehow got that fullness or that we have the

important belief / faith. I don't believe we have got it. Christopher Coulson mentions Maslow's hierarchy of needs. I don't think Maslow had it. In speaking of needs he left out our most essential one, our need for oxygen. Christopher also mentions Carl Rogers' 'unconditional positive regard' which many seem to believe in. For me, although I understand Rogers intended it to give the feel that as counsellors it is wise to value the healing power of the life force, the phrase has its deficiencies because it can suggest that you give positive regard to the pain within the individual. That for me is not love, though it may be respect.

We have not 'got it' and as limited human beings we never will. This needs to be honoured in our subheading. The word 'Towards' before some reference to 'fullness' would seem to my mind to fit the bill. It suggests that we have some humility and are willing to embrace anyone.

As I have already suggested the word 'integrative' lacks dynamism and I hope I have convinced readers that as humanistic psychologists our strength has been recognising the fullness of our humanity and its relationship to others and nature. Therefore I suggest that a possible subheading could be 'Towards a Fully Human Psychology'. This can be seen in equal measure as either explaining our Charity's title 'The Association for Humanistic Psychology', which is currently at the bottom of the cover, or making the need to put the Charity's title there unnecessary.

I am still left with a desire to embrace the 'hard nosed' scientists. I would therefore suggest that we place in our title the idea that we want to move towards a 'Real Psychology'. To this I mean, from a humanistic perspective, a psychology based on trustworthy observation and experience which draws on a large number of activities including subjective material that comes from a credible individual. Highly experimental psychology deserves a *degree* of trust, although in my view often small, in that it states things about limited situations and undifferentiated people. It must not be excluded as our sense of the real often is helped along by what these scientists find.

The alternative subheading I am suggesting is -

*Self & Society*

Towards Real and Fully Human Psychology

How does that dig readers? Best wishes,

*Eric Wall*

*Dear Chris,*

You say S&S is not a Forum. Well yes, it's not strictly so, though it is a place of meeting and an interactive space. This exchange of letters is an example. We're having a discussion, even a debate; it's just slow, with two or even four months gaps between responses. Recent issues of S&S have been holding such discussions on the Letters pages. A forum is also where members of the community promote their views, a sort of Speaker's Corner. Well isn't that what our contributors do? But we want to achieve more than just preaching to our own converted(?) community, but speak unto some of the surrounding tribes. And the borders between us and them are pretty open most of the time.

Regarding AHP subsidising S&S, it's true that AHP publishes S&S and sets the editorial policy, but who subsidises who is debatable. If we didn't have S&S then subscriptions would be £5 a year, but what would we do with such a small income? Maybe a quarterly four-page newsletter and not much else! In reality, if not in strict accounting terms, S&S subsidises AHP, without the magazine we wouldn't exist for long, except in a backwater. So S&S is our voice, our means of fulfilling our declared purpose '... a forum for ordinary people hoping for a vision of a more conscious and humane society. AHP can be a gathering place for everyone interested in exploring being human in a rapidly changing world' (from our promotional leaflet). We're not ceasing to do that, the content of the magazine hasn't, and won't, change all that much, so you won't be 'subsidising a general magazine', but we do want more of the neighbouring tribes to pick it up, and to participate in our community.

The trouble with our currently tight market position is that we've been in this niche for years, and we've scarcely grown. But we are trying, with a large mail-out to individuals and organisations who've previously contacted AHP(B) and advertising in the BACP journal. We're developing the website, with cross-links with other sites, online subscriptions and (soon) articles online and complete editions of S&S available to members, so we're trying. I consider we do have a unique selling point – hideous phrase - there's no one quite like AHP and S&S in the UK. And people who find us generally like us. All we're doing is trying to broaden our appeal and reach out, while remaining true to our ethos. Would you be happier with a sub-title of '*A Humanistic Perspective on Contemporary Psychology*'? (No promises to change it!)

Come on Chris, contemporary psychology isn't about rats in mazes anymore, at least in the healing trades, if not in academia. Psychology's becoming more human, humane and humanistic. Sure, some articles do mention the Good Oldies, Maslow, Rogers and 'authenticity' (why not?), but in a contemporary context. And I'm sure 'love' would be our index too, if we had one. (Once the magazine is online, could you do a search for us?)

I don't agree you have to be self-actualised to 'buy into actualized beliefs', otherwise we'd have very few members! Nor do I believe that humanistic psychology is dead, it's even being accepted in the NHS. In the 2002 UKCP directory the Humanistic and Integrative section is the second largest in terms of organisational members (24 organisations, 17 being clearly in our camp) after the psychoanalysts (29

organisations). In a very rough scan of the BACP directory over 25% of therapists describe themselves specifically as 'humanistic', and this rises to around 45% if you include those who use person centred, existential and transpersonal approaches.

So whatever we do, I guess we'll still only appeal to a minority readership, but I'm sure we can at least broaden that minority. So, Christopher, are you a lone voice crying in the wilderness; or is there a silent majority out there in our members thinking the same as you? If so, I'd like to hear from them, and from those who are happy with our attempts to broaden our appeal.

Love to you, too!  
*Tony Morris*  
Chair - AHP(B)

*Dear Chris,*

One of the features of S&S that attracted me to join the staff team was the non-sectarian editorial approach to choosing material for publication. I believe this quality needs to be nurtured and developed. Not only is it part of the nature of S&S, it is also, I think, a necessity if we want to ensure the survival of the journal.

Yes, positioning is certainly a key to successful marketing. If AHP is to be understood as an anachronistic grouping from the second half of the twentieth century, a little club espousing a 'minority creed', then perhaps it needs a different, smaller kind of publication as the niche narrows and numbers dwindle.

We (editors and committee) believe this is not the case and have decided on a different direction. World communication is opening out more and more, and opportunities for expanding and extending dialogue and debate across all sorts of ideological, political, social and ethnic borders have become easy reality (at least technologically). What can continue to unify and underpin such dialogue in S&S is the set of humanistic values held by the readers. Aren't these delineating and delimiting enough to ensure the homogeneity of the grouping?

What this development perhaps needs is a simple shift of focus, away from concentrating on differences from other ways of thinking, and towards focus on commonalities with humanistic views of people world-wide. This is a shift which has clearly manifested long since within the pages of S&S, but only now on its cover. The new strap-line is not about watering down the concept of humanistic psychology. Nor is S&S about evangelising. It is, I think, about being available to more people as well open to potential qualitative growth and change in our own thinking and beliefs.

I confess I haven't yet met any fully actualised people, only people on the way. I'm not sure what you mean when you speak about 'actualised beliefs'. If 'actualised beliefs' are beliefs made actions to become part of our experience, then S&S is in some measure just that - an actualising of humanistic values in journal form. And I think S&S and AHP still have huge potential to develop, given sufficient resources and sufficient will to reach out.

We editors continue to need to hear from readers who do, and don't, agree. Like you. So thank you for the light touches and the serious topic.

Love,

*Alexandra*

*Alexandra Chalfont, Managing Editor, Self & Society*

*Dear all,*

We were surprised not to have an outcry when we changed the strapline of S&S to 'A forum for contemporary psychology.' It took us a year to do it after lots of discussion and with trepidation. I think we were responding to two apparently contradictory developments in the history of humanistic psychology.

1. Humanistic psychology is everywhere. Whether it's being reinvented as Positive Psychology, or used as a foundation for NHS Health Promotion programmes and Circle Time initiatives in schools, whether it's acknowledged as a source or whether the new versions claim to be innovatory, the ideas and values are probably more deeply embedded in our society than they have ever been. I'm happy about that. I don't mind what it's called, if it means that children's feelings are being heard and understood, if it means that the NHS tries to attend to the whole person in a search for 'well-being', then humanistic psychology has a great deal to be proud of and to celebrate. When somebody recently tried to explain humanistic values, I found myself wondering if we could really claim an exclusive ownership of ideas of fulfilling potential, taking responsibility for ourselves, allowing each person's feelings to be expressed and heard, and attending to mind, body and spirit. Maybe once, but not now.

2. Humanistic psychology is nowhere – Christopher Coulson says 'it's dead in the water'. It's a small band who define themselves as humanistic, and the term is often misunderstood. I have been involved in explanations of the term, as I'm sure you have too. It's sometimes confused with humanism, prompting a need for explanations for the interest in spiritual and transpersonal issues. On the other hand, humanistic work is boxed within a 'me' generation culture, belonging to the seventies and eighties, with shady boundaries, a lack of professionalism, and sometimes abusive practices.

Within the psychotherapy community it has also been interesting to watch psychoanalysts discovering the body and acknowledging that spirituality is an important and real feature of human life. It seems to me that as well as the boundary skirmishes going on, there's been an osmosis of humanistic psychology into analytic thinking, and that the traffic has moved both ways – many 'humanistic' people have an interest in object relations, and attend to child development and transference issues, for example. Eastern and western ideas and practices are nourishing each other, adding to the insights available to us. Perhaps we are becoming mature enough to acknowledge debts, or perhaps it is increasingly obvious that any one methodology or model is limited, and that we can integrate more into our perspectives.

Lavinia Gomez, in her timely article in this issue, states that 'there is no essential divide between a psychodynamic and a humanistic approach; because there is nothing to stop psychoanalysis from being included as a humanistic psychotherapy: we do not necessarily have to choose between the humanistic and psychoanalytic or psychodynamic labels'

For many years now, writers who would not describe themselves as humanistic have featured in *S&S's* pages, and we're proud of that – proud that we're open to dialogue, discussion, debate, sometimes conflicting views. As Christopher Coulson wrote in his letter in the last issue, we've 'kept the faith in our inside pages', not by publishing a narrow band of writers, but by keeping to the values we hold and making publishing decisions based on them, no matter what flag the writer is flying. So the inside pages moved on, well before your present editors and committee arrived on the scene. But we know that the front cover didn't move on, and that potential subscribers did not realize what gems were inside. Ever since I've arrived, a constant theme has been –we've got a great journal, how can we let people know it will be interesting to them? And at the same time, new and faithful subscribers and members have told us from time to time how much they value our work.

So we have no intention of reducing the quality of love, passion, compassion and interest we include in our pages – in fact we think we've been developing it. The changes come from an openness of heart and a commitment to something deeper than the label on its cover. But we have refused some suggestions of aligning ourselves to particular organizations so that we can continue to be free to make a radical contribution. That's not a simple decision to make; we haven't made life particularly easy for ourselves, but we think that this opening up which is symbolized by the strapline is true to our values and roots in the humanistic tradition.

I can't respond to every point in the letters which have come in about this. The suggestion of 'integrative' might make sense to psychotherapy community, but not in terms of the wider world. I can't go with the idea of 'real', or 'human' as I don't think people I respect from different traditions would feel themselves to be 'unreal'. Initially I was attracted to Nick's idea of pitching your tent somewhere, but when I took it further I realized that I might want to move my tent if I found a gale blowing into it, or if (as happened to a friend of mine) I

found I had pitched it on an ant's nest. It would still be the same tent, I would still be me, but I'd have a new, and perhaps better view.

If you've noticed, the cover has changed again, saying that S&S is published by the Association for Humanistic Psychology. This is interesting. We are saying that an association with a label (AHP) is open to all contemporary (current) discussion about psychology, so long as it comes within a broad spectrum of values based on a fundamental respect for human experience.

To go back to the tent, this feels like being out in the open air to me, having a view of 360 degrees, being able to move. It gives us all a chance to grow and change. Our first discussion about this issue, in an AHP committee meeting, was moving and inspiring, and there was a real sense of open-heartedness.

I don't want to predict the outcome of these discussions – perhaps we could just keep enjoying them and see what comes through.

*Maxine Linnell*  
*Commissioning editor*

*Dear S&S,*

As one of the authors of *Core Concepts in Psychotherapy: Interventions and Techniques* I would like to thank John Rowan for his attention and review in the June-July 2003 issue of *Self & Society*. I feel he accurately assessed our desire to provide a systematic 'pedestrian' survey of the commonest interventions in various schools.

I apologize if he felt slighted because we did not include his work. Perhaps because we are on different continents we were not aware of it. We will keep it in mind if we have a chance to expand into an advanced work.

I also apologize if the research that supports his positions was not also included. Again, we were not aware of all the research and the contrast between short and long term psychotherapy is hotly debated in many circles.

*Core Concepts in Psychotherapy: Interventions and Techniques* was designed to present most schools of psychotherapy, even those which are not humanistically oriented. The book was meant to show the craft of psychotherapy. The art, as stated in the book, is the applications of those interventions and techniques with empathy and compassion.

Thank you for your attention and your honest review.

Until again,  
*Lynn Seiser, Ph.D., MFT*  
*Long Beach and Tustin, California USA*



*Dear S&S*

Your readers might like to know that the UKCP, in keeping with its policy of supporting a pluralistic approach to psychotherapy, has recently recognised the title *Integrative Child Psychotherapist*. The key document, available from UKCP is 'Learning Outcomes for Trainings in Psychotherapy and Psychotherapeutic Work with Children'. The Institute for Arts and Therapy in Education (IATE) is the first body to be approved for teaching courses leading to the title of Integrative Child Psychotherapist. This does not affect the work of the Association of Child Psychotherapists (ACP), which is a member of UKCP and which offers training in work with children using the psychodynamic approach. The Department of Health recognises the new development and NHS Health Trusts will be able to choose which training they want their Child Psychotherapists to have. There are implications for the education services as well. This is in the context of the ongoing debate about whether psychotherapy is a free standing profession - as trainers and practitioners in private practice assume - or a task added on, often without training to the work of psychiatrists, psychologists and others who work in the public sector.

Yours sincerely  
*David Jones*

**Man. Editor's note:**

Since David's letter arrived in our office

- a) the Vice Chair of UKCP has confirmed that a letter of resignation from ACP was accepted at the last meeting of the UKCP Governing Board.
- b) AHPP has announced that criteria for Child Psychotherapists, suspended during the UKCP debates, are now being reconsidered in this new light.

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