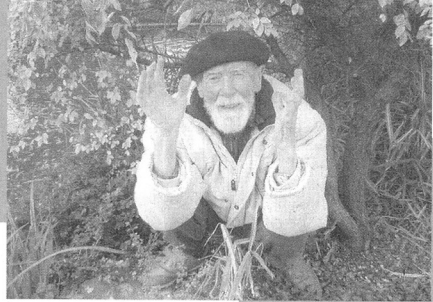


**Self & Society**  
*is Born*  
**Vivian Milroy**



It was in 1971 or thereabouts that a group of people from Esalen in California mounted a seminar/demonstration at the London Inn on the Park. I didn't learn about it till afterwards when I read a report in *New Society*. They seemed to be representing a new American approach to psychology. The whole thing sounded very way-out but intriguing, and I followed up the references, which included people called Carl Rogers, Fritz Perls, Abraham Maslow and Will Schutz.

I got some of their books and a month later I was in a state of high excitement. I was discovering an entirely new way of looking at human beings and relationships and life generally – a new way of being. I had been quite happy, but was ready to try something new. And this was certainly new.

After a time, I wondered where I could find other people who might also have come across whatever this new philosophy was called. It wasn't easy: there was no *Time Out*, nowhere any advertisements for groups or lectures in alternative living.

Then I read a letter in the *Times* written by an Ann Faraday who mentioned that she came from a branch of psychology called 'humanistic psychology' and she seemed to be echoing the ideas of the people from Esalen. I then found there was actually an Association for Humanistic

Psychology and after a bit more sleuth work I tracked down the then secretary to a basement in Hanover Square. I wanted to join up immediately but he hadn't got any membership forms.

Gradually I got to know a few scattered groups, and people who were offering workshops and lectures. I attended groups; I listened to talks; I went on reading and the more I read the more excited I became. But after the original article in *New Society* there was no follow-up. And nowhere was there anyone recording what was actually going on. What we needed, I thought, was a journal. And as nobody else seemed to be planning on starting one, I decided to do it myself.

For eighteen months I went round floating the idea of a journal of humanistic psychology (I had of course no idea that there already was a journal of that name in America). I advertised in *New Society* for contributions. Other people were interested: one of the first to offer help was John Rowan and he directed me to other contacts. (John's input then and during the following decades has been monumental.) Soon a welter of ideas and suggestions were flying around and gradually a journal was born.

The wide range of subjects to be covered finally narrowed down to two main areas - the development of the self and the enrichment of human relations. The title *Self & Society* seemed to emerge naturally.

I wanted a simple readable style with a minimum of jargon. We would cover the background theory and also what was happening 'here and now'. I would impose any editing control as lightly as possible. Whatever came in would be printed, so long as it was understandable, relevant and not libellous.

As to the mechanics, I was at that time running a small engineering firm in Southwark and we had had an automatic typewriter for some years. These - the forerunners of word processors and personal computers - were controlled by magnetic tape, could be corrected, and would produce text that was properly laid out and ready for printing. All we had to pay for was the actual printing and postage. Nevertheless, for an unknown venture, it represented a considerable sum.

At this time I met Bob Jones who had been working on similar lines, but planning for a weekly. As I had originally intended a quarterly, it seemed reasonable for us to join together to produce a monthly journal. And so we did, halving the initial costs. Then we breathed in, gritted our teeth and set firm deadlines for a publishing date about three months ahead.

The frenzy mounted as we worked our way through the inevitable teething problems, but at last the first issue was ready and sent off to the printers. General relief all round and we relaxed while waiting for the first five thousand copies.

But not for long. It suddenly dawned on us that it wasn't all finished and done with: in another four weeks we would have to produce another edition. We braced ourselves for the battle and managed to blot out the fact that after the second one was done there would be yet another – and then another and another and another (actually 145 before I had finished.)

Through the next seventeen years we covered all the vagaries, excitements and convolutions of what then came to be known as the human potential movement. Primal therapy appeared and psychodrama; the Bhagwan takeover came and went; women's rights and men's rights; astrology and shamanism; past lives, communal living, channelling, networking and so on.

We met, talked with and interviewed the big names from America: Roger Harrison, Arthur Janov, Alexander Lowen, Carl Rogers, Natalie Rogers, Jay Stattman, and we introduced the big names in Europe – Mike Barnett, David Boadella, Gerda Boyesen, Anne Dickson, Aaron Esterson, Eve Godfrey, Dina Glouberman, Glyn Seaborn-Jones, Will Grossman, John Heron, Gale Houston, Sidney Jourard, Jerome Liss, Arnold Keyserling, Frank Lake, Simon Meyerson, Kenner Roth, Mike Reddy, John Rowan, Patricia and Paul Lowe, John Southgate, Brian Thorne.

We made hideous errors in pagination layout and spelling. We got authors names wrong, sometimes even their sex. We were attacked by academic psychologists as purveyors of a 'dangerous psychology'. But we kept going, twelve issues a year for seven long years. Then we had to admit that it had got a bit too much for us and with regret – and relief – reduced to six issues a year.

The important thing is that, in spite of a recent eighteen-month hiccup, *Self & Society* has survived. And, to my not unprejudiced eye, it looks better than ever. A new clean professional-looking cover, some interesting new writers and new approaches and, perhaps most important, now safely in the arms of its spiritual mother, the AHP (B).

I wish them both health, long life and success – for at least the next twenty-one years.

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