

# Editorial



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**Richard House, David Kalisch and Jennifer Maidman**

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## *Self and Society's* 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday

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We've all seen journals and magazines come and go over the years. It takes sustained commitment and a great deal of hard work to publish a quality journal successfully for four decades. Yet this is what the AHP and a long and distinguished list of previous editors of *Self and Society* have collectively achieved – and a truly remarkable achievement it is. So it's a pleasure and a privilege for us to write this editorial introducing *Self and Society's* special 40th birthday issue.

If the quantity and quality of contributions we've received on our special theme on The Future of Humanistic Psychology is anything to go by, then rumours of 'the death of Humanistic Psychology' have been wildly exaggerated, and are certainly not based on substantive evidence. You'll see many interesting perspectives on such questions later in this 'bumper' birthday issue. Arguably, humanistic practitioners haven't been as successful as other therapy modalities at publicly promoting their approach and values in this 'hyper-professional' age. How are we to raise the profile of humanistic work, whilst staying true to its principles and values, which, for at least some of us, are decidedly *post-professional*? (to use Ivan Illich's prophetic term from the 1970s). These are big paradigmatic questions, which will be addressed in our 'Future of Humanistic Psychology' symposium in both this and future issues of the journal. If any readers would like to contribute articles or letters on the subject, as ever, we'd love to hear from you.

Returning to S&S's auspicious history for a moment: we're hoping to compile a complete list of all previous S&S editors, from volume one to date, and publish it

in the journal to mark and honour their tremendous achievement. However, as relatively 'new kids on the block', we don't have this information in anything like the detail we need, **so can we please encourage readers to write in with what they know about the history of S&S editorship**, so that together with our own soundings, we can produce a list of all previous S&S editors, with the relevant dates; thank you.

As you'll no doubt have already noticed, S&S has undergone a significant re-design for this 40<sup>th</sup> birthday issue. We hope you like it; and of course we're open, as always, to feedback from readers, positive or otherwise. We'd also like to extend a warm welcome and a big 'thank you' to our new layout person, Carrie Bremner, for all her hard work and fantastic ideas on the redesign. Well done Carrie, it couldn't have happened without you!

We're also using this 40<sup>th</sup> birthday issue to launch a new sub-title – i.e. *International Journal for Humanistic Psychology* – through which we're trying to reach out to the wider international community of humanistic writers (as, for us, *Humanistic Psychology from a purely national perspective* seems something of a contradiction). Indeed, in this issue we welcome several major contributions to our 'Future...' theme from prominent North American humanistic practitioners. We also want S&S to be 'for' (i.e. in the service of) rather than 'of' Humanistic Psychology; we think the difference is subtle but crucial. We're hoping that we can attract writers from across the globe, from all continents, as we're sure that there must be exciting humanistic work happening far beyond the 'usual suspects' of the Anglo-American world.

And so to our theme for this issue – ‘The Future of Humanistic Psychology’. We’re including six diverse articles on this prescient theme, written by major figures in the therapy world, and including articles by some ‘critical friends’ of our work. We think that these fascinating and incisive articles raise many profound and challenging questions, and we really want to urge readers to write in with responses – if these articles don’t generate a lively letters page, then we can’t imagine what else would; so let’s be hearing from you! – your letters, please, to [editor@ahpb.org](mailto:editor@ahpb.org); thank you.

We’re aware that there is a strong male bias in the authorship of the theme articles printed in this issue. It wasn’t planned this way, it’s just the way it has played out. However, we’ve received a lot of other excellent articles on the ‘Future...’ theme, many of them by prominent women in the field; and in future issues we’re hoping to print perhaps two ‘Future’ articles per issue. This will also help to keep the debate about these questions alive and emergent; and at best, we’re hoping that the discussion, debate and dissent generated by these articles will make a significant contribution to the effective re-foundation of our work – something which presumably many if not most of us want to see happen, albeit it in a way that’s consistent with our core values. We are also excited that PCCS Books have expressed interest in publishing a volume under the provisional title *The Future of Humanistic Psychology*, which would include versions of all of the articles we’ve received on this theme for S&S.

We also have the first of a new series on ‘The Roots and History of Humanistic Psychology’ – launched by a fascinating article from one of the key figures in the history of Humanistic Psychology, John Heron – which will no doubt ‘twang’ the memories of some readers, and offer a panoramic view of those exciting times to those who have come to Humanistic Psychology more recently. The articles in the remainder of this series will be keenly anticipated; and we already have commitments from major figures from our history to contribute articles to this series. We also have a very moving article in this issue by Jean Clark, based on her best-selling pamphlet ‘Change is boundaries dissolved’; and as promised in the previous issue, we have two further thought-provoking articles on theme of accountability’.

Andy Rogers’ Ethical Dilemmas column kicks off with some thought-provoking responses, and again we urge readers to engage and wrestle with these dilemmas, as they are so useful for ‘keeping our humanistic ethics alive’ (to use a phrase taken from feminist psychotherapist Nanette Gartrell, 1994). Manu Bazzano has also hit the

ground running with some innovative book reviews, taking the reviews section into the realms of therapy-relevant film and television. We hope you enjoy these reviews as much as we did.

Our first Retro Review Classic is written by Counselling Psychologist Lyndsey Moon – a challenging review which engages fully with post-structuralist ideas (as does Jim Hansen’s article and Tom Strong’s book review). We’re aware that post-structuralist thinking aren’t always popular amongst at least some humanistic folk; but we believe that a thoughtful, dialogical engagement with these challenging ideas can only sharpen and deepen humanistic praxis, and the philosophy that underpins it. We’re also really grateful to Julian Nangle for bringing some powerful poetic voices to the journal; this is something we really wish to encourage – so we would welcome contact from readers who might have poems to offer for future issues.

You’ll probably have noticed that we have a brand new Editorial Board, with some familiar names, and some new ones too. We’re delighted to have a board of such calibre, and this alone reassures us about the healthy future of the journal, and of Humanistic Psychology in Britain and beyond. We also welcome a distinguished group of the movement’s ‘elders’, as Honorary Editors. Again, we are aware of a gender bias in the list to date – something again which we hope to put right going forward. The history of gender politics and the predominance of the ‘white, male voice’ in the psy field is no doubt worthy of a ‘theme symposium’ in its own right. Perhaps somebody would like to start the ball rolling by submitting an article?

We also wanted to mention that we recently received an anonymous donation of £500 to our Fund for Change (see issue 39, 4) – an incredibly generous response to our appeal; and with just a few more donations, this will greatly ease the path to making S&S into the top-notch, must-read journal that we’re determined to produce.

Finally, next year we would like to start printing two peer-reviewed papers per issue, so if you have an idea for a peer-reviewed article, do please get in touch with us at the editorial address.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together. ‘Happy Birthday’, *Self and Society!* 🎉

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#### Reference

Gartrell, N.K. (ed.) (1994) *Bringing Ethics Alive: Feminist Ethics in Psychotherapy Practice*. New York: Haworth.