

AHP Co-chairs' Page

John Rowan and **Alexandra Chalfont**

John Rowan

I have just been reading a book called *Psychotherapy for the People*, which I find quite inspiring, as far as I have got with it (Chapter 2). It is written by two psychoanalysts, and the word 'humanistic' occurs several times (in a good sense) in the first chapter. It gives a very thorough history of the phases which psychoanalysis has gone through, and emphasises the newer and more relational versions as the ones with promise for the future. The authors adopt a dialectical approach, and write all the time in terms of what we now call 'second-tier thinking'. This is of course the same approach which I adopted in my own book *Ordinary Ecstasy* (3rd edition). They do not allow themselves to be cowed by the apparent success of CBT and its associates, but consistently make the point that the instrumental approach can never do justice to the human being, the person. We need books like this, whatever camp they may come from, to remind us that the apparent success of CBT is necessarily temporary, because it will be realised sooner or later that it does not fit with the reality of the human.

Human beings will always be more than first-tier thinking can encompass: they cannot be reduced to machines that need repair, simple systems that need readjusting. They always have existential choice; they always have complexity; they can never be reduced to just being large computers. Hooray for humans! Humans with glands, humans with tears, humans with heart, humans with contradictions, humans with I-Thou, humans with their enormous uniqueness. ⑤

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Alexandra Chalfont

One important focus of our AHP conference and gathering (7–8 September 2013) will be to share our thoughts, feelings and hopes for the future of Humanistic Psychology and practice in various fields – psychotherapy and counselling, education, social work, management and coaching, health, etc. So many aspects of learning, teaching, communicating and living out selves that may be either authentic or partly or wholly imagined are being 'netified' in today's digitised world. As social media burgeons, we experience how many of our clients' lives, relationships and issues become magnified, distorted, publicised and concretised across the net.

Yet how many humanistic practitioners tentatively embrace or wholly reject doing therapy via Skype or email or telephone?

How many of us work online ourselves, and how are we as practitioners meeting both the challenges and opportunities of creating relationally grounded therapeutic work that does not take place face-to-face in a room? BACP has been addressing online therapy for a while now, and currently some of us in UKCP are looking at the new medias from various perspectives, too.

What experience or thoughts do you have? Let's have the conversation. ⑤

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