

# Editorial



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## Richard House, David Kalisch and Jennifer Maidman

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We hope you've all had a great summer, whether in 'Mediterranean Britain' or perhaps elsewhere in the world. We're publishing this issue a little earlier than usual to coincide with the AHP's September Conference, 'Celebrating 50 years of Humanistic Psychology', at which we very much hope to meet some of you in person. We are indebted to Carrie, our designer, for her readiness to adapt to our revised timetable at short notice, and also to all our contributors and to Manu Bazzano, Sissy Lykou and Andy Rogers, for likewise being so accommodating with our revised deadlines. Special thanks also go to Annie Spencer, our Guest Editor, for bringing all the theme symposium articles together in time for our revised deadline, and doing so, as you will see, without any loss of quality. We've also been greatly assisted by the freely given time and copy-editing skills of Serra Pitts, our voluntary Associate Editor, and for this issue also David's son, Mike Kalisch. It's an honour and a pleasure to be part of such a wonderful team!

For this issue, **Annie Spencer** has guest edited what we are sure you will find a fascinating and highly relevant collection of articles on the Eco Therapy theme. Annie describes the constituent articles well in her own guest editorial, but what struck us most is, first, the way in which writing lyrically and poetically about the natural world has an impact on us that any amount of analytically informed practice can't touch (which is, indeed, the implicit message in some of these articles); and secondly, how important it is that this journal never forgets that head should never come to dominate heart in both the pages of *Self and Society*, and in humanistic practice more generally (cf. the letter to the editors from Jen Turner, this issue). A heartfelt 'thank you', Annie and your contributors, for helping us to re-member that.

In our articles section we have two very fine pieces. Our old friend **Colin Feltham** is characteristically provocative and challenging of embedded assumptions, taking for granted no humanistic 'sacred cows', and leading us to think deeply about the nature of humanistic philosophy; and we are delighted to welcome **Onel Brooks** to the pages of S&S with a highly provocative article that raises some fundamental questions about one current sacred cow in the psy field – viz. research. After reading Onel's article, we suspect that readers won't be

taking for granted the unquestioned beneficence of 'research' in quite the same way as they did before.


Next, we have a barnstorming interview with **James Davies**, currently making waves with his best-selling book *Cracked*, which is also reviewed later in this issue – a searching interview that gives readers a rare insight into the experience of challenging head on the formidable institution of Psychiatry, and providing a very complimentary addition to our previous special issue on Psychiatry. Following on, we launch a new feature for the journal, an 'Opinion' section, with an entertaining and provocative essay by **Manu Bazzano** entitled 'The Buddha Delusion'. Manu forcefully dismantles a number of the peccadilloes of the age, no doubt upsetting several apple-carts along the way (perhaps we could equally accurately have called this issue a 'No Sacred Cows' issue) We hope this piece, and future articles in the Ppinion slot, will act as a (sometimes irreverent) counter-weight to some of the more academically inclined articles in the journal, generating lively debate and even provoke some letters... – let's be hearing from you!

Speaking of which, as well as the two lively and very welcome letters contained herein, our thanks go also to readers who've sent material in to **Sissy Lykou** for the news page; it's great to see this taking off. As we were going to press we received a further fascinating link from Harris Friedman in the US, shedding light and – if that's possible – simultaneously pouring cold water, on one of Positive Psychology's big claims to be 'scientific'. Do check out the story.

Continuing the 'Future' series, **Keith Tudor** from Aotearoa New Zealand suggests ways in which Humanistic Psychology might re-situate itself in the post-modern era. Controversially, in his peer-reviewed paper Keith challenges the assumptive notion of Humanistic Psychology as a 'third force'. Also, in our continuing 'Roots' series, we are delighted to welcome back **Thom Osborn**, who tells the fascinating story of the evolution of the famous Dabs course in North London in the 1970s. For historians of S&S, Thom actually first wrote for S&S in 1974.1 Indeed, readers might like to know that we are currently working on publishing three anthologies of 'classic' articles from the S&S *oeuvre*, in which we plan to include a fully indexed contents listing of all of the first 41 volumes of the journal. Certainly a space to watch out for.

In our regulars section, **Andy Rogers'** Ethical Dilemmas returns, challenging as ever, and we have poetry from **Anthony Naumann** (with a commentary by **Julian Nangle**) and **John Rowan**. In our Reviews section, (which in the previous issue had to be cut short at the last minute for reasons of space), **Manu Bazzano** has assembled some fine reviews of must-read books. Along with James Davies's *Cracked*, we have Caroline Brazier's review of Manu's highly acclaimed *Spectre of the Stranger*, Manu's own review of a new biography of Jacques Derrida, plus reviews of Thomas Nagel's new book, and Richard's review of an important new work in the burgeoning field of Counselling Psychology (a field which is notably receptive to humanistic ideas.) And in our regular Retro Review Classics section, we have two offerings this month: **Annie Spencer** on David Abram's *Becoming Animal* (in keeping with this theme issue); and **John Rowan** on a classic from yet another pioneer writer in S&S, Jerome Liss (whose first article in S&S appeared in 1973).<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the forthcoming AHP Conference this year also sees the launch of a new PCCS-published book, *The Future of Humanistic Psychology*, edited by the three of us and comprising all the articles published so far under that heading in this journal (many of them extended and revised for the book), plus a number of new chapters specially written for the book. By the time you read this, the book will be available via PCCS or Amazon, and we very much hope it will help put Humanistic Psychology firmly back on the map, where we passionately believe it rightly belongs.

We very much hope you enjoy reading this rich and diverse issue - as we move from Summer into Keats' season of mellow fruitfulness! 

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

*Self and Society* Editorial Collective

#### Notes

Tom Osborn, 'Who am I responsible for?', *Self and Society*, 2 (12), 1974: 1-10.

Jerome Liss, 'Emotional therapy means emotional discharge', *Self and Society*, 1 (5), 1973: 1-3.

# Guest Editorial Introduction

**Annie Spencer**, Guest Editor

The discipline of ecotherapy is perhaps in one of its most creative phases right now and an exciting area in which to work. It is still open to many interpretations, and has not settled into a form that can easily be practised or taught in a way that is universally recognisable. This state of affairs offers practitioners the opportunity to experiment, and forces us to think hard and deep about the ways in which we are trying to work with clients. It is seeding a rich diversity of practice as therapists and educators are inspired to open up their work as they understand how good relationship to the earth and to animals can increase the well-being of their clients.

I have searched out some of the practitioners working at this edge while knowing that I have only scratched the surface, and that there are many others making important discoveries and developing new ways of working. But here is a small sample of interesting methods being explored with a range of different clients. The articles describe to varying degrees the practitioners' work and the beliefs that underpin it. In many cases these beliefs are in a state of development, and they explore and push the boundaries of our philosophies and belief systems around our relationship with the natural world and how this affects our emotional well-being.

**Rose Flint** writes about her work with people in hospital. They are too ill or too old to take out into the countryside and so she works with imagery, with outstanding results. Threaded through this work is a great understanding of our countryside gathered by frequent observant times spent walking the land by the author. Rose is a poet of some standing and I hope you will enjoy, as I have, the fluent prose of her article. **Kelvin Hall** explores working with horses and what this means for us, and conveys his great joy that this relationship has brought him. I only hope that our art department will be able to include a picture of the magnificent animal who is Kelvin's companion on his journey. **Lucy Scurfield** takes the simple and imaginative approach of converting two allotments into a therapeutic space, and describes both how this can be done and some of the great results she has achieved. Finally, **Michael Connors** writes about working with those suffering from cancer and also those reaching the end of their lives, and we are offered an insight into the ways in which the land can co-create healing for those in great need.

To tantalise you further I've also reviewed **David Abrams'** *'Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology'*. I hope that one way or another we manage to whet your appetites for thought, discussion, further reading and new ideas of your own in this developing branch of psychotherapy. 