

Guest Foreword

Andrew Samuels

It is impossible to imagine the British therapy scene without John Rowan's contribution. If Humanistic Psychology has found its place in that scene as a third force, between psychoanalysis and behaviourism, then that has a lot to do with John. If the Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy College of the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy is the largest element within UKOP, then that has a lot to do with John. If transpersonal psychology is at last coming in from the margins, then that has a lot to do with John. If serious psychotherapeutic engagement, as opposed to mythic idealization, with men's issues continues to thrive, then that has a lot to do with John. And if the impossibility of doing conventional research on counselling and psychotherapy is being increasingly recognized, then that has a lot to do with John.

So – who is this Great John? I met him first in the 1980s when I did a workshop for the British Association for Counselling, as it then was. The theme was 'pluralism'. He ambled up to me afterwards and told me that, whilst my material was great, the dense and lecturing style in which I delivered it was letting me down. Why didn't I use experiential exercises and small-group discussions in private, which people would like? At a stroke, via John's intuition, I was reconnected to my past in experimental theatre and in the human potential movement of the early 1970s. I have gone on using exercises and participatory moves in every single lecture or workshop since then. But it has been a hard job to get editors of books and journals to allow me to try to get readers to do the exercises as they go along.

Then I remember him caustically dismissing the idea that one could ever do research of a positivistic kind on psychotherapy when he was speaking as a Board member of UKOP at one of those legendary AGMs. The cognitive-behaviourists were outraged, and the psychoanalysts dismayed – but John stuck to his guns. This intervention failed, I have to say, and even some humanistic practitioners these days regard Randomized Controlled Trials as the 'gold standard'.

John is one of those innovators who does not chuck out his earlier stages of professional development. Hence one can see primal integration and person-centred work sitting alongside the later Wilber-influenced integral psychology and transpersonal approaches. I want to emphasize that this capacity to move on but not opt for a cheap attention-grabbing break with the past is what characterizes all the great contributors in our field – Freud, Jung, Rogers and so on. You can see how this archaeological perspective on John's thought works out in practice, as you read through this special *Festschrift* issue of *Self & Society*.

I mentioned John's caustic side. He can be a rude person, to

be sure. But this is always in service of what, sentimentally, I would call truth. Recently, at a conference on the relations between Jungian analysis and Humanistic Psychology, he tore into the idea of 'individuation'. Oh, sure, the Jungians put him right ('it's a process, not a state') – but the overall effect of such creative aggression on John's part was to get a vigorous and 'outraged' dialogue going. And the old man stood up for the whole of this talk, beaming as he was severely chastized. We forget sometimes how useful a man's aggression can be.

On another occasion, at a conference, John gave a case presentation of work done with an 'Essex man'. He gave us a lot of verbatim process – and he used an Essex accent for the client and his own voice for himself. To my amazement, some class warriors in the audience objected because they felt this was disrespectful. Now, I was pretty sure that John meant this respectfully, as a recognition of the client's individual difference. He was obviously taken aback by the onslaught, which was pretty nasty, but he held his ground and stayed in relation to his critics. Courage is 'grace under pressure', wrote Hemingway, and Churchill said that courage is the quality that guarantees all others.

Twenty years ago, in 1995, I contributed to John's 70th birthday *Festschrift*. To be honest, I thought that was it. His beloved partner-in-crime Sue found the text for me, and I thought I would go over it for the delectation of S&S readers.

The piece is entitled 'Finding the middle way: a compromise formation between using a computer and using an electric typewriter'. You see, John was ahead of me in getting into computers, and used to chide me for sticking to the typewriter. Not a lot has changed in 20 years in terms of John being an early adaptor – of almost everything, not only technology.

Then I found, to my horror, that some of the same anecdotes that I was using for this Introduction had a first outing in the 1995 piece! Never mind. What I want to record here is one particular nuanced difference in emphasis between what I wrote then and what I am writing now. Back then, I devoted a good deal of space to John's work on sub-personalities. Yet until I re-read what I had written then, I was going to pass over that aspect of his *oeuvre* in relative silence. Why the change?

Well, it could be changes in me. But I think it is more likely that as John individuates (!), becoming the person he was always intended to be, the accent is more on wholeness, on the 'non-dual' in Wilber's term.

I'm going to sign off in the same way I did back then:

John, I salute what you have achieved. Don't stop. (And don't go on about computers any more.) With love, Andrew 5