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CONFERENCE REVIEW ARTICLE

Jungian Analysis and Humanistic Psychotherapy: Critical Connections – Past, Present and Future, Saturday 25 October, London

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On Saturday 25 October 2014, around 200 delegates packed themselves into London's Holloway Road Resource Centre for an engaging conference bringing together humanistic and Jungian practitioners, organized by the Confederation for Analytical Psychology, and 'offered as the 5th biennial Andrew Samuels Lecture' (Andrew is of course on the editorial board of *Self & Society*, and has recently been appointed Honorary Life Member of the AHPB). As rather an old hack of therapy and psychoanalysis conferences going back to the early 1990s, I very rarely get enthusiastic about therapy conferences these days, but I found myself unusually excited in anticipation of this event as I arrived at Holloway Road tube station. My strong hunch is that while perhaps comparatively few Jungian practitioners have much to do with Humanistic Psychology (Andrew Samuels being a notable exception), many humanistic practitioners have, at the very least, dabbled in Jung, if not engaged with Jungian thought and practice at quite a deep level. Not least, any casual perusal of the past 42 years of this journal's *oeuvre* will reveal many articles that have engaged with Jung (including one special themed issue in 1997 [volume 25, issue 1] entitled 'Jung: A Racist?').

I most definitely fall into this latter category. I have always found Jung's engagement with the numinous and the spiritual refreshing and exciting, and have greatly appreciated his intelligent and telling challenges to medical-model thinking and ontologies. In the training dissertation I wrote at the end of my first counselling training in 1990, I looked at Jungian notions of 'the self'. It might well be, then, that humanistic practitioners are more aware of the cross-overs and potential cross-fertilizations between Jung and Humanistic Psychology than are Jungian practitioners; and in this sense alone, this was a very long overdue and hugely worthwhile event – and will hopefully be just the beginning of an unfolding and mutually fructifying engagement between these two vital streams in psychotherapeutic thinking. Certainly, my experience of this event was that there is little if any of the kind of power-infused hierarchical thinking that one encounters in ('Gold Standard') psychoanalytic attitudes to the other psy therapies, and I felt that a tangible, mutually respectful engagement was refreshingly possible at this excellent conference. This might be the point to mention that *Self & Society* is delighted and honoured to be publishing this conference's proceedings in the autumn 2015 issue (volume 43, issue 3).

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To the conference itself. I immediately found the conference blurb conducive, in its assertion that 'Humanistic Psychotherapy and Jungian Analysis have many features in common' – and that this is something to celebrate. It goes on to point out that both Perls and Jung (among others!) embraced the idea that all the elements in a dream are necessarily part of the dreamer's personality or psyche, and that there are also similarities between Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Jung's ideas about individuation.

In terms of therapy/clinical work itself, there also exist common features across both approaches, including: trust that the client/patient knows what is needed from the therapy; a recognition that the therapist is unavoidably present in the co-created process as a person; and, most importantly, that therapy needs to maintain a distance from the conformist and materialist values of contemporary society. Each tradition has also spawned the exploration of a variety of collective approaches to psychology, ranging from the transpersonal and spiritual to the socio-political. But there was also a clear acknowledgement that there do exist (sometimes substantial) differences between the approaches, which, as we will see later, certainly emerged on the day.

A key stated aim of the conference was to promote 'external dialogue between the traditions and internal dialogues within the speakers' – with similar dialogues taking place among the participants, too. I can vouch for the fact that the latter certainly happened, and in great abundance! I was also interested to learn from one of the organizers that the conference had been at least 12 years in the making. This is perhaps symptomatic of the internecine 'modality wars' that have beset the field, and which Andrew Samuels made a heart-felt plea for us all to transcend. Indeed, it was said that there had been (I quote) 'intense and vitriolic resistance to this conference for years'. Yet both humanistic and Jungian approaches share a critical antipathy to mainstream psychoanalysis, and perhaps incredibly, there had never been a 'public conversation' of this nature before. I hope that the latter point alone is sufficient justification for the unusually lengthy nature of this 'report article'.

The conference speakers (in alphabetical order) were Helena Hargaden, Birgit Heuer, Deirdre Johnson, Dale Mathers, Chris Robertson, John Rowan, Andrew Samuels, Steven Smith and Brian Thorne. We soon discovered via a show of hands that participants were made up of roughly two-thirds humanistic delegates, and one-third Jungian, and we began with an exercise (facilitated by conference chair Ruth Williams) in which we were to imagine being immersed in the other modality from our own, then making the journey back again, and then sharing the experience in twos or threes. A fittingly experiential and image-laden beginning to the day.

In what follows, my own selectivity and partiality will inevitably influence the amount of space I give to each speaker's contribution. The first speaker was **Helena Hargaden**, a Training and Supervisory Transactional Analyst, who looked at the influence of Martin Buber on humanistic psychotherapy,making links with her own experience of humanistic therapy and Jungian analysis. Helena began by looking at Buber, the intersubjective and the I–Thou (or 'believing humanism', as he called it), and more particularly at Buber in relation to both Carl Rogers and Carl Jung. For Buber, relationship is primary, and a *mis*-meeting can be traumatizing. Rogers certainly encountered Buber (see, for example, the 1957 dialogue: Anderson, 1997; Cissna & Anderson, 2002), and the question arises as to whether Rogers and his person-centred theory were actually influenced by Buber – an issue that was left

tantalizingly hanging. There is also the argument that complete mutuality is necessarily impossible. It was also noted that Buber and Jung fell out over the question of spirituality.

Helena spoke of how important it is not to conflate equality, mutuality and reciprocity, which perhaps does happen in humanistic work and theorizing. Buber certainly spoke of the asymmetry of the healing relationship. She then shared some clinical work, which led to an interesting discussion, with one contributor suggesting that the inner and the outer might be a false or misleading duality. The first sign of difference between the approaches occurred here, with several person-centred contributors suggesting that Helena's client had moved therapeutically precisely because the therapist had allowed her own vulnerability, and had not allowed theory to guide, encroach or divert; whereas Helena wanted to hang on to an important role for theory.

In her presentation 'Models of the "Self": Gendered, Non-gendered and Trans-gendered', Jungian analyst (with a Psychosynthesis background) **Deirdre Johnson** then foregrounded what Humanistic Psychology and Jungian approaches share regarding the importance of balancing and synthesizing opposite tendencies within the human psyche. Notions of gender and sexual orientation were drawn upon to show how valuable the notion of 'the Self' can be in human relationships, emphasizing in the process just how important it is that both Jungian and Humanistic Psychology continually update their respective models of the Self. Interesting questions were raised in relation to whether Jung took gender difference more seriously than humanism does, and also the dangers involved in Jung's documenting some of the differences between the races.

Steven Smith, psychotherapist and Senior Lecturer at the Metanoia Institute, then spoke under the intriguing title 'The Psychotherapeutic Process of Change: Exploring the Integrative Links between Carl Jung's "Enantiodromia", Eric Berne's "Physis" and Arnold Beisser's "Paradoxical Nature of Change"', critically evaluating the ontological aspects of humanness that can contribute to the client's process of change, growth and healing. For Steven, we are not isolated minds, but intertwined in a web of interrelatedness – a perspective that both Jungian approaches and Humanistic Psychology share. Steven spoke about 'physis' (e.g., Clarkson, 1992, 2002), and referred to an in-built ontological dynamic in 'enantiodromia' whereby extremes generate their opposite (cf. Heraclitus here: e.g., von Oech, 2002), and to the inherently paradoxical nature of change, along with the notion of 'creative indifference' (e.g., Friedlaender, 1918; Stevenson, 2004), and the therapist deliberately *not* taking a position. I am reminded of Fritz Perls here, who spoke of avoiding a one-sided outlook, and cultivating the ability to see both sides of an occurrence, and so completing an incomplete half (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1994).

Steven did maintain that Jung has 'something extra' to say, but he also acknowledged that there are major overlaps: 'We can never know what evil might be necessary to produce good', and vice versa (quoted from Jung's Collected Works, Volume 9). There was also some refreshing questioning of the primacy of 'the relational', and whether 'the relational turn' in therapy might just be a turn too far (e.g., Tudor, 2014) – a view that generated some agreement from the audience. The work on 'the active client' by Bohart and Tallman, for example (e.g., 1996, 1999), suggests that therapeutic change might not necessarily always all be centrally about 'the relationship', and 'the primacy of the relational' does seem to be one of those

warm and fuzzy but unthought-through therapeutic clichés that has gained hegemony in recent years, and that is in urgent need of some critical deconstruction (see Loewenthal & Samuels, 2014).

John Rowan then gave us a panoramic and impressively spontaneous description of his encounter with Humanistic Psychology in the 1970s. It was fascinating, for example, to hear, from someone who was actually there, about the first Radical Psychology conference held at Keele in the early 1970s. For John and his radical colleagues, to call psychology a 'science' was 'ridiculous', for there are no psychological 'laws', in Hemple's nomothetic sense (Fetzer, 2002). Also mentioned by John were co-counselling as a very effective route into feelings, anti-sexist men's groups, primal integration, 'Red Therapy', the seminal anthology *In Our Own Hands* (Ernst & Goodison, 1981), and *Red Rat*, *Humpty Dumpty* and *Achilles Heal* magazines. In 1980, John declared himself to be 'actualized' (I can never quite tell whether John has at least half a tongue in his cheek when he says this, or not) – but what comes next, after this? This is where the 'subtle consciousness' of Ken Wilber takes its place in John's biography and cosmology.

Moving into the transpersonal realm took John into Wicca, neo-paganism, myth and legend, gods, goddesses, archetypes, nature spirits, angels and so on, and this is where Jung came into John's account, with Jung also being an important writer on the subtle levels of consciousness (Stan Grof, Joseph Campbell and James Hillman were also mentioned here). According to John, Jung had comparatively little to say about the self, and what he does have to say is vague (though see Jung, 1958), whereas Wilber has far more to say about the self (Rowan, 1983) around Centaur consciousness and the 'subtle self'. According to John, a number of research studies have also confirmed Maslow's notion of self-actualization, but no-one has seriously researched into what John sees as the somewhat woolly notion of (Jungian) 'individuation'. For John, and somewhat controversially, individuation seems much the same as self-actualization and doesn't add anything extra; and it is an important question as to whether self-actualization and individuation are real, or even possible – deep and crucial questions around which therapy often pussy-foots.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, John's provocative challenge to the Jungian notion of individuation led to some considerable and passionate discussion and disagreement in the hall, and highlighted one substantial fault-line, perhaps, between humanistic and Jungian cosmologies. It certainly got 'a vigorous and "outraged" dialogue going' (Samuels, 2015, p. 7), with Jungian delegates taking strong issue with John's apparent dismissal of the notion of individuation. There is surely a paper to be written here 'comparing and contrasting' the humanistic notion of self-actualization with the Jungian notion of individuation – any takers? … (please contact the editors with proposals!).

John's allegiance to Wilber's work also came under some criticism, with Wilber being condemned by one delegate as 'a conceptualist', and his theories criticized for being Eurocentrically white, male and middle class. The implication of the critiques seemed to be that Wilber's cosmology is a particularly linear and modernist take on the self and human consciousness. From the floor, Andrew Samuels referred to some 'compulsive tendency' that we seem to have 'to have a greater or higher good', questioning why it might be that we make this 'modernist' move. Perhaps we are even *imposing* something on to the psyche here.

Andrew also referred to there being lots of intensity and feelings in the room at this juncture of the proceedings, lurking beneath the humour and apparent lightness. The session chair, Ruth Williams, summed it up succinctly: 'This is one of the many differences here today'. I was left thinking that it is vital to have a space in which 'creative disagreement' of this nature can occur (with room for our destructiveness to perhaps be expressed and owned, too), for 'Without contraries is no progression', as that quintessentially humanistic visionary, William Blake, presciently put it several centuries ago.

Jungian analyst and trained body psychotherapist **Birgit Heuer** then spoke under the title 'To Be or Not To Be: On Body, Being and Jungian Analysis', addressing commonalities and divergences between the humanistic psychotherapies and Jungian analysis through the themes of body and being. Birgit showed how humanistic body therapy and Jungian analytic theory can be brought together, and can inform one another, via 'sanatology' (meaning a clinical theory of health and healing), enabling the body to be understood as the experience of 'embodied being' (the latter referring to authentic somatic experience), with the capacity for embodied being seen as a crucial feature of authentic spirituality. Birgit thus spoke of wishing to bring 'being-based values' (echoes of John Heron here) into analytic work, with 'being' needing to be 'invoked rather than defined' – an interesting move which, if successful, would certainly respond to a common critique that humanistic approaches make of (psycho)analytic work. If you will excuse the invoking of the 'r' and the 'i' words, for Brigit, cross-modality **r**elational sensibilities develop in practitioners to the extent that they **i**ndividuate in their trainings.

First up in the afternoon session were Psychosynthesis psychotherapist **Chris Robertson** and humanistic psychotherapist and psychiatrist **Dale Mathers**, speaking on 'Return(ing) to the Radical Edge', meaning the edge between individual and cultural psychotherapy. So this presentation was about how therapy can rediscover its 'vital edge', with the recognition that both the humanistic therapies and Jungian analysis emerged as radical responses to prevailing cultural malaise. Their joint presentation reflected a deep concern with whether conventional therapy might actually be colluding with and merely reproducing dominant discourses, including that of scientific materialism and its dire ecological consequences (cf. Robertson, 2014), and whether we might find or create an authentic counter-cultural discourse of our own.

Chris Robertson first wanted to explore what sort of 'healing art' therapists are engaged with, maintaining that 'Our conceptual clothes keep us more distinct than maybe we are', and that with lots of 'branding' going on in the field (i.e., identifying ourselves with our therapy brands), the important distinction between concepts and practice becomes conflated. Chris wanted to deconstruct taken-for-granted notions (common both to humanistic and Jungian approaches) like 'growth' and 'the relational' (cf. above). Thus, for example, for Chris our conventional focus on an 'internal world' and human inter-relatedness arguably reflects a Western over-emphasis on individualism (cf. Hermans, Kempen, & van Loon, 1992; Wallach & Wallach, 1983); he even asked whether 'the consulting room itself [is] one of the sacred cows that we need to release ourselves from'. He also spoke of the way in which we can use knowledge to protect ourselves from the terror of being in the moment, deliciously quoting James Hillman to the effect that 'The uncertainty of what you and I are here for is what we are here for'.

In his part of what was a joint presentation, **Dale Mathers** argued that 'the self' is a concept, not a thing; that it is collective, and is distributed over time and space – and most importantly, that it *has* to be political. There was a fascinating analogy drawn between therapy and jazz (yes, *jazz*), with therapy said to be about playing the cymbals. (It just so happens that I have recently been listening to some live Soft Machine gigs from around 1970, and the iconic Robert Wyatt's magnificently fluid, intuitive and creative jazz drumming would indeed seem to be an excellent analogy for therapy at its best! Quite apart from its being exceedingly therapeutic to listen to.) Dale went on to say that 'You don't actually need words to do this job, what you need to do is listen…', and 'We love our preoccupation with discourses as it gives us something to hold on to'.

Responding to these two presentations, one delegate said from the floor, 'I *like* the vagueness of Jung!', in contradistinction to the more mechanistic humanistic view of the self as a kind of *thing* (an area where humanism can learn from Jung, perhaps). It was also argued that one cannot individuate unless there is a connection between oneself and the collective. Chris Robertson refreshingly critiqued the professionalization of our therapeutic language (cf. House, 2003), and Dale Mathers asked why it is that we seem to be incapable of organizing a trade union of therapists – not least because it is at the collective, political level that 'self*ing*' (not to be confused with the dreaded 'self*ies*') happens. For Dale, the capacity to *be with not-knowing* (cf. Cayne & Loewenthal, 2008) is key.

After a short break we were treated to the first ever showing of a filmed interview of **Brian Thorne** by **Andrew Samuels**, appropriately titled 'The Two Carls' (after Thorne, 2012). The full transcript of this engaging interview will be reproduced in full in the autumn issue of this journal. Suffice to say at this juncture that Brian was struck by the 'exhilarating' interview's 'splendid spontaneity', and felt that it did justice to his own indebtedness to 'the courageous' Carl Jung and Carl Rogers. The considerable overlap between the two great Carls comes across strongly, and the current state of therapy in Britain is also touched upon. For the rest of this enthralling interview, please consult the forthcoming autumn issue!

In the closing plenary, there was an interesting challenge made to yet another of therapy's emerging therapeutic clichés, that of comfortableness with not-knowing and the unknown (see above). For we arguably need *knowing* as well as not-knowing (or a judicious balance between the modern and the postmodern, perhaps – Hauke, 2000; Smith, 1994). Different kinds of knowledge were also referred to – story and pre-modern, for example – and the very quest for knowledge *about* can actually get in the way of experience (cf. Steiner, 1978). The point was also forcefully made that *thinking* and *being* do not necessarily have to be mutually exclusive. One delegate also expressed what perhaps a number of those present were thinking, that at times the event felt like 'being back in the countercultural '60s and '70s, and revolutionary socialism!'. Finally, the telling point was made that therapy as a practice is difficult because it entails facing up to, rather than denying or distracting ourselves from, pain and suffering, and perhaps this makes our work far from easy to 'sell' in the current cultural and political conjuncture.

Andrew Samuels ended by listing what he sees as the commonalities between the two approaches – namely, a respect for spirituality; the foregrounding of creativity; presence and authenticity; and a deep respect for the client's/patient's wisdom. Moreover, what is at stake in the current cultural conjuncture is a battle for the very

'soul' of therapy (cf. Edwards, 1992), not least over the kind(s) of therapy that is/are provided by the state (see Atkinson, 2014; House & Loewenthal, 2008a, 2008b; Morgan-Ayres, 2014). With psychoanalysis wanting to have nothing to do with humanistic and Jungian approaches in therapy's unholy 'turf war', there is arguably a very strong case for humanistic and Jungian modalities working much more closely in order to preserve and champion the core therapeutic values for which they both stand.

I hope, finally, that this overly long review has provided enough of a taster of the fascinating fare on offer at this path-breaking conference, for you to eagerly visit the full proceedings when they are published in this journal in the autumn issue of 2015.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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Richard House, PhD, is co-editor of *Self & Society*, a retired university lecturer and an education campaigner. He formerly lectured in Psychotherapy and Counselling at the University of Roehampton, and has been contributing regularly to the therapy literature since 1990. His books include *Therapy Beyond Modernity* (Karnac, 2003) and *In, Against and Beyond Therapy* (PCCS Books, 2010) and as editor or co-editor, *Against and For CBT* (PCCS, 2008), *Too Much, Too Soon: Early Learning and the Erosion of Childhood* (Hawthorn Press, 2011) and *The Future of Humanistic Psychology* (PCCS, 2013).

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