A 50TH YEAR SYMPOSIUM FOR *SELF & SOCIETY* AND HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY IN BRITAIN

Editor's Note: Early in 2022, our 50th-birthday year, I invited a range of old and new friends of the journal, and of Humanistic Psychology (HP), to submit a shortish contribution looking at what people's engagement with HP has meant to them, personally and/or professionally; what it is about HP that is distinctive and sorely needed for the Psychology field, and for modern culture more generally; what has been their experience of *Self & Society* over the years – and so on. Contributors could write about anything they felt like sharing about HP and *S&S*; and as I had hoped, this has created a rich tableau depicting the diversity and history of our work in this, our 50th year, and also some pointers for the future of Humanistic Psychology.

There follow contributions from (in alphabetical order): **Elliot Benjamin, Caroline Brazier, Dina Glouberman, Gaie Houston, David Kalisch, Maxine Linnell, Jennifer Maidman, Julian Nangle, Denis Postle, Gillian Proctor, Kirk Schneider, Lucy Scurfield, Robin Shohet, Maggie Taylor-Sanders, Brian Thorne, Els van Ooijen** and **William West.** I warmly thank them all for their generous contributions to co-creating this engaging celebratory symposium, that I think reflects beautifully and faithfully the rich diversity and alive vibrancy of Humanistic Psychology at its unbounded best.

If the late and much-loved **John Rowan** were still with us, our 'Father of Humanistic Psychology in Britain' (as he is often justifiably characterised) would certainly be making a weighty contribution to this symposium! So we thought we'd adorn the symposium with 'pictures from the archive', taken at John's 90th birthday celebration at London's Open Centre in early 2015, and at his retirement party.

I'm sure, finally, that with the time and resources, I could easily have filled several complete issues of the journal with pieces for this symposium! In light of this, I'm also aware of so many HP folk I could have asked to contribute to this collection. So if, on reading the following, you feel moved to send me your own contribution to this symposium, do please email me up to 2,000 words (to balancewithheart@protonmail.com), and we'll happily publish them in the next issue.

The Future of Humanistic Psychology Goes Hand-In-Hand with the Future of Democracy

ELLIOT BENJAMIN, PH.D., PH.D.

The past few years I have published a number of articles in Humanistic Psychology journals, inclusive of *Self & Society*, that have described what I view as the combined perspective of Humanistic Psychology and progressive politics.[1] In particular, I have been extremely concerned about the possible destruction of democracy in the United States through the presidency of Donald Trump, as well as the continued and escalated possible destruction of democracy in the United States if there is a 2024 Trump 2 or Trumpian presidency (Benjamin, 2021a, 2022). Consequently, when I think about

the future of Humanistic Psychology, I think about the current dire circumstances in the United States, in between the four recent years of President Trump and a very possible occurrence of a 2024 President Trump or President Trumpian (Benjamin, 2022). However, the horrendous nightmare of current events in the Ukraine and Russia highlights the precarious state of affairs of democracy well beyond the United States. Aside from the catastrophic inhuman destruction of lives spearheaded by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, democracy in Russia has essentially been obliterated with the arrest and imprisonment of Russian citizens demonstrating against Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as well as the threat of 15 years of imprisonment to journalists who dare to write anything opposing the government's actions (Jones, 2022; Simmons & Bruell, 2022). So I ask myself the question: what place can Humanistic Psychology have in the dire set of circumstances that threaten democracy throughout the world?

Undoubtedly the link between the future of Humanistic Psychology and the future of democracy is strongly connected in a number of countries aside from the United States, but my main focus in this commentary is on the extreme dangers to democracy that are currently taking places in the United States. These dangers have been described in terms of intensive and excessive political polarization, pervasive mis-information regarding the legitimacy of the 2020 presidential election, the prevalence of political violence and death threats against people who advocate for a particular political position, the passing into law of voting restrictions in a number of states, and the gerrymandering and control of delegates by state governments (Kagan, 2021). But what does all this have to do with the core premises of Humanistic Psychology in regard to authenticity, empathy, and self-awareness (Rogers, 1969)?

From my perspective, without addressing the enormous political dangers to our democracy that we have recently been living through in the United States, Humanistic Psychology is essentially operating in a narrow solipsistic world that is very much out of touch with the urgency of advocating for democratic political policies and actions that are inherently 'humanistic'. A number of Humanistic Psychology authors have echoed this perspective,[2] and I have emphasized this in the context of the empathic social engagement that is at the core of progressive politics (Benjamin, 2018–19). However, there are various ways in which Humanistic Psychology could address these enormous political dangers. One important way has been described by Kirk Schneider (2020) in the context of promoting his experiential democracy project that focuses upon people with adversarial political perspectives listening empathically to each other. Schneider (2015) has suggested that his experiential democracy work could be implemented in the United States legislative arena, which I find to be a very creative and relevant way of potentially merging Humanistic Psychology and democracy.

But another way, which unfortunately has not gained much traction in Humanistic Psychology circles, is to engage directly in the political process through progressive politics advocacy work (Benjamin, 2021b). These two ways are certainly not mutually exclusive, as Schneider and I have dialogued about this and agreed upon the wisdom of a 'both / and' approach (Benjamin, 2021c; Schneider, 2021). But the bottom line for me is that it is not relevant to ask about the future of Humanistic Psychology without simultaneously asking about the future of democracy, at least in the current dire political situation in the United States (and, especially, Russia).

The current prospects of preserving democracy in the United States are tenuous at best, as President Biden's approval ratings are precariously low,[3] and all signs point to the 2024 Republican presidential candidate once again being Trump, or else a Trumpian (Benjamin, 2021b, 2022; Kagan, 2021). And what would happen to the core Humanistic

Psychology value of empathy if we end up with a 2024 President Trump or President Trumpian? It doesn't take much imagination to view the escalated hatred and violence that would likely overtake the country in this event (Kagan, 2021). I believe we have seen a considerable degree of empathy in our current US president Joe Biden over the past 14 months, even though we may be disappointed with the extent of his empathy for people in countries other than the United States (Benjamin, 2021b). But if we have a 2024 President Trump or Trumpian, then I think we can virtually say goodbye to any kind of empathy whatsoever (Benjamin, 2021b, 2022).

This is why I advocate for the 'both / and' approach of including progressive politics advocacy as a part of Humanistic Psychology. I'm not alone in this advocacy, as there was definite interest in the formation of an APA (American Psychological Association) Division 32 (Humanistic Psychology) Psychology/Politics task force that was discussed at a 2021 Division 32 APA workshop facilitated by a number of Humanistic Psychology leaders, inclusive of Kirk Schneider, Eileen Serlin , Phil Zimbardo, and Ron Boyer (Benjamin, 2021a). But unfortunately there was no follow-up to this interest, and therefore I would like to take this opportunity to invite anyone who may be interested in the formation a Humanistic Psychology/politics task force to contact me personally.[4]

Such a task force could entertain a multitude of ideas to accentuate the merging of Humanistic Psychology into the current political landscape, but I think what is most important here is that it would be a concrete step in linking the future of Humanistic Psychology with the future of democracy, as from my perspective it does not make sense to talk about the future of Humanistic Psychology without simultaneously talking about the future of democracy. Of course one could go much further, and talk about linking Humanistic Psychology to the future of our whole planet in regard to preventing environmental destruction and nuclear war, but this is a whole other discussion. For now, I think a first step is to focus upon the link between Humanistic Psychology and democracy, given the dire and dangerous political circumstances that are currently taking place in a number of countries all over the world. This is inclusive of the rise in anti-semitism, which affects me personally as a Jew, in various countries in Europe (Greenblatt, 2022).

Thinking once again about the current nightmare debacle in Ukraine, we are currently faced with the possibility that Russia may decide to drop a nuclear bomb on Ukraine, which could lead to a nuclear war, which could become World War III (Haque, 2022; McGee & Calzonetti, 2022). In this unimaginable horrific world disaster, again I ask: what role can Humanistic Psychology play? And in particular, what role can Kirk Schneider's experiential democracy framework play? And what I am left with is virtually no answer to this question, other than holding deep down to my Humanistic Psychology values of empathy for other human beings, and engaging in Martin Luther King's formulation of creative maladjustment, which has been poignantly described by Arin Reeves (2012) as follows:

> The power of maladjustment... the choice to not adjust to what is wrong or broken even if it invites others to call you crazy.... It is actually crazy to adjust when you know that what you are adjusting to does not live up to the best of who you are. It is the maladjusted who lead. It is the maladjusted who change the world. (pp. 2–3)

I feel very moved by the demonstration of creative maladjustment on the part of thousands of Russian citizens who have protested against the Russian invasion of Ukraine, in spite of their facing stiff prison sentences for doing so (Jones, 2022). They share Dr King's commitment to not adjust to what he experienced as evil forces that were in control of his country (Reeves, 2012). They are experiencing these same evil forces today in their country, multiplied many times

over, and I am afraid that these evil forces may very well gain control of our own country with a 2024 President Trump or President Trumpian. However, I don't need to 'adjust' to them. I can choose to be 'maladjusted' and write about my maladjustment. And I believe that being maladjusted to these current and possibly far worse future political realities in the United States is part and parcel of everything that Humanistic Psychology stands for (Benjamin, 2018–19; Rogers, 1969, 1986; Schneider et al., 2015).

And therefore in closing, I will briefly share what Humanistic Psychology founder Carl Rogers (1987), in the late 1970s near the end of his life, had to say in this regard: 'I believe our culture is facing a life and death crisis on many fronts, and that I have an obligation as a citizen to speak out' (p. 24).

Notes

1 See Benjamin, 2018–19, 2021a, and 2021b and the references therein.
2 See Benjamin, 2018–19 and the references therein.
3 See Joe Biden's approval ratings at https://tinyurl.com/ykxnt89b and https://tinyurl.com/2ysxbe32 (accessed 12 May 2022).
4 The author can be contacted at his personal e-mail address: ben496@prexar.com.

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CAROLINE BRAZIER

Fifty years is a long time. Fifty years is nothing. Such is the paradox of time. *Self & Society* has almost reached its half century. Some of us have travelled alongside it in life and in the world of humanistic therapies for much of that time. Now perhaps feels like a time to take stock and reflect back. What have those 50 years brought?

Needless to say, I was not aware of the launch of the journal in 1973, but as an angst-ridden mid-teen I might well have been interested in it, had I given journals a second thought in those days. Back in 1973, though, I was more concerned with the state of the world, and in particular with survival. Two years previously, in March 1971, the BBC had broadcast a programme in its Horizon series: 'Due to Lack of Interest Tomorrow Has Been Cancelled'. The programme was an early forerunner of the environmental movement, and raised the question of habitat destruction and pollution. Despite the snowy-screened reception which was the best our family television could manage with BBC2, I listened to the soundtrack and watched shadowy figures as they moved through the haze and panicked about a future I might not experience. Hard to believe that back then, we had only two accessible channels on our TV, one of which was frowned on as 'commercial'.

Those years were a time when I was desperately searching for social and spiritual answers, and finding few. A little too young to have enjoyed the summer of love in all its glory, my year group always seemed to arrive a little after the party was over. The Cold War was a backdrop we lived with – what would you do with your last four minutes? Memories of World War Two had not altogether faded. Nor did the prospect of university feel altogether comfortable in a time when students were painted as protesting, drug-taking drop-outs. Consumerism was on the rise. I wanted religious faith like my God-squad friends, but Jesus never favoured me with an appearance, so I gave up hoping and became a materialist instead. Looking back, I can see how, in the circumstances, I retreated into a rather tame student life, driven by a deep despair both at the world and at myself; but at the time it felt like a relief to hang out with friends, listening to the Moody Blues and Joni Mitchell and avoiding anything too thought provoking.

This was not to be a long interlude, however. In my early twenties I encountered and was inspired by Carl Rogers' ideas, firstly through a short paper on congruence in education which I

read during a PGCE year. It was a breath of fresh air. Although my career as a primary school teacher lasted only a year, Rogers' ideas on education proved a powerful influence, and have shaped my work as an educator in various contexts ever since. In particular, Rogers' respect both for the individual and for naturally arising human processes that he framed in the concept of the 'self-actualising tendency'; also, his emphasis on providing the right conditions and then giving space for learning to unfold, and his ideas on congruence, not assuming I knew what was right for the other, but being honest in my shared uncertainty.

Ten years later, I signed up to a radical person-centred training in groupwork and counselling, broadening my exploration into therapeutic contexts. I came to feel a deep trust of the human spirit and in the innate good in all of us which, given those core conditions, would naturally emerge. Looking back at those times, I feel saddened at the loss of that simple optimism which we felt then. We believed that such values were self-evidently right and their realisation apodictic so that, having discovered their verity, society would naturally gravitate towards its peak fulfilment and become an open, liberal crucible where learning and growth were available to all. We did not reckon with the changing mood of that society over the coming decades and the gradual creep of the national curriculum and evidence-based practice. Nor did we foresee the pitfalls which individualism would bring.

For myself, and, I think, for many of my contemporaries, the 1980s were a surprisingly rich time, as a counter-culture to Thatcherism bred many grassroots, community-based groups. In many ways we were catching up on an ethos spawned in earlier decades. We were joining the party. That decade saw the emergence of many new local projects within the charitable sector. Restrictive regulation and monitoring were yet to emerge, and there was a window of growth in which experimentation and enthusiasm were the order of the day, with all the accompanying benefits and pitfalls. Risk-management became a dirty word. Alongside my therapy training, I worked in community education and women's health projects, became involved in feminism, and joined bodywork and dreamwork groups. I also encountered and became involved with Buddhism which, by the next decade, would become a central part of my life. Many of those groups were concerned with self-actualisation and personal growth, and a culture of openness prevailed in which we encountered one another in raw expressions of emotion: tears and rage, joy and tenderness. Dubbed the 'me-generation', it was also a time of profound personal exchange when we took interest in one another and celebrated difference. Authenticity and communication were central.

I share these reflections not because my personal memories are particularly interesting to anyone other than myself, but because I think they reflect the experiences that many of us had. It was a time in which we were confident that human potential reached far beyond the confines of the rather stuffy society in which we had grown up, and that with the right nurturance, we could release forces of growth within each of us and realise higher mind states, overcoming the psychological and social limitations of the past. With convert zeal, and perhaps the naivety of youth, we tore up dictates of previous generations and rewrote our expectations. At the same time, however, perhaps inspired by similar rhetoric, a new culture was emerging in politics and business, based on ideas of limitless, constant growth and the actualisation of the individual.

Growth has been and remains the myth of our time. Despite early warnings of some (*Limits to Growth* was published in 1972),[1] a faith that things could continue to develop and improve in an endless upward trajectory has driven a massive expansion of consumption with built-in obsolescence and a constant round of upgrades and re-modelling. If difficulties arose, there was always a sense that technology, and humanity itself, would find a way through the apparent obstacles. Changes have been rapid. Who expected back in 1973 that some 50 years on,

most of us would be able to watch television, or any number of other streamed entertainment, at whim on phones which we carried with us in our pockets? Who imagined we would be able to communicate in groups across continents and see one another real-time as we spoke?

As the rhetoric of growth became self-fulfilling, a sense of entitlement became entrenched in large sections of the community. An advertising industry, consumer rights groups and an increasingly litigious culture persuaded people that they could reasonably expect things to run smoothly, and that they should not be thwarted, side-lined or disadvantaged in any way. Normality was a bench-mark standard to be upheld regardless of circumstances, and this in turn fed a mistaken belief in our ability to control circumstances, whatever they might be. In the recent Covid pandemic, which indeed is far from over despite the wish of many that it be so, we saw how people railed against even modest measures which curtailed their liberty, and believed that dates could be set and lines drawn whereby the advance of the virus must contain itself. Like modern-day Cnuts, people bade the waves of infection retreat, and seemed genuinely perplexed when they did not.

Alongside this sense of entitlement, individualism has been a theme that has run far wider than the personal-growth movement in the last half century. In the Thatcherite denial of society, and in the championing of personal rights, the myth of the self-made man or woman, individual success, and financial advancement prevailed over earlier rhetorics of collective responsibility. Unhooked from obligation to others, the individual became the agent of free choice and self-determination.

In such ways, some of those values which we saw as the foundations for a fairer, more culturally rich society became subverted into agendas which served a very different end. Liberalism became neo-liberalism, and freedom to express became freedom to exploit. Over the decades since 1990, my own journey has challenged me to look in new ways at some of the principles of the humanistic movement. In particular, I have explored Buddhist psychology and its application in the therapy room, and more recently I have been exploring its interface with ecopsychology and the environmental movement. These new perspectives still, for me, sit comfortably alongside Rogers' core principles of creating conditions which foster healthy change. At the same times, their emphasis is more outward and less introspective.

Whilst independence may have been promoted as an ideal, these approaches emphasise our dependence on others. They recognise our involvement in a complex web of human and other-than-human relationships. As pressure in society mounts, far from asserting our entitlement, this dependence becomes more starkly visible. Whether a lack of care workers and fruit pickers to service our needs, the collapse of supply chains for oil or foodstuffs, or crop failures resulting from exceptional weather, it becomes obvious on a day-to-day basis that we exist only by the grace of many others; people and things which we take for granted. Fundamentally, the key requisites of life, air, sunlight, water and so on, are completely beyond our production capacities, and if we destroy their bases, we will not have the capacity to regenerate them. As these basic commodities grow scarce, it becomes clear that from conception to grave, we are in thrall to forces beyond our control, and irredeemably dependent.

My interest in Buddhism has led me to explore the ways in which we construct delusional worldviews, maintained through biases of perception and misinterpretation of phenomena as a defence against the knowledge of our existential vulnerability. Habitually separating our experience into identifications that bolster the self-view and rejections that reinforce the sense of self through distance and differentiation in order to create a semblance of order and stability. This psychological control establishes illusory islands of identity amid the turmoil of life. Instead, Buddhism suggests, in

as much as we exist, that we are simply the meeting points of conditions in any moment; points in a web that interconnects with every other point in an ever-expanding universe.[2] Humanistic thought has at its centre, by necessity it would seem, the human being. The values of openness and respect for process which this movement fosters are vital to our futures. In the crises that we currently face, however, we cannot ignore the shadow of our collective narcissism and our flagrant disregard of other species. Our hope lies in recognition of our embeddedness in a greater whole. Ecological thinking places us within a web of conditions which are much wider than the human framework.

The horror which I felt watching that programme back in 1971 has not gone. Though things have not unfolded exactly as predicted, recent extreme weather and other environmental events demonstrate how real consequences are unfolding directly from lifestyle choices which we as humans have made over recent decades. We do not live in isolation, and already we are feeling the effects of our actions in displaced communities, migrations, food shortages and degradation of habitats. These 50 years have seen extinctions of animals and insects on unprecedented scales. We have seen deforestation and the melting of polar ice. We are approaching tipping-points within the next decade. As we go forward, we need to think beyond the humanistic to the ecosystemic. Only then will the real values which we have been cultivating truly come into their own.

The therapy world reflects the society from which it emerges, and in particular the factions within that society to which it adheres. I believe strongly that those values of openness and enquiry which have been so characteristic of the humanistic movement at its best are vital to our futures. In recognising that we need to listen to others with deep empathy and that we do not have all the answers, we come to appreciate the complexity and multi-faceted qualities of the system in which we are all part, and foster a kind of humility that allows others to flourish through a culture of curiosity and engagement. We co-exist in mutual valuing, which, whilst it may have predominantly been expressed through the human sphere in the past, can expand beyond the boundaries of humanity to cherish the systems that embrace and hold us all, including in our society the ecosystemic web of life in all its myriad forms.

Notes

1 W.W. Meadows, D.H. Meadows, D.L. Randers & others, *The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind*, Universe Books, New York, 1972.
2 As represented by the image of Indra's Net.

1. Past issues of S&S on display at John Rowan's 90th birthday bash, Open Centre, 2015

My Journey with ImageWork and Humanistic Psychology[1]

DINA GLOUBERMAN

My first forays into the world of the imagination had a certain danger about them. It was not the obvious danger of a wild imagination showing you frightening things. It was rather the danger that if you believed in the imagination, you couldn't also believe in everyday reality.

Here are three personal stories that illustrate the lure of the imagination – and the danger it presented to me.

The first was when I was about six years old. I was convinced that one day, Charlie, the driver of the estate car that took me and other children to school each morning, would ring my doorbell and, because I was such a good girl, give me a magic box. Within this box would be a magic wand, and when I waved it, every wish I wished would come true. The wand eventually developed in my mind to produce smaller wands for my friends. I also asked that it only fulfil wishes that were good for me. One morning, I sat up in my bed, and said, 'But that's magic, and I don't believe in magic'. And that was that for many long years.

Another event took place when I was an undergraduate at Brandeis University. My Psychology Professor, Dr Richard Jones, gave us an assignment to write out our dreams as soon as we woke up and if possible, before we opened our eyes or moved much. We were to hand them in anonymously. As I followed his instructions, I found that the world of dreams opened up with such vivid presence that one day, I wondered why the world of dreams was considered any less real or important than the world of everyday reality. After all, we spent a great deal of time dreaming. The only difference seemed to be that everyday reality had more continuity: you began a new day where you left off the night before. These thoughts frightened me, because I knew that the 'sane' view of life was that reality was reality, and dreams were 'just' our imagination. I stopped keeping my dream journal, reasoning that since it was anonymous, it wouldn't be missed.

The third story I want to describe happened while studying at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem where I was taking a course in the Kabbalah, the Jewish mystic tradition, with the eminent Professor Gershon Scholem, and we were studying various magical uses of the name of 'God'. At the same time, I was reading *The Children of Sanchez* by anthropologist Oscar Lewis (1965). It is the story of a poor family, told from the point of view of each member of the family. Once again I thought: Either this is true, the magical mystical world of the Kabbalah, or that is true, the real world of poverty. I chose the real world of poverty and abandoned the Kabbalah.

These stories illustrate my fear of the power of the imagination, indeed of all that is not part of what is called 'objective reality'. I took my decisions without discussing them with anyone. The fear was part of my taken-for-granted background imagery, what I call the 'Everyday Imagination', that I didn't know how to question, or even talk about, and was at least partly derived from my culture. It is indeed a fear that is prevalent in so much of Western culture and education, and is reflected in the way the imagination has so often been sidelined in the interests of what is considered demonstrably real and provable. This is as true of Psychology and psychotherapy as it is of other fields.

Against the background of this fear, however, some part of me persisted in championing the imagination, or, more accurately, the imagination persisted in honouring me with its presence. I knew that if I wanted the imagination in my life, I could no longer perceive it in this either–or way, because when in doubt, I always chose 'objective reality'.

ImageWork is the result of that persistent relationship. It offers the possibility of diving into the world of what I call the 'Transformational Imagination' with the protective gear of the knowledge that this is another world with many treasures, but the point is not to stay there. It is always to bring the treasures back to enrich the everyday world of reality.

Essentially it involved holding the outer world of everyday reality and the inner world of the imagination separate enough so I knew which was which. Then I could use the inner world to illuminate the outer world, and the outer world

to feed back into the inner world. But they mustn't be confused. That way, madness lies.

My conscious work with the inner world of the imagination is what I came to call 'ImageWork'. It teaches us to listen to the voice of the psyche and the spirit, yet it is profoundly practical. Indeed, each exercise I create and use is simply the most practical application of the imagination that I can find to deal with the issue at hand or create the transformation we are working towards. It is a way to live well in the real world by underpinning everyday physical reality with a life-affirming meaning and purpose, and helping us to fulfil that meaning and purpose as well as having a magical time along the way.

And perhaps after all, it is not so far from the magic box I was hoping for at age 6, with a magic wand that could create smaller magic wands to give out, but would only allow me to wish for what was truly good for me. ImageWork has the power to help make our dreams come true, as long as we have first checked out what our true dreams are.

The Context in Humanistic Psychology

The roots in Psychology of my approach to the imagination lie in Humanistic Psychology. This radical and holistic approach to Psychology offered me a spiritual home when I was studying Psychology at Brandeis University, in the faculty of Abraham Maslow, in the 1960s, and in growth centres of New York and London in the 1970s. I still remember how important it was that I no longer needed to play the role of good therapist. Being me was good enough.

At that time, it was terribly important that Humanistic Psychology moved away from a medical model to a democratic and holistic one, based on fostering communication, creativity, and personal development throughout life for everyone. Abraham Maslow was, and still is, a key figure in this approach.

The underlying assumptions changed the map of psychology at that time. According to this new approach, we as humans are constantly evolving beings, and we need to take a holistic approach to being human. The integration of the physical, the mental, the emotional and the spiritual was important for everyone – as was self-exploration, creativity, free will, authenticity, and positive human potential. Self-development could be done in an essentially democratic way through self-exploration and group work as much as through professional consultation (see Rowan & Glouberman, 2018).

All this seems obvious now; then, it was revolutionary. We psychologists were, after all, studying rats in their cages.

A number of different methods emerged, including Gestalt and Psychodrama, which put a great emphasis on using the imagination to understand reality. The first time I remember being astounded at the power of the imagination happened when in a growth group, as we used to call them, we were asked to become the image in a dream. It was as if a whole new world emerged and spread itself out before my eyes.

One of my most powerful experiences of psychodrama happened in a conference on groupwork in the early 1970s, that my father introduced me to. I did a workshop on the Psychodrama of Death with a wonderful psychodramatist named Hannah Weiner. My mother had died a year before, and yet I couldn't accept the finality of death, and it felt as if she was 'hanging around', unable to go. When I pushed my mother, *aka* the group leader, out of the room, and slammed the door three times, to the applause of the group, I was stunned by this taboo-breaking experience, and yet knew I was now able to close a door in my life and open a new one.

The theory and practice of ImageWork is situated comfortably within this tradition. Humanistic Psychology supplies a philosophy I feel at home with, and from which the holistic,

democratic, and interactive nature of the work partly derives.

Similarly, when I co-founded Skyros Holistic Holidays with Dr Yannis Andricopoulos in 1979, my own joint inspirations were a community-based summer camp I went to as a child, where I learned how happy I could be in community, and the world of Humanistic Psychology. Together they served as a model for the community-building processes and holistic courses that we introduced, which created an atmosphere that has had life-changing effects on participants' lives.[2] [See Robin Shohet's contribution to this symposium – Ed.]

Principles of the ImageWork Approach

Here are some important principles of my approach to working with the transformational imagination. (These are developed at length in my book *ImageWork: The Complete Guide to Working with Transformational Imagery*.) You will see how they fit with their context in Humanistic Psychology.

I first coined the name 'ImageWork' rather than using the common term 'visualisation' because images are not necessarily visual. They can be seen, sensed, felt, heard, smelled or tasted. This is important, because people often say that they are not good at images just because they don't have a strong visual imagination.

My approach is *interactional*, with the practitioner and client, or group members with each other, creating a shared world of imagery, rather than having the practitioner simply guide the client or group. It is *democratic* in that wherever possible, the client is taught how to use imagery and they become their own expert in everyday life. It is *holistic* in that, in my view, the Transformational Imagination reflects our inner love and wisdom, and benefits not just ourselves but the whole of which we are part. And it is *radical* in that it seeks to let go of the received and fixed positions of the Everyday Imagination of the culture, and to work with an open and evolving Transformational Imagination.

ImageWork needs to take place in the context of a community or a relationship that supports openness, trust and evolution because the images can go so unexpectedly deep so quickly that the environment needs to be safe and welcoming.

It also needs to be seen in the context of a bigger picture of being human, which could also be called spiritual or transcendent. This helps the Imaginer to align their everyday personality with a source of wisdom, truth, love and purpose in themselves. In the imaging, the wisdom level of the imaginer is often represented by light, which can be thought of as the light of the soul, but need not be. This bigger context doesn't require any particular belief system, and the reader is encouraged to frame it in their own way, using a language that fits with their own outlook and with that of their clients and group members.

The underlying attitude which makes this work possible is radical trust, or openness to the wisdom of the imagination. If you are determined to control the outcomes, indeed have decided in advance what answer you want and try to get it, there is no point doing the imaging. The image, like a prisoner pleasing the prison guard, will only tell you what you want to hear. You won't learn anything new.

Both practitioner and client (or Guide and Imaginer) need to let go of rational control and wishful thinking. They must trust the wisdom of the Transformational Imagination, allowing an image to emerge in its own time. Then they can work with it in such a way that it can yield its treasures.

Finally

If the physical world I live in is my home, then the imagination is my second home, the place I

go to whenever I am seeking a deep understanding and transformation for myself or for others.

From this vantage point, I use the multidimensional quality of the imagination to help people to honour their truth, resolve their problems, heal their wounds, create their heart's desire, offer what they can to the world, and understand the meaning of their life.

A fragment from a saying I learned in my childhood comes to mind: 'He who knows, and knows not that he knows, is asleep; awaken him. He who knows and knows that he knows is wise; follow him.' Waking people to their own wisdom is what ImageWork is best at doing.

Perhaps I speak directly to the part of them that already knows, but knows not that they know. And that part answers, sooner or later.

Notes

1 This piece is adapted from Dina Glouberman, *ImageWork: The Complete Guide to Working with Transformational Imagery*, PCCS Books, Wyastone Leys, Monmouth, 2022.
2 Dina Glouberman, *Skyros Soul*; available at https://www.skyros.com/about/our-story/skyros-soul/ (accessed 12 May 2022).

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2. Two much-loved elders of Humanistic Psychology in Britain, the late John Rowan and Dina Glouberman, enjoy each other's company

Mighty Oaks

GAIE HOUSTON

There are ever fewer of us who can recall the times when *Self & Society* was no more than a twinkle in Vivien Milroy's eye, or even when it became the rather small acorn from which this mighty oak has sprung.

We [Vivien, John Rowan, Yvonne Craig and I are those I remember] crowded into Vivien's office at Borough, to have conversations he pleaded to record and print in the next issue, so portentous and cosmic did he deem our deliberations to be. He never did so, though lack of copy may well have been a problem for him as editor, as during that epoch a little book I was writing about Gestalt first came into the world as two successive, so-called 'Special', issues of this journal. In those days, pages needed to be filled, by whoever was handy.

As I remember it, what is often called 'The Sixties' really happened in the UK in the seventies. This was the time when Quaesitor and Encounter Groups were the main sources where many of us explored what came to be called self-development. *Self & Society* was part

of that sudden jolt and gear-change of perception in many people's minds.

Flower power and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) marches and Carnaby Street were to become the various emblems of an exciting decade of questioning and protest. Germaine Greer's book *The Female Eunuch* came out in 1970 and was a runaway bestseller. Feminism was turning from a mutter to a shout. The Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp was not set up until 1981, yet in my mind it belongs with the heady activism of the decade before.

All this comes to my mind as I stop to think about the title, *Self & Society*. The Society part sits beside the Self memories of the excitement of being part of an editorial board, meeting in what seemed an important City office, eating Chinese takeaways there together, and talking the world and ourselves to rights. I am not sure that any of us had much idea that the journal would survive, or that the self-development so many of us were hunting out in evening and weekend events would morph into the therapist training and accrediting bodies which have largely developed from and replaced it.

The early years of the journal coincide with the beginning of this change from what might now be seen as the outrageous excesses of the encounter-group era, to the growth of conformity. Psychotherapy trainings need standards. Standards require measurement. Measurements need recognised enforcing authorities. Conformity is the justifiable result, and I am grateful that we have created institutions to monitor the skill and responsibility and probity of practitioners.

But just as in schools, music and drama are curtailed or eliminated to give enough time for swotting up on exam subjects, so have Blind Walks and massage and Noise, Noisy Exercises, given way in most psychotherapy training to the study of comparative theory and the writing of case studies.

Touch is powerful and healing. Rather than risk its abuse, it is proscribed in most therapies, and trainees are taught how to avoid it.

Therapists do not mix socially with clients. They start and finish sessions to the minute. I could argue many justifications for these arbitrary and rather chilling rules of procedure. The case remains that such rules are inventions which are greatly to the advantage of the therapist, and much less obviously to the benefit of many clients. They have become part of a belief system about Good Practice.

In general society I see the same shift away from spontaneous response and into a rigidity which somehow contrives to be so correct as to be unassailable, in the ways it has become permissible to talk about sex, gender, race, and more. There seem at the moment to be two extreme polarities which fuel each other. On one side is the horrifying abuse and calumny anonymised and still lethal, pouring in Stygian streams out of social media. It leads to fear and misery and even the suicide of school children. On the other side is an almost vengeful righteousness. Statues are toppled and speakers hounded from universities. It is as if it is not enough to disapprove or deplore. Now we must forbid.

Historically, Puritanism has been followed by a period of licence. It is as if the two movements are out and about, indeed are raging, at the same time now, in a way I know we never imagined as we sat in Vivien Milroy's office all those years ago, talking of how to build a better and more loving world.

I am writing this in the first dreadful days of the invasion of Ukraine. We are living in the times when Boris Johnson, Donald Trump and Vladimir the Impaler Putin are far from being the only people who should not be allowed to have access to power. Bad faith is on a roll. The people of Ukraine are fighting to survive.

What society have we to offer them? We are all under threat. The European economy, meaning

survival and comfort, is going downhill. Our slow acknowledgement of and response to global warming is weakening the survival chances of millions of us. Suddenly, even what had seemed unthinkable, the use of nuclear missiles, is actively being prepared. I fervently wish all power to *Self & Society* and all who sail in her. Long may they flourish, the selves who make this journal, who nurture the assailed realities of empathy, generosity, tolerance, understanding, nobility, love and virtue.

DAVID KALISCH

Co-Editor of *Self & Society* (2013–2018)
Director, The Centre for Humanistic Psychology and Counselling, Devon (1992–present)

As the European continent and the world order shift on their axis, bringing into focus and shaking up the taken-for-granted assumptions of the post-war period, it's particularly pertinent to review the 50 years that *Self & Society* rather wonderfully will soon have chalked up, and reflect a little, but not too seriously, on the place of Humanistic Psychology (and from a rather insular British perspective, on the place of *S&S*) in all of this.

I wouldn't want to rehash the whole story of Humanistic Psychology's emergence as a cultural phenomenon (no better succinct introduction exists, I feel, than Maureen O'Hara's 'Humanistic cultural praxis for an emerging world' – O'Hara, 2018). And I'm not quite old enough – at the age of 73, it's lovely still occasionally to be able to say this! – to remember the very earliest origins of Humanistic Psychology and *S&S* in the UK, save to say that I believe the two have gone hand-in-hand from the word go; and without one, there is no other. To put it simply, Humanistic Psychology doesn't exist in this country other than by virtue of *S&S* (and, of course, vice versa). AHPb and *S&S* are the founding institutions of Humanistic Psychology per se in the UK, and it's through their continued existence that Humanistic Psychology as a force, independent of its constituent parts – Person-Centred Counselling, Gestalt, TA and so forth – continues to exist. And the Third Force is what it was, let us recall (after Psychoanalysis and Behaviourism) – before the psy world splintered into a thousand 'forces', each with a forgettable acronym of its own, like mayflies to flutter around for a week or a day, and then be gone.

Three Forces before the marketisation, monetisation, McDonaldisation of the whole field took place, i.e. at a time when people still *believed* in something, and believed that these forces could change the world in a positive way: Freudianism forged in the dark crucible of eastern Europe in the early twentieth century as an attempt to understand the sinister forces emerging through the veneer of civilisation at that time; Behaviourism, a Russian and American concoction offering then, and still now, the promise of social control; and finally Humanistic Psychology offering an altogether brighter, sunnier prospect of continuous human improvement which, looking back, can be seen to have been inextricably – and fatally, perhaps – tied up in the myth of progress, and the obsession with perpetual growth that the post-war settlement and the boom times that soon followed seemed to exude the possibility of.

And so here we are, bumping up against the limits to growth on all sides on a planet growing darker by the minute from the coincidental but not unrelated apocalypses of European land war, climate catastrophe, food shortages, refugee crises and global order breakdown. Who do we need to make sense of it all now?: Freud, Klein, Jung, Darwin, Marx, T.S. Eliot, Iris Murdoch or Yeats or Immanuel Wallerstein? Probably not Rogers, Berne and Maslow or Perls, you'd have to say.

But this was meant to be a personal and, if possible in the circumstances, celebratory account; and personally, one of the things that drew me to Humanistic Psychology (as opposed to psychoanalysis, which I flirted with) is that it

wasn't too serious, too bookish. And back then, i.e. the early 1970s, post the obligatory India trip with its equally obligatory – and life-changing, it has to be said – ashram stay – and then back in the UK, living off the Harrow Road in London next to Release – the drugs place – in a squat with fellow musicians Joe Strummer and Tymon Dogg, starting my first therapy at Community – a 'Humanistic Growth Centre'– with a frequently stoned Gestalt therapist who shall not be named, but who also –generously – invited me one day into one of Ischa Bloomberg's Gestalt groups (presumably at Quaesitor).

I recall being rather intimidated finding myself in a group when I'd expected myself to be in my regular not-getting-anywhere individual therapy session; and when this big burly bearded man – i.e. Ischa – offered me a bowl of olives, which I, in the spirit of don't accept gifts from strangers, instinctively rejected, Ischa proclaimed loudly to the group, 'David has not yet learnt the generosity of receiving' (which I felt at the time was an exceptionally overblown and unkind interpretation!). I had thus entered a strange but not unfriendly post-hippie world where rules of politeness didn't apply, of in-your-face anger and sexuality, rudeness, challenges to be authentic, 'stop thinking / start feeling, for god's sake' therapy groups. But how right Ischa was: it was also a world of generosity and communality that I had stumbled into, of inclusiveness and joy, if one dared reach out for it.

Another example that year, inspired by Ronnie Laing's books (as everyone was), I somehow had the dander to arrange to meet Leon Redler, and ended up having a spontaneous session with him at his house over a cup of tea, and then being invited back that evening to meet Ronnie himself and the gang at a meditation meeting. Naturally I was too frightened to accept – such openness, generosity, sharing, not wanting anything from me (and especially not even money) was at this time, and for a time to come, too alien for me to process; I could only be cynical, rational, sceptical, suspicious (or how does the song go?...).

Eventually I got the chance a few years later, still in the 1970s, to wear my scepticism on my sleeve, to indulge it and even to wear it out as a member of one of a series of highly experiential, seat-of-your-pants groups – billed as a mixture of Gestalt, encounter, Reichian Taoism with an amazing American therapist, at his Human Potential Centre, which morphed into years of group therapy and then, subsequently in Exeter and mid-Devon, with another gifted humanistic therapist.

Looking back, I always marvel that my first group therapist was able to tolerate my ambivalence and distrust for as long as he did without challenging it in any way, allowing me to be me, which at the time was revelatory; and I eventually let it all go for an innocent open-minded and -hearted curiosity that was, looking back – and I certainly didn't know it at the time – the beginning of my training as a therapist. Generosity on display everywhere in these groups once I let it in… a trail of music, always there was music, some judicious use of drugs, falling in love again with the world, re-enchantment, magic, love, generosity, heartbreak, loss, spirit everywhere through all the pain of everything.

Five-day enlightenment retreats then followed, or overlapped, that claimed to 'out-therap therapy', and did (but the therapy had loosened up the roots). Elements of Osho meets Zen meets enlightenment intensive. Most of it stood me in good stead for the rest of my life, lucky to have been born then rather than now or before, and receiving so much generosity from so many people when I needed it, which was often and deeply. I'll gladly express my thanks, including to the past editor of *S&S*, the late David Jones, dear friend, who got me involved as more than just a reader of *S&S*, and of course the current editor, Richard who, many years later, rang me up out of the blue and asked if I wanted to co-edit *S&S* with him and Jennifer (Maidman), which I surprised myself by agreeing to. This

involved me more in the institutional structures of the journal, the AHPb board and the Association of Humanistic Psychology Practitioners (UKAHPP), where I also discovered only generosity, inclusiveness, encouragement, even from the folk (and there were several) I for some reason rubbed up the wrong way.

But going back to my beginnings with it, I've been trying to think: when did I first become aware there was such a thing as Humanistic Psychology as such? The first key event on the trail was seeing the picture on the back of a friend's copy of *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim* (by Fritz Perls), with the caption 'To suffer one's death and to be reborn is not easy', which was definitely the catalyst; and then reading Perls, Hefferline and Goodman, the classic Gestalt text in 1973 and starting to do the self-help exercises in it. Definitely a conversion experience for me, and the reason for my moving to London in 1974 to seek my first therapy; and later, in 1976, my two main group therapists. I didn't go to AHPb or UKAHPP events until much later. I lived in the sticks, having moved out to a rural idyll in remote west Wales in 1974.

For me, it was *S&S* – the Journal of Humanistic Psychology – that was the channel, the medium for connection with a tribe, albeit at this point more an imagined tribe than anything else. And as I said earlier, it was David Jones who suggested to me on a walk in the Devon countryside, to which I had them moved from Wales, that I should join the Editorial Board. When I asked him how much it paid, he responded with a great guffaw of laughter and the words 'but you also won't have to ever do anything for it'. A deal was struck and true to his word I never had to do anything... and freed from that compulsion, I did things. I wrote my first pieces for *S&S* as a reviewer of new books by a certain Dr R.A. House (2003), later by Totton and House (1997), by Mowbray and Brown (1995) and so forth – you get the picture; the books that started to shake up and challenge the juggernaut that was developing to colonise the humanistic field. So yes, a community for me largely held together by a journal, and I never met these good folk till later; starting to write was my contribution, and reading was the channel of participation in this humanistic world.

And simultaneously I went to Humanistic Psychology groups for years, the old way, when it was about group therapy and not this weekly therapy business that it's now mostly turned into – let's face it: privatised, boarded-off, individualised, compartmented so that one can go back better resourced into the many compartments that we call 'life' now. Back then, what we were involved in was some kind of an attempt at a revolutionary praxis, the trying out of non-commodified forms of relating to each other in the group context, and noticing – and if not noticing being called out for the many ways in which we all avoid being authentically present and in relationship.

And of course, looking back it was nothing like as revolutionary as we thought it was, because what became of it? There was no revolution, clearly, and now Humanistic Psychology is part of a professionalised field, part of the shenanigans and part of the commodified form that therapy has become (and that we're all, or most of us are, part of): but dear old AHPb – and particularly dear old *S&S* – isn't. It, they, somehow stuck to their guns. Sometimes you're better off remaining the 'uncarved block', and in that way you avoid, as the Nobel laureate would put it, 'sucking the blood out of the genius of generosity'.

Professionally, I later myself became part of the development of Humanistic Psychology in the Southwest of England, setting up a centre that was specifically Humanistic Psychology-based, teaching and running courses in Humanistic Psychology, Gestalt Therapy and Humanistic Counselling, developing many fantastic relationships and friendships along the way, and having a lot of fun running courses and groups in ways that didn't forsake the kind of spirit, vivacity, serious and reverent – and irreverent –

playfulness and experiential immediacy that I'd first discovered for myself all those years ago.

Also, I was delighted to be involved in co-editing two books on Humanistic Psychology with Richard and Jennifer, and also co-editing the journal itself with Richard and Jennifer, with Richard and more recently with Gillian (Proctor). And now, in the later years of my career, I've gone back to offering what first was offered to me: Gestalt Therapy groups for personal development with no reading, no books and no certificates in sight. So, full circle for me in my nearly 50 years since *Verbatim* first fell into my lap, and 50 years now to dear old *S&S*, which didn't look like it would always make it to 50, but certainly has done under the inspired editorship of Richard and the wonderfully supportive AHPb Board: to all of whom I raise a glass and toast 'Many Happy Returns' for your pending 50th birthday, and many more years to come!!

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3. David Kalisch and Julian Nangle in animated conversation at John Rowan's 90th birthday celebration

MAXINE LINNELL

> I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now.
>
> Bob Dylan, 1964

Looking back is overrated. Thinking about the ten years when I was the Commissioning Editor for *Self & Society*, I have pockets of memories rather than anything linear or very specific.

Meetings, of course. Like most voluntary organisations, a sense of getting by, scraping through, in terms of energy and resources. Initially I had a slightly grandiose approach to doing the job, which shows in my first editorial in 1998, where I addressed the issue of pacifism and Humanistic Psychology from a home-made soapbox. I don't remember writing it, and I'm slightly in awe of the person who did.

As time went by, I discovered the editor's approach to getting copy. There were friendly conversations which inevitably led to 'Would you be interested in writing about that for *Self & Society*?'. I enjoyed making that space available for people's voices and experience. It's a wonderful opportunity to follow up on interests and passions. I met and worked with some great people. Inevitably, it wasn't always like that.

As a home, AHP seemed like a slightly anarchic outliers' cabin, still based in the adventures and risks that come with pioneering. That suited me, and I loved the exciting personal work I engaged in myself, as client and as therapist. It changed my life, except of course when it didn't. I look back now on the gaps there were, as well as the abundance. I resisted the idea of professionalising personal development, making it an academic activity, enclosing it with rules and regulations. And now here we are in that comparative safety, perhaps with a more mechanistic and medicalised approach to being human. It's more a fortress than a cabin. I've benefited from all that, too – the anti-depressants when needed and the recognition of neurodiversity and trauma. Living with overwhelming grief when my son died in 2010, I felt the basic human love and connection which shine through any set of practices, labels and beliefs.

My best memories are of the festivals. I've never enjoyed a conference, though I've tried. My socialising is intense, and I thrive on connection, but my experience of conferences was a bit like being on Zoom – a virtual replica of connection, missing out the messiness and riches of bodies and senses. Safe-ish, and easy to leave. The whole conference format seemed to create that shape. They were held in sterile buildings where nature might be a potted plant in the corner, if you were lucky. Pre-set times dictated endings and beginnings.

Julian (Nangle) had been part of Dance Camps and I'd been to Voice Camps. They seemed to be a far more wholesome version of the hippy community of my early twenties. Julian had the vision of creating something with that essence for an AHP Gathering, and I loved the idea. We wanted speakers to be part of the whole event. Everyone would endure/experience the compost toilets and the camping and the weather. The gathering wouldn't be only about the content, but the process. We'd be united in whatever stresses that caused, and we'd be closer through the vulnerabilities of mud and mess. And it happened, thanks to Julian's passion and skill, and many other people's contributions. We sat on straw bales in a big dark marquee in the rain. We talked. We invited Seize the Day to play for the evening, and their song 'Flying' resulted in a decision not to use aeroplanes, which has continued to be a part of who I have become. We dressed down in wellies, we dressed up from the costume box. I was entranced to find the worlds that mattered so deeply to me, music, the political, mystical, psychological, physical, natural, linked together into a community I could manage for a few days.

Of course it wasn't enough. It didn't change the world, and it didn't include everyone who should be included. But I forgot the words on all the pages, the talks, the meetings, those sixtyish copies of *S&S*. The memories of those festivals are still here, and I cherish them and everyone who gave them life.

This is from my final editorial, in 2008:

> This might be a reason to fight for the survival of psychotherapies which can tolerate the unknown, which are not only dedicated to a smiley face, and the absence of labels like anxiety and depression. Anxiety and depression are part of the richness of being human, of living with the unbearable puzzle

> of life and death, if only we can hold them in the mandala.

I'm amazed that I wrote this now. Do I know more, or just something different? That idealist has been grounded in lived experience, and I know less and less.

My own life is very much changed. Seven of my books have been published, and I've taught creative writing for some years. I'm loving exploring textile art, and I've let go of the big ideas and ambitions. There are hens and vegetables in the garden, and desultory efforts to live as sustainably as I can.

I don't really know who AHP is now. But I'm glad to have been a small part of a small part of its life, and I wish you well.

Some Personal Reflections on 50 years of *Self & Society*

JENNIFER MAIDMAN

In 1973, the year *Self & Society* first launched in the UK, I was 15 years old. I had no idea that Humanistic Psychology even existed, but with hindsight I can see its influence was already shaping the ideas I had about myself and the society in which I lived.

I grew up in East London; I was both confused and curious about aspects of my own being-in-the-world from an early age. The term 'transgender' hadn't even been invented yet, but that's what I was. I knew from infancy onwards that something didn't feel right; still, I couldn't find any external reference point for my dysphoric feelings, not in my family or at school, nor in my environment or in the media. As a child I wondered, was there *anyone* else like me in the world? Was my experience, of an inner life at odds with my physical self, completely unique and strange? Later I learned that a few trans-sexual people did exist, but were stigmatised, caricatured or attacked. Thus it was that I internalised a great deal of shame during childhood, and resolved to keep my unacceptable and dangerous thoughts and feelings secret. At the same time, I had a desperate need for connection and authenticity. Fortunately, I discovered music, which to some extent broke my isolation. It probably saved my life, and became both a deep passion and a lifelong career.

Meanwhile, even to a child in the relatively staid neighbourhood where I grew up, the sense that some sort of social revolution was underway was palpable. From the mid-sixties onwards, everywhere you looked – in music, art, literature and politics – there was, to quote Thunderclap Newman's big hit, 'Something in the Air'. And a part of that 'something' was, I believe, the pervasive influence that Humanistic Psychology (HP) had been exerting on American and European culture since the 1950s. 'All You Need is Unconditional Positive Regard' might not have quite the same catchy ring as 'All You Need is Love', but weren't Carl Rogers and the Beatles ultimately talking about the same thing? And to be fair, Rogers and the other pioneers of HP had got there first, and were a bit more specific. Still, it was the Beatles and many other artists who picked up on the *Zeitgeist* and took it on to the stage. For the first time in history, via technology and new channels of mass communication, an optimistic message of love, fellowship, individuality and human potential was reaching billions all over the world. It was an exciting time. Yet still, there I was, a mixed-up trans kid, entering puberty, feeling all wrong, and wondering what on earth I could do about it. Where did I fit in?

My first contact with elements of HP came via the local library. Having failed to find any reference to people like me in the 24-volume encyclopaedia which took pride of place in my parents' home, I began to explore the psychology section at the library. I tried Freud, but it seemed dry and obtuse to me back then. Jung? – too vague and too much religion (though I love Jung now). I was looking for

answers, and I found them, or at least thought I had, in two authors in particular: Arthur Janov and R.D Laing. Laing's emphasis on destigmatising out-of-the-ordinary experience and allowing a process of healing to unfold, resonated, although he did seem a little bleak at times. But it was Janov's books which inspired me most. He wrote with such confidence and optimism. For a while I really believed he'd found the cure for just about everything; surely that would include whatever it was that was ailing me?

The problem, as Janov saw it, was that most of us grow up in less-than-optimum conditions, and experience at best a deficit regarding our physical and emotional needs, and at worst active abuse and trauma. I couldn't quite work out precisely where it was that my generally loving and supportive parents might have gone wrong, but I was sure that they must have done something fairly awful to precipitate my state of confusion. When I heard John Lennon's extraordinarily raw and intimate 'primal album', Plastic Ono Band, recorded after therapy with Janov, I was completely sold. I convinced myself that Janov's therapy was the only way to get to the bottom of things.

It would be a few years before I finally made it to the Primal Institute in Los Angeles at the age of 20, but when I did, the therapy changed my life, though not necessarily in the ways I had hoped or expected. I did a great deal of intensive individual therapy, but it was the primal groups which I remember most vividly: sometimes 30 or 40 of us in the room, showing up with our real, mixed-up, wounded selves, warts and all, and discovering that this was actually OK. The way out of the hurt was to feel it and let it go. As a child I'd never dreamed such authentic encounter was possible, or even desirable. Post-primal, I was still transgender but now at least I had some measure of self-acceptance, my identity wasn't a secret any more, and I knew from personal experience that human beings didn't have to spend their lives hiding from themselves and each other. Another world was possible.

Yet as *Self & Society* entered it's second decade, I still didn't realise that Humanistic Psychology was 'a thing', despite the profound influence it had already had on my life. Some may disagree, but having spent time with Art Janov, talked with him, and undergone the therapy he developed, I believe he was fundamentally a humanistic practitioner and thinker who wanted his patients to flourish and become 'fully functioning' in every sense. On paper his writings may seem a little dogmatic and his methods harsh by present-day standards – he believed the human organism doesn't give up its neurosis without a fight – but in person I found him a gentle, empathic soul. Primal therapy may have been idealistic, naïve and overly sure of itself (as was I), but it was grounded in a profoundly humanistic philosophy: that idea that human beings are basically good and capable of self-healing, growth and self-actualisation, given the right conditions of unconditional acceptance, honesty and emotional connection. And Primal therapy, though it may have looked and sounded very different, shared philosophical roots with Carl Rogers' work on the 'core conditions' of Empathy, Congruence and Unconditional Positive Regard.

Carl Rogers' work was to shape my next encounter with Humanistic Psychology a few years later, though not initially through his own books, but via the work of Dave Mearns and Brian Thorne, whose *Person Centred Counselling in Action* was a core text on my first counselling course. Rogers' theories were a revelation to me. By that time I had come out to the world as transgender, though it would be a few more years before I formally transitioned. I also had a successful career in music; I'd toured the world, played on hit records and made it on to 'Top of the Pops' and 'The Old Grey Whistle Test'. Despite all that conventional success, however, I often suffered with a painful sense of being 'less than...'. I felt like an outsider, an alien, and I still feared drawing too much attention to myself. Rogers' ideas, particularly the concept of 'conditions of worth', served as a key to unlock an understanding of how the hostile, stigmatising cultural environment in

which I'd grown up had negatively impacted my self-image and my relationships with others. As a trans person, I had a deeply internalised sense of inferiority and shame. For the first nine years of my life, homosexuality was still illegal. Trans-sexual people were seen as deluded, our identities pathologised as a 'disorder'. Primal therapy had cleared away a lot of emotional baggage, but this stuff wasn't so much emotional as *existential and spiritual.*

During *Self & Society*'s third decade, I spent seven years in weekly integrative, humanistic therapy with a wonderful counsellor who supported me through my gender reassignment, and I did a three-year training to qualify as a humanistic therapist myself.

I think it was around 2007 that I became aware of a government plan to regulate psychotherapists and counsellors under the Health Professions Council. This struck me as highly inappropriate. Therapy had always seemed to me to be a collaborative adventure, a 'coming alongside' type of activity, rather than something one person did to another. The idea that it could be forced to conform to a set of rules laid down by a state-sanctioned body was anathema to me. It was like regulating musicians or poets. I joined a new organisation calling itself the Alliance for Counselling and Psychotherapy, which strongly opposed HPC regulation. I soon learned about some of the 'turf wars' within the profession which had arguably helped precipitate the push for state recognition. In the end, the Alliance won the argument and HPC regulation was abandoned in favour of a form of 'light touch' regulation via the existing professional bodies.

It was through the Alliance that I met many amazing people, including Richard House, Denis Postle, Andrew Samuels, Andy Rogers and Lucy Scurfield. I also began to write about counselling and therapy for journals, and eventually found myself co-editing *Self & Society* with Richard and David Kalisch. The three of us also co-edited and contributed to two books – *The Future of Humanistic Psychology* for PCCS Books, and later the completely updated and revised *Humanistic Psychology: Current Trends and Future Prospects* for Taylor and Francis. Although I'm no longer a practising counsellor – I'm too busy making music – I remain a member of AHPb and an associate editor of *S&S*. Circumstances dictated this piece be written at short notice and it may seem a little fragmented, but I hope it conveys at least a flavour of the myriad ways in which Humanistic Psychology has woven itself into the fabric of one life.

Given the undoubtedly (in my view) huge influence of HP, I used to think it odd that it didn't have a higher public profile, or that organisations such as AHPb didn't have massive memberships. Were we doing something wrong? As I wrote this it struck me that things are actually exactly as one might expect, and as they should be, given that humanistic values emphasise co-operation over competition, equality over hierarchy, and diversity over conformity. HP was never about dominance; it was always about influence and soft power – a balancing act by the so-called 'Third Force'. Even within the humanistic field, different tribes have always existed; pluralism is very much on the rise. Rogers' core conditions are so universally recognised that some say 'We're all humanistic now'. Beyond the therapy field, the term 'Person-centred' is ubiquitous within the caring professions. So Humanistic Psychology is arguably just as powerfully influential as it has ever been – it's just not always obvious. You might say that HP has gone viral. To quote Jeff Beck's 'Hi Ho Silver Lining', it's 'everywhere and nowhere, baby, that's where it's at'. As such, its onward march in one guise or another looks pretty unstoppable.

So, happy coming 50th birthday, *Self & Society*, and here's to another 50 years!

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25–30 Years with AHP

JULIAN NANGLE

I cannot remember the year exactly, but it was around the time Andrew Samuels' book *The Father* was published, possibly 1988. I attended a talk Andrew gave. I was living in Dorset where I had recently moved with my wife Anna. We were bringing up five children between us, and I was beginning training as a counsellor, while selling rare books as means for us all to survive.

At Andrew Samuels' talk I remember picking up a copy of *Self & Society* at the back of the room and reading a piece by John Rowan about the importance of self-accreditation. I had already started seeing a few clients as part of my training, and the media was full of the importance of formal accreditation. My gut instincts at the time were against this, and there, written with the clarity of translucent water, were John Rowan's words saying exactly what I believed and felt myself; to be a counsellor of any worth, surely one has to know this, but not in a Jungian inflated way – rather, in a grounded, self-aware way. I joined AHP immediately and attended the conferences when I could, with an enthusiasm that had been missing in my life. I felt I had found my therapeutic tribe.

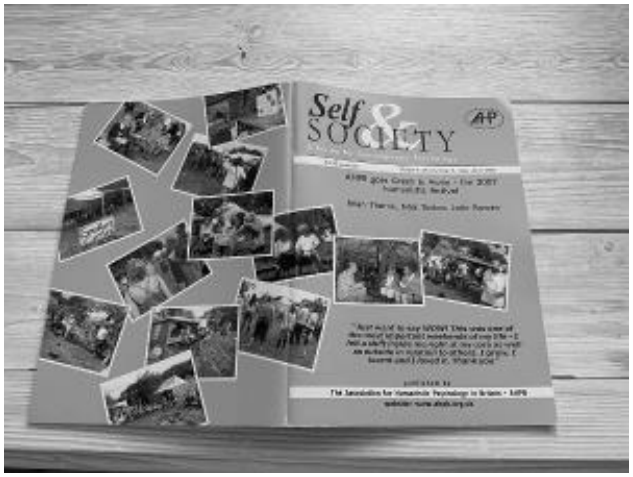
In the early 1990s I started writing about my own experiences of being a counsellor and submitted some of these 'essays' to Fran Mosley and John Button, who at this time were the editors of *Self & Society*. To my delight, Fran agreed to publish some of them.

Moving forward a decade, I became more involved with AHP and found myself offering to organise a slightly different kind of AHP 'conference'. The germ of this idea came from something Anna and I had been experiencing every year during the summer holidays. During the 1990s and the naughties, we and our five children had been spending the summer holidays at Dance Camp East in East Anglia. Here we found like-minded people camping out in circles and sitting round camp fires into the night, all with the backdrop of dance and music workshops. These were truly halcyon days, where children could play happily but independently from their parents, within a safe space.

It occurred to Anna and myself that AHP could benefit hugely from such an approach, and we asked Maxine Linnell, then editor of *S&S*, if she thought the idea of running a conference along these lines might prove popular. Maxine grasped the suggestion with both hands; indeed, without Maxine, the Green and Away Festivals, as they became known, would not have happened at all. It was because of Maxine's contacts that we were able to book the venue, too.

You can see, below, the cover of *S&S* for the winter issue of 2007, edited by Maxine, in which participants' reactions to the first festival

are recorded.



4. The cover of *Self & Society*, winter issue, 2007

When I look back on the three festivals Anna and I helped to bring about, each one attracting around 100 people, I do feel a level of pride. We even made a £4,000 profit from the first festival. I feel huge gratitude for all the people who came to the festivals and also for all those who helped to put them on – Maxine (who has remained a good friend) and Sue Orton especially. I feel this gratitude also because I learnt so much through the experience of the festivals themselves.

Among the many contributors to the two festivals at Green and Away (2007 and 2010) and the 2008 Festival at The Leela Centre near Gillingham in Dorset, I remember Brian Thorne, John Rowan, Dina Glouberman, Andrew Samuels, Nick Totton, Julian Harrow, Jenny Nicholson (Joanna Macy's work), Guy Gladstone, Martin Wilks (meditation), Henry Whitfield (from TIR), Leo Rutherford, Sue Orton, Nick and Jane Wise (their unforgettable drumming and singing workshops), my wife Anna (Chi Kung), Joy the storyteller, Zita Cox, Jocelyn Chaplin, Ba Wheeler (Taize), and I do not forget Seize the Day (suggested by Maxine, I believe), whose music was way ahead of its time, singing about climate change and other such matters. One of their songs, 'Globalisation', still reverberates round my brain. Also their song 'Flying', which questioned whether or not we can continue to fly while the planet burns.

There were other therapists, of course – too many for my mind to recall, who contributed hugely to the success of the festivals. However, one name remains firmly embedded in my mind – that of the founder of *Self & Society*, Vivian Milroy. I remember him break-dancing at one committee meeting and then turning up for the first Green and Away Festival with his tent, aged 91. The fact that everyone was knee high in mud did not deflect his enthusiasm and encouragement.

One of the best innovations we had at the festivals was 'Home Groups', which allowed participants to share any joys or struggles they encountered during the festival. It also allowed for firm and long-lasting friendships to be forged. Each group was made up of approximately ten people, who would meet up twice a day for an hour.

Aside from these high points, there have been other conferences and meetings, in London and elsewhere, which have brought about important connections for me. I remember meeting the poet and seer, Jay Ramsay, at an AHP gathering in London, and later developing a strong friendship with him through attending a 'men's group' weekend which he hosted at Hawkwood College, Stroud. There was also a wonderful conference at Dartington where I remember sitting around a table with all the AHP luminaries; Jocelyn Chaplin, Dina Glouberman, Andrew Samuels and Elizabeth, the poet – oh, I wish I could remember her surname, she taught me so much! – feeling very lucky and not a little star struck.

At our conference in Leicester some time in the 90s, I had been asked to source a keynote speaker. A few years earlier I had done a course in Past Life Therapy, run by Roger Woolger. His book *Other Lives, Other Selves* had completely engrossed me. I thought this imaginative way of working would be of interest to our members, so I invited Roger to the conference.

The talk he gave flummoxed and surprised me.

He talked completely literally about past lives, and reincarnation, whereas at his course he had used the notion that if we allowed ourselves to be regressed we could find ourselves, through our imagination, in a past life we could believe we had lived before. He emphasised at the course that you did not have to believe in reincarnation for this Past Life Therapy to be useful. A key part of the therapeutic benefit of the regression comes when, with the help of the therapist, one is taken through the death of this previous life. It is at this point when the healing becomes relevant to our current life. At the conference, however, Roger memorably spoke from the viewpoint of total belief in reincarnation, which alienated a good number of his audience.

Judith Furner has remained a close friend after we worked together for several years, she as Treasurer and me as Administrator, trying to oversee the running of the Association during what proved to be a very wobbly and difficult time. Without Judith and Maxine alongside me at different times I do not believe I would have remained a member of AHP. Following the difficult time, during which Maxine resigned her post as editor, and others took over for a year or two, our current editor, Richard House, together with the AHPb committee, which included and still includes Dina Glouberman, took hold of matters in such a way as to, literally in my view, save the Association, taking the magazine partly online being the masterstroke. This has given some badly needed oxygen and buoyancy to our important ship of wisdom.

I look forward to AHP and *Self & Society* continuing in the important work they have undertaken these past 25 to 30 years, and I hope that occasionally I can contribute further to this work, including bringing the occasional poem to the pages of *Self & Society*.

I wish to save the final words on my involvement with AHP and *S&S* for John Rowan. For me he was a giant in the field of all things therapeutic, but especially in the field of humanistic therapy. His wonderful books and his early interest in Beat Poetry, however, sealed the deal for me with him. Without John I would never have joined AHP, and without John I would never have stayed in there. He and his wife Sue have been enormously supportive to me throughout my association with AHP and *S&S*, and I thank them for this, and salute John's memory.

John Heron and Medical Education

DENIS POSTLE

Charing Cross Hospital. Alternative Medicine Conference. I'm there because I'm researching a film about stress. A tall elegant man speaks eloquently without notes about the limitations of conventional medicine. One phrase rang out, 'zero responsibility elixirs'. This was my introduction to John Heron.

Richard House's request for articles for the *Self & Society* 50th anniversary issue coincided with the recovery of *Doctors*, a film I made about stress and distress in 1980. It was ITV documentary of the week and it featured six General Practitioners, a group of doctors in training and John Heron's approach to post-graduate medical education, specifically for GPs. Making this film was a life-changing moment for me. It introduced me to Humanistic Psychology as an extension to the meditation I had been practising for the previous ten years. I found what John Heron was doing, the research and education background to it at the University of Surrey, the Institute for the Development of Human Potential (IDHP), plus, not least, co-counselling, more interesting than film-making; and precipitating, after 25 years, a departure from broadcast media and entry into the universes of humanistic and other psychologies. The recovered film is available here: https://vimeo.com/576887905. It can be seen as

a celebration of Humanistic Psychology in action and of John Heron's contribution to it. A large part of the film is devoted to workshops and training situations in which six GPs share their experiences of stress and distress. These need to be seen and heard, but I feel that the transcript of John's numerous interventions about the practitioner role would be a welcome celebratory contribution to this anniversary issue of the journal.

Here are the sequences that John Heron contributes:

> Uh, I'll say one, two, three. Take a deep breath. And once the breath is in, a loud cry, throwing the arms and the body up with a loud noise. Yes, we'll do this about two or three times, so one, two, three. Breath in, Oh, and again, and again.
>
> It is interesting that many of the top helpers in our society are indeed killing themselves off in significant numbers. It's almost as if 'I', a helper, I'm not supposed to have problems and I became a helper in order not to notice I have problems; and now that I have got problems I can't allow myself to have them, I mustn't notice I've got them. I certainly can't tell anyone else because everyone thinks I shouldn't have problems, because I'm an important helper, and there is nothing I can do with it, there's no one I can go to, there's no one I can share my difficulties with.
>
> Just as you and I in our education had very little help, virtually no help at all in looking at our feelings and discovering what has happened to us in our life, our childhood, and how that has affected our current behaviour, very little help with our relationships with other people – doctors are the same with their undergraduate training. So, there's no help in their training in the undergraduate years with working on feelings, and looking at what goes on in relationships with people,
>
> The kind of rule, the unspoken rule, often sometimes is quite definitely spoken, but the kind of rule, the norm in the culture about feelings is control, the educational task is to cultivate the intellect and the incidental function of the intellect just to control feelings.
>
> And this really is about the only suggestion about feelings that our educational system gives people. Often quite indirectly, control your feelings.
>
> The doctor gets used to using the role to ask very direct questions to get information, uses the role to come up with a diagnosis, and uses the role to come up with a treatment, a prescription, and very little else. It's part of the time constraint of course for the average GP; it's also, I think, part of the education and the culture, to reduce the relationship to something that's very functional, that's very focused on bodily symptoms, very focused on physical treatment.
>
> Where it's appropriate to be caring, loving and affectionate, supportive, where what the human situation requires is reaching out to another person through touch, through my words, to be friendly, caring, supportive in a human way, I may simply be unable to move. Stuck?
>
> Yes, I mean literally physically unable to move together and emotionally unable to reach out, I'm frozen. I mean, I've seen this with many professional helpers where it is appropriate flexibly and awarely to reach out and care and support physically and verbally; [the] person is frozen, stuck and too embarrassed, and this is one example of distress distorting behaviour.
>
> What's required is a much greater flexibility, in which the doctor can be the healing authoritative figure who can diagnose and prescribe, as and when appropriate, and also at the other end of the spectrum can be eliciting, can draw the patient out, can give space, and indeed can enter into a kind of co-operative relationship with a patient, where two human beings are looking at the difficulties and the problems and the life situation of one of them, and looking at it in a co-operative way.
>
> Vulnerability seems to me to be one of the simple basic facts about the human condition,

that you and I as human beings are vulnerable. That we are vulnerable because we have bodies which can very easily be hurt or damaged, and our minds are vulnerable – we are vulnerable because we have thoughts and feelings.

Now this distress in our society is not sufficiently honoured: we don't sufficiently honour our vulnerability, we don't accept it, and I think the tendency in our culture is to hide vulnerability under the appearance of strength, rather than find strength in the acceptance of vulnerability.

Now, one of the things it seems to me about distress is to provide a system whereby you and I can meet and deal with our redundant distress emotions appropriately. We can find some time to deal with our grief or fear or anger that is catching up with us, as vulnerable human beings, and deal with it in the appropriate place and appropriate time and with an appropriate method.

I think you and I need this. I think everybody needs it as one tool of living, one way of living more effectively.

If you invite adults to loosen up their musculature, to engage in a variety of simple activities which loosen up the whole physical system through increasing the breathing rate and thrashing the limbs in various ways, and if those people are willing to be open to the emotional effects of doing it, the activity of the breathing and the rapid physical movement interrupts the tension and control. And as that tension, that physical tension and control are interrupted, a lot of hidden feeling emerges, cry, tremble, angry emotion surges up.

I think it is going to do two things: first of all, relieve the pressure, the compulsive driving energy of the distress, so instead of it being an energy within that's pushing and distorting behaviour into unacceptable forms, that energy is released, it relieves that internal pressure. And secondly, I think it gives the person more insight into what's happened to them in the past and how what's happened to them in the past is affecting behaviour now.

If I'm busy keeping some hurt down in here, then I can sustain that by getting into a job in which I am, as it were, keeping other people down, and keeping them in the patient role, keeping them in a dependent passive place, so I can endlessly turn attention away from my own hurt child by treating other people as, quotes, hurt children.

I think distress can distort behaviour and it can distort professional behaviour; so as a professional helper, as a doctor, I can treat my patients as dependent, helpless, powerless children and behave like an oppressive, slightly punishing parent.

That's just in the way I treat them and the way I greet them and the way I deal with them when I talk to them during the consultation, the way I treat them and greet them and talk to them during the examination, whatever that may be.

But I think there is a subtler thing, perhaps rather more serious: my actual therapeutic intervention can be punishing, I mean not intentionally, but the distress can displace in that way. So, things may occur like quite unnecessary and inappropriate investigations, quite unnecessary internal investigations, sending people to punitive referral agencies. That's to say, referring a patient to someone whom the doctor at some level knows is going to be rather difficult, or awkward and unpleasant about the condition which is being referred to that particular agency, or specialist, and prescribing pills which the doctor and/or the patient know to be useless or irrelevant, prescribing pills which have a particular punitive side-effect.

Now I'm not suggesting this occurs an enormous amount of the time, but the instances I've quoted are actually from doctors themselves, looking at their own experience and asking themselves, are there any things I do in relation to my patient in treating them that might be construed as punishing or punitive at the time, a kind of displacing – instead of kicking the cat, I take it out on a patient?

So those are some of the things that doctors have mentioned to me as possible contenders for this process.

Now this is going to sound rather shocking, but I remember a compulsively caring doctor who was getting into quite redundant kinds of involvement in work, doing too much work, colluding with too many patients' expectations and demands, being a very 'good boy' in relation to the patient. When invited in a workshop context to look at this, as it were, to explore it to take the lid off, he found that underneath was in fact a good deal of anger. It's a form of self-punishment, I mean compulsively helping other people in inappropriate ways, driving oneself to care and help and doing things that in a sense are really not in the best interests of either the patient or the helper, is a form of self-punishment. So, if I've got a lot of anger inside me, one way I can deal with it inappropriately and compulsively is to take it out on myself. Instead of discovering the anger and finding some way of dealing with it that's harmless, it rumbles around inside my system. I can either punish others with it, or compulsively drive myself, accuse myself, tell myself I'm not doing enough, perpetually feel guilty for not spending more hours working for, and with, other people.

I regard this as an educational activity, reclaiming the whole of my life, becoming aware of it, making it part of my total awareness of myself. It's not a psychotherapeutic activity, as some people think; it's something that you and I as human beings need to do as part of our life-long education and development.

Because if I understand now all that's happened to me and how it affects me now, this is why I think doctors need to do this, and they can start with what's going on in their professional work and widen it to what's going on in their personal lives, and take that back to some of its sources in the earlier parts of their lives. The life becomes complete, in time.
Bringing these feelings of fear, the grief, the anger to the fore, experiencing them and releasing them physically, I'm suggesting this is restorative, it's a healing process, it is healing the memories, it's taking the negative charge off them, healing the memories, and the process of healing the memories in the past ceases to haunt the present and distort it. I open up the past, I clean it up, and it becomes innocent in its effect on the present.

[So] that you and I and everybody is not haunted by old feelings, haunted by old events, haunted by ghosts of past experience that are always looming up on the fringes of our experience now, distorting what we think and say now.

Doctors is available online here: https://vimeo.com/576887905.

For other films by Denis Postle see https://denis.postle.net.

5. Denis Postle and Sue Rowan successfully ignoring the cakes and biscuits at John's 90th birthday celebration

GILLIAN PROCTOR

Humanistic Psychology is a home for me both professionally and personally, and has been for many decades. Carl Rogers' revolutionary approach to counselling and psychotherapy remains as counter-cultural today as when he first challenged the systems of power that positioned some as experts over the lives of others (for example, Rogers, 1978). The focus on unique individuals and autonomy, creativity and individuality are key foundational principles of Humanistic Psychology consonant with my ethics and values. Equally important to me is the postmodern focus on holding complexity, ambivalence, multiple ways of understanding ourselves and the world and a 'not knowing' approach (see Proctor et al., 2021). The values that underpin the humanistic approach for me include empathy, acceptance, authenticity, humility and love.

However, any psychological approach is in danger of missing several crucial other lenses to understand ourselves in the world, particularly sociological, existential and spiritual. I have argued that the focus on individual psyches and therapy as an individual solution can divert our attention from social and political issues (Proctor, 2006), and encourage blaming individuals for distress caused by inequalities, or just being human (e.g. dealing with death). For example, the notion of 'resilience', when used to imply an inner characteristic, serves to individualise and blame 'unresilient' people for how we deal with what life throws at us, rather than acknowledging the unfairness and inequalities in the different kinds of adversity we all face. A psychology that gets involved in helping people become more 'resilient' can only serve as an agent of social control, helping us to adjust to a 'sick' society.

In addition to a more traditional or modernist approach to science, through empiricism and research, Humanistic Psychology has simultaneously embraced other ways of knowing – intuitive, experiential or spiritual – and, indeed, the importance of not knowing or thinking we know. Being able to hold all of these diverse ways of thinking about and understanding ourselves and the world, using different lenses for different purposes and not prioritising or valuing any one above the others, has no doubt posed a threat to Humanistic Psychology. Not pursuing scientific status above all else has likely contributed to the marginalisation of the discipline in academia. Even though it's surely not the dominant discourse, the diverse ways that the underpinning values arise in so many different spheres, often in what people miss or are longing for, repeatedly point to our human condition as described by Humanistic Psychology and others.

A big strength of Humanistic Psychology, and in particular *Self & Society*, has been the ongoing links made with these other lenses, reminding us of the 'we' (not just the 'I's), our shared humanity and our interconnectedness with non-human parts of our world. From an existential perspective, our uniqueness as individuals is intricately connected to our facticity or contingency, where we are 'thrown' into the world with respect to our sociological positions within structures of inequality. These positions both limit and enable our opportunities for agency and shape our experiences. Understanding how we and others deal with our thrownness and the intersectionalities of our positions to create our own subjectivities and identities is a crucial bridge from our own internal psyches to the world in which we live. *Self & Society*, as it expresses through its name, has been a home for these connections for the last 50 years.

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Humanistic Psychology's Chief Task: To Reset Psychology on its Rightful Existential-Humanistic Base[1]

KIRK J. SCHNEIDER

While some in the field continue to believe that psychology proceeds purely on the basis of positivistic science (e.g. Baker et al., 2008), I contend that this is patently naive. Psychology was, and probably always will be, a philosophically based discipline. In this light, the field of psychology has actually been 'reset' many times over its relatively brief 100-year history, and this resetting has had as much to do with philosophical fashion as it has had to do with empirical evidence (see Kuhn, 1962).

The first time the field was reset was at the point where its standing as an explicit philosophy was replaced by its 'formalization' as an explicit laboratory science. This was the time when Wilhelm Wundt and his colleagues began basing psychology on the experimental method (or the philosophical approach of natural science) to evaluate laboratory findings. The second major time when psychology was reset was when psychoanalysis replaced laboratory science as the leading philosophical paradigm. This was a period, roughly the 1920s, when Freud and his colleagues emphasized the primacy of the so-called 'drive model' of human functioning over the conscious activities of laboratory investigation.

The third major period of philosophical resetting was the usurpation of the psychoanalytic model by the behavioral model, where only overt and measurable human actions were considered the domain of legitimacy. The fourth major period of resetting was spearheaded by cognitive science and the shift in emphasis from outward behavioral actions to inward informational processing. Now we are in a period where the predominant paradigm is quickly moving from cognitive science to neuroscience, from intellective processes to behavior–brain correlates.

So where does that bring us to at present? How should psychology be reset in the emerging era, and what role does that leave for Humanistic Psychology?

I believe that psychology should now be reset on its rightful base in existence. It is high time that psychology recognized what the great poets and thinkers the world over have recognized for centuries – that the main problem of the human being is the paradoxical problem: that we are both angels and food for worms; that we are suspended between constrictive and expansive worlds, and that we are both exhilarated and stupefied by this tension. The role this leaves for Humanistic Psychology is the role that William James so deftly set for it back in 1902. That was the year James wrote his book *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and called for a radically empirical, experientially informed inquiry into the human being's engagement with the world (Taylor, 2010).

I also believe that Humanistic Psychology's role today is commensurate with the existential-phenomenological-spiritual tradition of successors to James (see Mendelowitz & Kim, 2010), exemplified by Otto Rank (1924), Paul Tillich (1952), Martin Buber (1970), Rollo May (1981), R.D. Laing (1969), Ernest Becker (1973), and many others who called for a new 'whole-bodied' experience of inquiry and life. This whole-bodied psychology does not preclude other strands along its bandwidth, but it incorporates them as part of its awesome

tableau (on the psychology of awe, see Schneider, 2004, 2009, 2013).

In a nutshell then: The chief task for Humanistic Psychology going forward is to reset psychology on its rightful existential-humanistic base.

Note

1 This article is adapted from the Special Section: The 50th anniversary of JHP: Reflections on the state of the field, *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 51 (4), pp. 436–8. Copyright 2011 from Sage Publishing Co. It was reproduced in R. House, D. Kalisch & J. Maidman (eds), *Humanistic Psychology: Current Trends and Future Prospects* (pp. 213–17). London & New York: Routledge, 2018.

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My Journey with Humanistic Psychology

LUCY SCURFIELD

I believe AHPb is colluding with a prevailing culture that is gradually undermining Humanistic Psychology. I believe it needs to be a challenge to the status quo. It is this which I wish to explore here and will do so by reference to my own personal experience. What I am saying does not reflect the views of other Board members.

I knew nothing about Humanistic Psychology when, in 2014, Richard House, editor of *Self & Society*, asked people to join the AHPb Board. I thought I would apply! Having joined the Board it was suggested that I be chair. Something in it appealed to my political self, my sense of responsibility and a feeling that it could inform my further professional/personal development. But I would like first to give some context for my sense of how things are affecting me.

I grew up close to the heart of academic Cambridge. In those days, students wore their gowns. The divide of town and gown was clear and evident. It was made more so when I failed the 11-plus exam and went to a secondary modern school in another part of the city. I left school with scraped passes in the equivalent of five O-levels. I did improve these later, and went on to get an Ordinary National Diploma in Science, the equivalent of A-levels, but I believed that university wasn't for the likes of me, and that people who went to university had a secret I didn't share.

Eventually, as a young adult I moved to London where I discovered adult education, which was accessible to all regardless of background, and I felt some hope and excitement stirring in me. However, interesting employment that suited me proved elusive until I was asked to run a book department, on a part-time basis, in a wholefood shop. Initially I ordered books by academics. The proprietor told me to choose books by people writing from their first-hand personal experience. This was a turning-point for me in my sense of the quality of my enquiry about the world. Whilst employed in the book shop I found work gardening, and gradually became a freelance garden designer. This was my first experience of finding fulfilling employment.

Whilst continuing to work in London, I made a move to Norwich where I undertook a tour guide course at the Sainsbury Centre at the University of East Anglia. I received good feedback for my essays, which were at undergraduate level. For the first time – in my mid-40s – I thought that I might be capable of going to university. I applied to do an art history degree and, on the basis of an essay, was accepted.

However, I felt like a fish out of water amongst my younger peers, who seemed to have assumed that it was the obvious next step. I needed to talk to somebody and eventually became aware of the counselling service, which was free to students, and hesitatingly I enquired about it. It took a while to find somebody with whom I felt comfortable, but once I had, it was wonderful having access to someone who listened attentively. It was very shocking when I understood they were leaving UEA because they had completed their training. Fortuitously they were from London, where I was able to continue seeing them.

This experience led me to think that I would like to be a counsellor. I felt so embarrassed at the idea of this that it took me a long time to voice my desire. The response was, 'Norwich is flooded with therapists'. So I thought I'd be a horticultural therapist, whatever that meant! My vision was of a garden where people could come however they happen to be – helping in the garden or sitting talking with me in a private space.

I had undertaken counselling training with Matrix College in Norwich. I had a sense that I could be myself and develop my own approach to my work as an integrative practitioner. As it was local and part-time, I could afford it whilst working. The course required ongoing personal therapy which immediately made sense to me. After a faltering start I settled on seeing Jill Hall. She happened to be within walking distance, and was interested in the garden project, which I called Strong Roots! I relied on my intuitive sense to lead me forwards and my project was given charitable status.

This was the first time I picked up the changing culture with regard to training schools for counselling and therapy. Matrix became a UKCP-accredited college affiliated to Middlesex University, and students were required to see therapists and supervisors who were UKCP-registered. However, I was permitted to continue seeing Jill although she was not on the register. Also, Matrix made clear that practitioners might find it easier to gain employment with a degree than without. So I decided to do the B.Sc. degree. But surely counselling is not a science. Also, I couldn't see why practitioners would need to have a Masters degree in order to be a psychotherapist.

Much of the course was centred around written work referencing other practitioners who had written books about counselling and psychotherapy. Personal exploration seems to have been demoted, with priority given to essay writing. Jill tells me that when she was invited by Matrix as a guest tutor to do some body work and groups of a purely experiential nature, it was understood that what was required of the students was to share whatever feelings and concerns arose in them. They just had to be themselves. Very likely they would be asking the same of the clients that sought to have

therapy with them when they became practitioners.

Having completed my training with Matrix College, in order to retain my accreditation I had each year to submit a record of Continuing Professional Development, a report from my supervisor and pay for the privilege of supplying this paperwork to somebody who had never met me and, on the basis of this submission, decided whether I was fit to practise. Part of the paperwork was professional indemnity insurance. This posed another problem. In the event of a complaint from a client, I understood that once I'd contacted the insurance company, I had to cease contact with the client. This would make it impossible to address the issue of concern face to face with the individual and see if the issue could be resolved in a far more creative and satisfactory way for the client, possibly with another person present to give further feedback if the client so wished.

After several years, for the reasons outlined above, I decided to deregister from UKCP, which I view as posing a threat to client safety by providing no support at all to practitioners whilst making money out of the people they accredit without ever meeting them. My concern is also with AHPb. I believe the Association is colluding with this academic slant in the field of Humanistic Psychology. It could be very intimidating for some people who would otherwise be drawn to train as a therapist, or to share their views and concerns by contributing to *Self & Society*. I said at the beginning that I felt, as a young person, that I wasn't qualified to join the academic world, and I fear that others might well perceive *Self & Society* to be for those who have an academic background and not for those who don't, as many contributors include lots of referencing and provide their academic credentials. The question arises about the impression this could now give to readers and potential contributors. I know that I would be deterred from engaging with it if I was a newly trained practitioner today. It may also serve to reinforce the notion that individuals cannot legitimately use the term 'psychotherapist' without providing evidence of an academic nature, even though psychotherapy is founded on personal exploration with the relationship being the cornerstone of the work.

l believe that the AHPb needs to challenge the status quo both through face-to-face experiential events and through articles in *Self & Society*. Contributions from people of all walks of life are important in this process.

6. Some of the humanistic revellers at John Rowan's 90th birthday celebration at London's Open Centre in early 2015

The Good Old Days?? Nostalgic Reflections

ROBIN SHOHET

Summer 1970. I am living in a spiritual community in Kensington and I hear of an exciting event in central London (Inn on the Park Hotel?) where American psychology gurus are hosting what I remember as the first Humanistic Psychology one-day conference in the UK. It is facilitated, I think, by Michael Murphy, the founder of Esalen, the Californian therapy/growth centre. I am thrilled, having read about the likes of Perls, Rogers, Alan Watts, that I will be getting a taste of this pioneering work. I do not have many memories of the day –

just perhaps a hundred or so people in a large meeting room. I guess I am boasting. I was there.

Soon after, I trot off to India following the very fashionable hippy trail to find truth, and come back depressed. I had tried for a spiritual bypass, to avoid the inevitable messy childhood, and found myself at Quaesitor, I think the first growth centre in the UK, followed closely by Community. What a cornucopia of events, inspired by both the Humanistic Psychology movement and returning disciples from Rajneesh, as he was called then before he changed his name to Osho. Wearing orange was the uniform, which later turned to red. And so much was available. Co-counselling, Reichian body work, encounter groups, psychodrama, Gestalt, rebirthing, dynamic meditation, bioenergetics. I felt Quaesitor throb with excitement. My first group was a 48-hour marathon (three hours sleep allowed), some of it in the nude, where the aim was to break down defences, all for the princely sum of £25.

Sexual boundaries were blurred, and what was considered acceptable in those days would now be considered abusive. Everything has its shadow side, and I think some of the male group leaders exploited their position. But there was a freedom to explore for which I will always be grateful. At that time, there was a weekly magazine called *Time Out* which advertised events in London, and I remember a regular advert by a woman called Dina Glouberman advertising Open Circle groups. I rang her up once (1975) and liked the sound of her voice, but never got to her groups, although I was invited to join her staff running groups on the Greek island of Skyros in the mid-80s, and we have become good friends.

As I write, much as I am enjoying reminiscing I am wondering what relevance this might have to people who were not there. I do not want this to simply be an old boys' and girls' piece of nostalgia, although of course it will be that in part. There is value in looking at our roots, and newly qualified people are shocked at how cavalier some of us were. But the history can also be a source of inspiration, which is what I would like.

In 1976, having had a couple of years of being a groupie – rebirthed (thank you, Frank Lake), co-counselled (thank you, John Heron) psychodramatised (thank you, Joel, now Ari, Bedaines), I felt strong enough to apply for the post of residential social worker in a half-way house for people coming out of psychiatric hospital. It was run as a therapeutic community, and was one of (at the time) 21 houses that belonged to the Richmond Fellowship, an organisation started by a Dutch woman, Elly Jansen. She took the idea of the Mental Health Act in 1959 which suggested treating mental illness in the community to heart, and she bought large properties to house ex-psychiatric patients, recovering alcoholics and drug users.

Our house was the senior staff training house, so staff from other houses came to our house for training, and they, as well as the residents, got the fair share of Humanistic Psychology philosophy and techniques thrown at them, as Peter Hawkins, Joan Wilmot and I were all advocates. I remember rebirthing a female resident through my legs – now, that would be considered totally inappropriate. I guess our innocence and enthusiasm saved us – that, on top of the culture being much more open. The lawyers had not yet taken up residence in the way we thought.

In the early 80s I was asked to write a book on dreams – a huge venture, as my last writing was at university where I had failed my history A-level because I struggled with writing essays. To gather information I had the idea of editing a special edition of the magazine *Self & Society*. In those days it came out monthly, and brought us news and articles from the Humanistic Psychology movement. The editorial board met, as I remember, in Vivian Milroy's offices in Southwark, and Vivian and John Rowan were founding fathers who decided what would go in. All very laid back (see

https://tinyurl.com/m66yfh4k for more). Deep appreciation for what they have contributed.

After doing my first special edition on dreams, I did another on dreams, two on supervision, one on revenge, one on forgiveness, and one on the pioneering work of South West London College counselling course, where students could devise their own syllabus and at the end their work was self and peer assessed, not graded by the tutors. I was in my element.

No reminiscence would be complete, in my view, without mentioning Dina Glouberman again. She with her ex-husband founded what I think was the first growth centre combined with holiday in Europe on the Greek island of Skyros, offering all sorts of personal growth courses. I know hundreds of lives, including mine, were changed – the combination of sun, sea, and deep personal work was fertile soil.

In the early 90s there was talk of 1992 – the date when the European Union would not allow the very British laissez-fare approach to accreditation continue, and we would all have to be regulated. I think the British Association for Counselling (BAC), as it was known in those days, was still small, but I heard that to be accredited you would have to have insurance. This did not seem right to me – my view is that we are asking our clients to trust us, but in taking out insurance we are at some level saying we don't trust them. I also did not see what insurance had to do with accreditation.

So, I helped to organise two conferences to look at the dynamics of accreditation – not for or against, but the dynamics. Through the then Norwich Collective, we ran the conferences in Cambridge and I remember a simulation where we gave tokens to people playing clients, therapists, supervisors and trainers. The money landed up with the trainers, who introduced longer and longer training requirements. Enough said. The shadow side of accreditation is that it is good for business. Jill Hall was a founder-member of the Norwich Collective, and is another of us oldies. How strange to be describing myself in those terms, realising now that I knew far less than I thought I did which, paradoxically, is a comfort. Then, I had the certainty that comes from ignorance and can be quite brittle and unnecessarily abrasive.

Out of these conferences the IPN was born – the Independent Practitioners Network, which provided an alternative to the fast-growing organisations like BACP and the UK Council for Psychotherapy which were moving into the accreditation field. The principles of the IPN were very humanistic – peer groups would form and they would be responsible for each others' work. So, if a complaint was made against one member, it would be against the whole group. In that way, it was in everybody's interest to keep up standards.

An extra learning opportunity was that a member of one group would visit another group, both to challenge (a different perspective) and to take learning back to their own group. Oh yes, and there were annual gatherings to share the learning and to feel a sense of belonging to a community – a far cry from the impersonal procedure of the likes of BACP. In fact I was once asked to join the ethics committee of BACP, and I was puzzled, given my position. The answer was that we would rather have you on the inside pissing out, than on the outside pissing in. I did not manage to join even with the grandfather clause, because I couldn't find my degree certificates from 1969, and so I could not (would not) complete the paperwork. I see that the pioneering days could not have continued in the same vein, and accrediting bodies could not not develop, so I have softened my stance on the need for external accreditation. They have their place and value, but I have felt lucky enough to be able to bypass them. To continue the analogy, I now see myself has having dug my own latrine (more of this later). Two exercises that I devised in preparation for the early 1990s conferences are worthy of mention. The first was a reverse accreditation where to pass, I had to convince the accrediting body how bad my practice was, and to fail me that I would have to prove how good I was. It

was a very interesting process, a double paradox, which we set to with relish. A total reversal of the usual way of doing things, where we try and big ourselves up and the other side takes pot-shots. A very unhealthy dynamic which has power overtones and does not seem collaborative. Having said that, I know people who have been glad to go through the formal accreditation process, so everything has its place. And there is also a shadow side of IPN which can be collusive and disorganised, and attract a certain adolescent rebelliousness from which I am not immune. Suffice to say that I dredged up all the faults I could find in my practice as I was determined to pass, and the following week six clients confronted me on the issues I had brought up. It's as if they were saying, 'You might at last be ready to hear what we could not tell you'.

The other exercise was that people simply talked about what they loved about their work and their love of their work for three minutes. A very moving experience. Perhaps not the only way to accredit but to stand alongside any other methods.

A final word on accreditation. In 1979 Peter Hawkins, Joan Wilmot and I (later joined by Peter's wife, Judy Ryde) started the Centre for Supervision and Team Development, mostly teaching supervision as well as some consultancy with teams and organisations. Joan and I separated from Peter and Judy largely due to differing views on this topic. Our view was, and still is, that we do not have a formal accrediting process; that we tell our students right from the beginning that they have passed and will get the certificate as long as they have full attendance. If there were to be a question of failure, it would be us who had failed because we had not found a way of bringing out the best in them. (I have written about this elsewhere – how difficult it is for people to believe that this does not automatically mean a drop in standards (Shohet, 2019).

We were once put to the test quite forcibly when, towards the end of the 12 days (four modules of three days each) we realised there was one student whom we could not pass. She was brilliant, but severely critical, and we felt we would be intimidated by her, never mind her supervisees. We had missed it, taken in by her intuition and perceptiveness. We went home and worked on our critical selves, the part in us that could intimidate. The next day, almost by magic, she shared about her early childhood which made perfect sense of this critical, intimidating part of her. She softened, and we were able to enjoy her wisdom. Coincidence? Perhaps. Or perhaps not. We think courses mirror the dynamics of their trainer/founders, and we are committed to that approach which asks us to continually keep on our toes.

In the last 20 years, Joan and I have been very influenced by the philosophy of Appreciative Inquiry, which looks at what is working in any system rather than focusing on what is not working. It is very much in line with the principles of Humanistic Psychology, seeing the potential in each and everyone, and with this focus helping it to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. 'Life is a mystery to be embraced rather than a problem to be solved' is one of their sayings. We refer people to the work of Ben Zander, an orchestra conductor, who starts his courses by telling everyone they have got an 'A'. Our job, we say, is to bring out everyone's A-ness (pun not originally intended, but it is now). This of course does not just refer to the therapy world but to all walks of life, as we imagine giving everyone we meet an 'A', even, or especially, those we have taken agin.

A final word on love and fear. I have been very influenced by *A Course in Miracles*, which goes into this in great detail. 'Teach only love for that is who you are' is one of its sayings. I have watched how much fear is coming into the therapy/counselling world, and it distresses me. Fear of a complaint, of being sued, of not getting accredited, of jumping correctly through hoops. I see that this is not only the therapy world, but part of the *Zeitgeist*. In our training we help people to really inquire into their fears with the aim of being less run by them, and to

remind them of our belief in love being behind everything (Shohet, 2008a). Humanistic Psychology has given me the means to express this.

So very finally, as well as an appreciation to Humanistic Psychology and to all those people I have mentioned, thank you Richard House (who also helped organise the Cambridge accreditation conferences) for following in the footsteps of Vivian Milroy and John Rowan in keeping this publication alive.

It is usual to give a biography at the end of an article, but there does not seem much more to add than the quote from *A Course in Miracles* above. Teach only love, for that is what you are.

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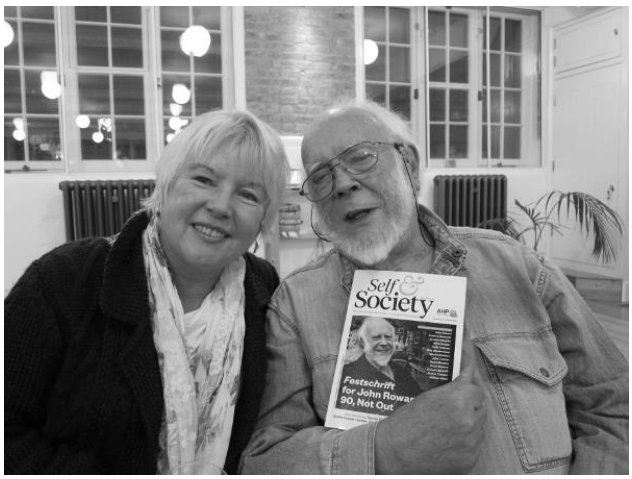
Stone Zander, R. & Zander, B. (2000). *The Art of Possibility*. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School Press; see also https://www.youtube.com/watch?. (Caveat: Zander imitates an accent which can give offence, but the essence of the message is worth taking.)



7. Sue and John Rowan parading and enjoying John's *S&S Festschrift* special issue, Open Centre, 2015

MAGGIE TAYLOR-SANDERS

I am sending this for your Symposium, from my favourite 'Geologian', Thomas Berry (as he describes himself). It certainly implies that any future for Humanistic Psychology has to shift its focus to UP, Universe Psychology. I think it's from his book *The Dream of the Earth*, or maybe *The Universe Story…*. If I was to send you anything more than this, it would definitely be a longer, less cogent, version of this quotation. In my view, this is our only hope for the future. We need to regain our rightful, interdependent, not-separate-or-superior place, if we are to survive and realise how the health of our psychology is totally dependent on the well-being of everything here with us.

> The Universe story is the quintessence of reality. We perceive the story. We put it in our language, the birds put it in theirs, and the trees put it in theirs. We can read the story of the Universe in the trees. Everything tells the story of the Universe. The winds tell the story, literally, not just imaginatively. The story has its imprint everywhere, and that is why it is so important to know the story. If you do not know the story, in a sense you do not know yourself; you do not know anything.

Hope and Resistance – a Journal's Tasks

BRIAN THORNE

I have a memory of standing on a railway platform in Stoke-on Trent during the late autumn of 1973. I am in a state of hopeful excitement because I am bound for the metropolis in order to participate in a somewhat mysterious group experience at Quaesitor, an already well-known and faintly notorious Growth Centre. In my briefcase there is a copy of Number 9 of the first volume of a new journal bearing the name *Self and Society*, and announcing itself as a 'channel of communications for the Human Potential movement including studies in humanistic psychology, social psychology and group dynamics'. I am keen to board the London train so that I can settle down to read the slim journal (32 pages) and also to take satisfaction in seeing my own first contribution to a magazine which has been a constant companion in my personal and professional life for half a century.

The birth of the journal marked a period of enormous hopefulness (at times perhaps naïve, but certainly always passionate and heartfelt). The edition I am reading on the train in November 1973 contained the details of ten Growth Centres in various parts of the country, together with many advertisements for encounter groups and other intensive group training experiences. I was myself in the early stages of a university career as a counsellor and academic, and lived on a campus that was often in turmoil as students and some unconventional staff demanded new approaches to learning and community living. These were the days of sit-ins, protests and rebellious (sometimes drug-induced) demonstrations. Behind the agitation, however, there was the yearning for better ways of living and relating, and a justifiable hope that, if not heaven, at least a more loving and creative world was just round the corner.

In the early years *Self & Society* served as a mirror for this hopefulness, but when it became more overtly the official organ of the Association for Humanistic Psychology in Britain it seemed to take its intellectual responsibilities more seriously. The sense of hopefulness did not diminish, but there was a reflectiveness and a greater acknowledgement (present to some extent for the outset) that the shadow exists and has to be taken into account if hope is not to degenerate into a facile optimism.

The cultural shifts in our society since the halcyon days of the 1960s and 1970s have, of course, been enormous. We now live in a world which is risk-averse rather than risk-taking. We are hemmed in by systems, regulations, accountability protocols, the iron grip of technology which promises greater freedoms and choice but seems to engender compulsiveness, robotic responses and an upsurge of malevolent divisiveness and unbridled narcissism. Hope, where it exists at all, is threaded through with anxiety and permeated by a sense of powerlessness. Dictators thrive, and ominous clouds gather apace that characterised not the 1970s but the 1930s. What now is the task of *Self & Society* as (bearing its new strapline) an 'International Journal for Humanistic, Existential and Transpersonal Psychology'?. The thoughts that follow are not intended to be prescriptive but they are offered by a mid-octogenarian who has always embraced the notion of hope as a theological virtue that lies beyond despair and transcends pain and suffering, not through denying or suppressing them but by bearing them.

With this concept of hope firmly in mind the journal needs to remain consistently hopeful. It should continue to reflect the image of the human person as endowed with amazing potential for loving, creating, imaginative and intuitive understanding, resilience, endurance and faith in that which is, as yet, not comprehended. To be true to such an undertaking, however, will require a steadfast

determination to resist those many forces that scorn such a concept of the human person – political, social, educational, scientific, technological, medical – and that would reduce human beings to mere shadows of what they are capable of becoming or, horror of horrors, to rendering them less than human, or even transforming them into a new, semi-automated species.

The resistance to such forces will require mighty acts of will, emotional courage of the highest order and intellectual prowess which is not subject to the tram-lines dictated by academic norms or by political pressures. Is this whistling in the wind, the final fantasy of an old man who in his relationship with an extraordinary journal over 50 years has known both joyous jubilation and profound lamentation? I choose to believe that my reflections are not the incipient signs of my inevitable dotage. I am buttressed in this belief by the superb quality of many of the articles in recent numbers of the journal, which have combined profound movements of the heart and intellectual rigour of the highest order. I am further encouraged and reassured as I think of the remarkable lineage of editors that the journal has enjoyed over the years. From the eccentric and pioneering Vivian Milroy to the hugely industrious and intellectually vibrant Richard House, *Self & Society* has benefited from the passion, commitment and faith of a remarkable band of people. If there are times when it seems a minor miracle that *Self & Society* has endured for 50 years, we need look only to our editors to be reminded that miracles are usually the outcome of love, faith and true hope.

8. Professors Ernesto Spinelli and Andrew Samuels celebrating John Rowan's 90th birthday celebration at London's Open Centre in early 2015

Humanistic Psychology – Guarding Sanity?

ELS VAN OOIJEN

I received the invitation to write something for this symposium on the eve of a four-week trip to Zambia to visit my 7- and 9 year-old grandchildren (and their parents). Because of the various Covid restrictions it had not been possible to see them for two and a half years, which was difficult, both for them and for me and my husband. In the past, such a trip would not have caused me much soul-searching, but this time I was crucially aware of how my decision to go would contribute to the current climate crisis. We sold our cars more than ten years ago, walk or cycle everywhere, have insulated the house to the hilt, covered the roof with solar panels, minimise our use of gas and electricity as much as possible, contribute to several climate-active charities, and have not flown since the last time we visited our family in 2019. Friends assure me that 'love miles' are OK and yet, are they really?

The trip gave me ample opportunity to reflect, not only on my personal response to the climate crisis, but also on the role of Humanistic

Psychology and to what extent it can help to clarify our responsibilities in this current 'mad' world. I found myself asking questions such as who or what are we, what is our role here, what are our relationships with the earth and all that lives, each other and ourselves, and what should we be doing? For me, Humanistic Psychology concerns just such questions, and I don't think that I am alone in worrying about the situation in which we find ourselves.

We do not live in the same society as 50 years ago, and many changes have not been for the better; indeed, I feel that something has gone badly wrong. Growing up in the post-war Netherlands, I experienced a gradual change from scarcity in the 1940s and early 1950s, to what felt like abundance in the 1960s and 1970s, when *Self & Society* was born. Certainly, I remember being told that 'we'd never had it so good!'. However, all that changed with Margaret Thatcher's and Ronald Reagan's adoption of Milton Friedman's neoliberal style of unfettered capitalism (itself based on the economic theory of Friedrich Hayek). I remember how shocked I was by the vulgar 'greed is good' slogan of the 1980s, and wondered how all this could be happening after the idealism of the 60s and 70s.

My father used to exclaim, whenever there was something happening in the world that seemed particularly nonsensical to him, 'We live in a demented world and we know it!'. My siblings and I thought it was just one of the many weird sayings he had inherited from his eccentric granny, but later I discovered that it is actually a quotation from the Dutch historian and philosopher Johan Huizinga, who was fairly well known at the time. The full quotation reads as follows:

> We live in a demented world, and we know it. It would surprise no-one if the madness suddenly erupted into a frenzy, which would leave this poor European humanity in a dulled and distracted state, with engines still running and flags still streaming in the breeze, but with the spirit gone.

The quotation is from Huizinga's book *In the Shadow of Tomorrow*, which was published in 1936 – three years before the eruption of the Second World War!

The quotation could easily apply to our current time, nearly 90 years later, the third decade of the twenty-first century. Many of us feel that we live in unprecedented times, with a great deal of madness, confusion, unpredictability, uncertainty, anxiety, depression and fear. Currently, with the war raging in the Ukraine, there is again the threat of a nuclear war; there is the Covid pandemic; the constant awareness of Climate Change or Global Heating; the post-Brexit ramifications for the British economy; the rise of the Far Right; the current, predatory, form of capitalism, leading to increasing inequality, the gig economy with zero-hours contracts, foodbanks and so on; and the continuous stream of immigrants, displaced by war, poverty or hunger.

This is our world, the context we and our clients inhabit. Although traditionally there has not been much engagement by therapists with what is going on in the world, that does appear to be changing. After all, we do not see our clients in isolation. We are all affected by our current *context*, by the *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of the time, and by what is going on in the world. For a while now, many of my clients and supervisees have been talking about their concerns about the wider world, and how it all affects them personally. They are afraid and anxious, and concerned for their children if they have them, or wondering whether the responsible decision would be not to have children at all.

As therapists we know that to understand our clients' present situation and encourage them to work towards the possibility of a better future, we first need to help them engage with their past. It is important for people to understand how they got to the situation in which they find themselves, so that they can begin to let go of unhelpful or outdated beliefs, feelings and actions, and develop new ways of being and relating. This, I believe, goes for most

approaches, as even in CBT there is need to find out people's core beliefs and schemas.

I propose that the same kind of therapeutic process may be applied to the wider world. I don't know about you, but I find that *I too* have a need to understand and get a grip on the various processes and developments that are happening in society at large. Also, as therapists we aim to live with awareness and mindful refection, so that we can help our clients do the same. For me this is where Humanistic Psychology comes in. As a Relational Integrative therapist, a humanistic worldview forms the basis of my practice. I experience it as an important counterweight to the creeping medicalisation of counselling and therapy, and the tendency towards micro-management and control. Regarding the National Health Service, Rosemary Rizq has written about 'The language of healthcare', and the impact of using terminology such as: patient choice and patient well-being; competence frameworks; evidence-based interventions; evidence-based therapies, risk assessment; diagnosis; cost-effectiveness; efficiency; world-class commissioning; best practice or positive practice; outcome-led services, payment by results; and even 'NICE-compliant therapies' (Rizq, 2013). What happened to words such as warmth, compassion, empathy or relationship? What happened to our human soul, to the soul of and in our work? Rizq suggests that 'it's very hard not to think of all this bureaucracy, all this checking, auditing, regulating, measuring, assessing, evaluating and governance, as a defence, as warding off something'. I think she is right, as in our current world there is a great deal that is difficult to face.

Regarding *Self & Society*, it has always been the journal that I reached for as soon as it dropped through my letterbox and often read from cover to cover. It is the place where we can find divergence from the status quo, where we can read maverick views that might not get through the reviewers' scrutiny elsewhere. It has held, and continues to hold, a crucial role in upholding humanistic values, not just for the individual, but for our society as a whole. The title 'Self & Society' says it all, indicating an openness to life outside the consulting room.

The last 50 years have been extraordinary, but for many of us there is constant 'hum' underneath our everyday awareness that all is not OK. The very survival of the living world, which includes humanity, is at stake. I think that this awareness, even if repressed or denied, underlies all our everyday experience. It is no coincidence that rates of anxiety and depression have rocketed. Covid clearly plays a role here too, but is, in itself, an unintended consequence of the way we live today.

We need to remember who we are as therapists and embrace the foundation stones of Humanistic Psychology, particularly Carl Rogers' core conditions of warmth, empathy, unconditional positive regard and authenticity. I find it helpful to see these conditions as aspects of 'love' – Agape rather than Eros – for the world and everyone and everything in it. They can help us remember what is important, and to act out of love and compassion. As therapists we have a role to play in helping all of us to wake up to the context within which we live and work. *Self & Society* is an important forum for changing people's mindset from being stuck in the status quo, to embracing our human responsibility. We need to challenge the current mode of thinking and (non) acting.

As counsellors and therapists, we are perhaps expected to be more aware in general, and that includes being more self-aware. Not only does that mean that we need to be aware of how the current context impacts on ourselves, but also that our supposedly greater awareness comes with an ethical responsibility not to keep it to ourselves. We need to share it, to do what we can that can mitigate whatever it is that we see as wrong. Our 'self' and our 'society' are not well! Never have I had so many requests for therapy as in the past year, and many of us are only too aware of the general anxiety underlying our lives. At some level, we all know that the world is not well, we are not well; and unless

we acknowledge this and take action, our condition may well be terminal. It is our job as therapists to face what is happening, work through it, feel the grief and the pain and help our clients do the same, so that we can take whatever action feels appropriate.

The values of Humanistic Psychology as embodied within *Self & Society* can be part of what sustains and holds us in this difficult, but essential task.

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9. The assembled throng marking John Rowan's retirement party

Me and *Self & Society*

WILLIAM WEST

In 1974–6 I was living in Notting Hill Gate whilst working as a volunteer for the Cope Trust, which I had helped form – an anti-psychiatry group inspired by the work and writings of David Cooper and Ronnie Laing, People Not Psychiatry and the Mental Patients Union. As part of being a volunteer I attended a number of encounter groups with fellow Cope Trust workers. I remember John Rowan coming and doing a session for us, and his writings in *Self & Society* and elsewhere had a huge and ongoing impact on my life and work. At that time, I was also exploring non-Christian spirituality. So I started reading *Self & Society*, which had a rich mix of articles relating to encounter groups and also to transpersonal ideas.

I left London in 1976 to live in Todmorden, a small town on the border between Lancashire and West Yorkshire. Realising that I wanted to be a therapist I immersed myself in the work of Wilhelm Reich, mostly through the work of Peter Jones but also through the Manchester Reich Group of which I was a founder member. This desire to be / become a therapist was inspired by a flow of energy down my arms during one of Peter Jones' Reichian Therapy groups. In the early 1980s I finally subscribed to *Self & Society*, and when I later began to run Post-Reichian Therapy weekend groups it was kind enough to advertise these group for free.

For a while in the early 1980s I thought that (Post) Reichian Therapy was the answer to everything. It had a relevant political edge and an under-explored, under-voiced spiritual side, but gradually my position shifted and my group work became closer to encounter groups with a spiritual element. I began to define myself as humanistic-spiritual, and again *Self & Society* seemed an appropriate home.

In 1990 I started an MA in Counselling Studies at Keele and subsequently a Ph.D., in which I explored therapy and spiritual healing. This was, looking back, the transition I made from therapist to academic. I was delighted in 1993 when *Self & Society* published the first fruits from my Ph.D. studies in an article entitled 'Spiritual experiences in therapy' in a special section of the journal on Therapy and Spirituality. In 1994 it profiled the Energy Stream Therapy Group that I was a founder member of, and my piece was entitled 'A brief idiosyncratic history of Energy Stream'. The editor of *Self & Society* at the time – David Jones – invited me to write a book chapter on Post-Reichian therapy for his book *Innovative*

Therapy: A Handbook. These opportunities to go into print were seminal moments in my move towards an academic life and in the development of me as a writer.

Now that I am post-academic and (semi)-retired, I have found a voice to match this new stage in my life, and *Self & Society* has again (!) been a key outlet for recent writings of mine, some of which were in response to a request from the current editor. It remains curious to me that when he recently asked me for an article (West, 2021) in an email, my first response was 'No'. But I woke up the next morning at 6 a.m. with my head full of some draft notes for an article. I typed these up and sent them to him rather hoping he would say 'No thanks'; but the response was 'Yes!', so I then had the harder work of fleshing out the original notes.

Reflecting on all of this I notice that for me, geography is involved. I grew up in a small town in the West Midlands and ended up in London for a while, and then moved north, where I have been ever since. I always saw *Self & Society* as London based, which may not be true, but…. The other thing I notice is that my contact with the editors over the years has been crucial and most helpful.

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10. A magnificent display of John Rowan's many books on humanistic and transpersonal psychology and therapy, from John's retirement party

SOME HUMANISTIC WISDOM

"To encourage and maintain diversity is a part of the ethical imperative of participating in the riches of creation. In the very idea of participation are contained ethical signposts concerning how we should treat all other forms of life. They are part of the family, part of ourselves."

Henryk Skolimowski (1930–2018)