Association for Humanistic Psychology in Britain
AHP new vistas MAGAZINE
AHPB Magazine for *Self & Society* | No. 9, 2022

Celebrating a Great Life: JOHN HERON (1928–2022)

A Symposium, including a classic article by John Heron, and memories contributed by Peter Reason and others

1. John Heron: A Personal Memoir – PETER REASON

John Heron, who died on 28 November in Bristol, UK, aged 94, made significant contributions to the theory and practice of participatory research, participatory education, humanistic facilitation, and participatory spirituality. The bare bones of his professional contribution, a summary of his activities, and a comprehensive archive of writing can be found at https://johnheron-archive.co.uk/. My reflections here are more personal, focusing on the period of our close collaborations in the 1980s and 1990s developing the model of co-operative inquiry, after which John left Europe for New Zealand.

John Heron had established the Human Potential Research Project (HPRP) at the University of Surrey in 1970, conceiving of humanistic education as a form of collaborative and experiential inquiry. In this he was seeking to counter the evident authoritarian tendencies of the Human Potential movement, in which group leaders set themselves up as unquestionably in charge of group process. The courses at HPRP were generally in the field of personal development and facilitation skills. John articulated a model of co-counselling as the primary model for personal development, differentiating this from the Re-evaluation Counselling founded by Harvey Jackins, which he saw as retaining critical aspects of hierarchical control. He also articulated an approach to facilitation based on six dimensions of practice, which formed the basis of training in facilitator styles (Heron, 1977, 1986, 1989, 1999).

In 1977 John moved to the position of Assistant Director at the British Postgraduate Medical Federation (BPMF) at the University of London to initiate an innovative programme of personal and professional development for doctors in hospitals and general practice. This was at a time when the medical profession was generally seen as authoritarian, failing to engage patients in their own well-being, with seriously negative consequences for both doctors and patients. The idea of a more holistic medicine was in the air, and the medical profession was challenged by a variety of alternative and complementary practices.

John's first articulation of the collaborative process as an explicitly research process was *Experience and Method* (Heron, 1971; see also Heron, 1981b), one of a series of working papers from HPRP. The argument is that research is necessarily 'original creative activity' and so cannot be encompassed by the deterministic assumptions of orthodox research; and further, that all persons have a political right to be involved in the creation of knowledge that purports to concern them. John argued for an inquiry model centred on the self-directing person in mutual relations with others in a self-determining community.

These arguments led naturally to the co-operative inquiry, research 'with' rather than 'on' people, in which all those involved work together as co-researchers and as co-subjects. Everyone is involved in the design and management of the inquiry; everyone gets into the experience and action that is being explored; everyone is involved in making sense and drawing conclusions; thus, everyone involved can take initiative and exert influence on the process. A co-operative inquiry group cycles between action and reflection, drawing on an extended epistemology of four interdependent ways of knowing: experiential, presentational, propositional and practical. These ways of knowing are interdependent (Heron, 1981a, 1996a; Heron & Reason, 2005).

Experiential knowing brings attention to bear on the lifeworld of everyday lived experience through face-to-face encounter, empathy, and resonance with a person, place or thing. Experiential knowing is essentially tacit, almost impossible to put into words; it is often inaccessible to direct conscious awareness. It is the touchstone of the inquiry process, and deepens through that process.

Presentational knowing can be seen as the first clothing or articulation of experiential knowing: we tell the story of our experience, often bringing it into consciousness for the first time to ourselves and to others as we do so. Such a spontaneous narrative can then be intentionally articulated and developed through creative writing and story-telling, drawing, sculpture, movement and dance, drawing on aesthetic imagery. Through this imaginative process, new stories and new images of who we are and what is possible can be created.

Propositional knowing draws on concepts and ideas, making sense of, and maybe generalising from, experience. In this sense, it is the link between action research and scholarship. Although propositional knowing always carries the danger of creating a world that exists in its own conceptual bubble, it is also clear that new ideas can drive everyday life. The ability to develop alternative theories critical of everyday common sense grows out of in-depth examination of experience and new narratives.

Practical knowing is knowing 'how to', knowing-in-action. At the heart of practical knowing is skilful doing, which may be beyond language and conceptual formulation. Practical knowing is of a quite different nature to knowing-about-action; action research is not the same as applied research. John argued for the 'primacy of the practical': as with all forms of action research, the point is not to understand the world but to act more effectively within it.

I first met John in 1978 as these ideas were being developed, shortly after my return from

the USA with a freshly minted Ph.D. I had quite independently developed my own version of participative inquiry, and so was excited to find, at a conference of the Association for Humanistic Psychology, a session organised by John Rowan on humanistic research – John Rowan was developing what he called a 'dialectical paradigm' for research (Rowan, 1981). The discussions at the session led to the foundation of the New Paradigm Research Group, which met regularly in London during the late 1970s and early 1980s, working together informally to develop a participatory paradigm and practice of research. These discussions led to the articulation of a 'new paradigm manifesto' (New Paradigm Research Group, 1981); and later to the publication of *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research*, which I edited with John Rowan and with significant contributions from John Heron (Reason & Rowan, 1981). The positivist psychologist Han Eysenck reviewed the book saying it deserved to be burned; the humanist Carl Rogers called it a 'gold mine of new approaches to research'.

Our shared understanding was that all aspects of human endeavour could be encompassed within this ethos of mutual inquiry. As John Rowan punned on the vaudeville routine of Weber and Fields on the cover of *Human Inquiry*:

> Who was that research I saw you with last night?
> That was no research, that was my life!

Once *Human Inquiry* was published, John Heron and I agreed that the time was past for theorising new approaches to research; we needed to develop a practice. We began a series of experiments in co-operative inquiry (using the model he articulated) leading up to the ambitious Whole Person Medical Practice. We invited general medical practitioners to a series of preliminary sessions to scope and design the inquiry. From this, some 16 GPs participated in six cycles of inquiry: a series of two-day workshops meeting for design and sense-making, interspersed with six-week periods of reflective practice.

At the first workshop, we drew on the GPs experiential knowing of medical practice to develop a five-part model of holistic practice (propositional knowing). Each participant then chose which parts of the model they wished to put into practice, and took these tentative plans to apply in their surgeries (practical knowing). This led to a deepening of experiential knowing – at times they were so thoroughly involved in practice that they would forget the inquiry process and need to recollect how they had behaved afterwards. They recorded their experience through various means, and returned to the following inquiry workshop with the narratives and accounts (presentational knowing) and joined with their colleagues in making sense of their experience, amending and developing the model of holistic medicine (propositional knowing).

At each of these workshops we had also agreed to invite a leading practitioner in some aspect of holistic practice to provide further ideas and stimuli. At the end of each workshop, the GPs returned again to practice with plans to try out new holistic practices. In this way the group systematically cycled through the four ways of knowing, developing both a deeper understanding and practical skills in holistic practice (Heron & Reason, 1984, 1985; Reason, 1988).

This was an intense time of action and reflection for the two of us, not only the challenges of facilitating a very diverse group of doctors, but also between sessions intensely reflecting on our own practice as facilitating researchers. What is the nature of authority, collaboration and autonomy in such a group? What is the best facilitation profile? What makes this good research, and what does it mean for research validity? How do you draw together 18 people to prepare a coherent account of their learning? These discussions, conducted sometimes in his office at BPMF but just as much driving home from meetings at some speed in his new

Alfa Romeo, formed the basis of a series of publications. These reflections and further inquiry endeavours led to a series of publications, including Heron, 1985, 1988, 1996a, 1996b; Heron & Reason, 2001, 2008.

This inquiry contributed to the establishment of the British Holistic Medical Association, the co-operative inquiries at Marylebone Centre Trust and the Research Council for Complementary Medicine. We contributed to a movement that significantly opened attitudes and practices within medicine. In addition to the substantive learning and political influence, the inquiry also raised questions for the theory and practice of co-operative inquiry, leading to a series of further papers on validity and quality, the primacy of the practical, the participatory paradigm for inquiry.

Alongside these developments in inquiry practice, John was generally active in the Human Potential movement; for his own account see Heron, 2012. My work with him was through the Institute for the Development of Human Potential (IDHP) founded by John with David Blagden Marks, Tom Feldberg, Frank Lake, Kate Hopkinson and David Boadella, which offered two-year courses in Facilitator Styles. Several of us were invited to initiate courses around the UK following the early models in London led by Tom Feldberg and Surrey by John, but each with its unique identity. As IDHP grew (and I believe it is still going in some form), the group of primary facilitators would meet regularly to manage the overall programme and for peer supervision. John insisted – he was good at insisting – that we always discussed 'ideology' first, before getting bogged down in administration issues. This meant, as with the holistic medical inquiry, that we drew on our experience to think through different facilitation profiles, to compare 'led' and 'leaderless' groups, to supervise each other's practice, to think through the nature of a community of practice and of self and peer assessment.

John was the supervisor for our group in Bath, and was a wonderful support for us when one of our participants experienced a psychotic episode and we chose to nurse her through it as a community. I think it a particular credit to John that, after he left active engagement with IDHP, we continued for several years, building on and developing the practices he had initiated.

Drawing on the learning from a diverse array of inquiry and education projects, John came to the view that a creative group is characterised by an appropriate balance of the principles of hierarchy, collaboration and autonomy – deciding for others, with others, and for oneself (Heron, 1999). Each of these principles has both a positive and a shadow side: authentic hierarchy is based in experience and skill, but may degenerate into authoritarian control; authentic collaboration finds a place for everyone, and draws together diversity, but can become oppressive majority rule; authentic autonomy honours the self-directing and self-creating individual, which at its extreme turns into a lonely solipsism.

John moved on from BPMF in 1985, first to restore and live in an elegant old farmhouse in Volterra, Italy, and then in 2000 to New Zealand, where he established the South Pacific Centre for Human Inquiry. He turned to what was perhaps his primary concern through his life: a participatory spirituality that bade a 'farewell to authoritarian religion' and to a further series of publications (see Heron, 1998, and papers on website).
I taught John's model as part of our work at the Centre for Action Research for Professional Practice at the University of Bath (Reason, 1998, 2002; Reason & Marshall, 2001). John's inquiry models have been adopted and adapted across the world to research with the experience of Black British women, nurses and midwives, young women in management, police offices, professional collaboration in child protection, young persons whose parent is dying from cancer, women and body image... and those are just some of the projects I know about. Sarah Riley, Professor of Critical Health

Psychology at Massey University, wrote to me, 'I'm sorry I didn't have a chance to tell him about the CI work in New Zealand my students are doing'.

Working with John was both exhilarating and maddening. He enjoyed mapping and categorising – six categories of facilitation, each one analysed in detail; four dimensions of an extended epistemology; Apollonian vs Dionysian inquiry; self- and peer-assessment; maps of altered states of consciousness, of participatory spirituality. These models provided us with important clarity. They helped us all see, for example, that much of Humanistic Psychology practice, while purporting to be about human liberation, actually carried significant authoritarian dominance; that doctors, because they carry the role of top carers and healers in our society, have to live with immense countertransference from the rest of us, to the detriment of their own well-being; and that research that treats people as objects cannot be considered to be a science of persons. Working with John was at times maddening because he could hold his clarity and precision very firmly, sometimes preventing the emergence of alternative perspectives and alternative forms of sense-making.

John was dedicated to collaboration and participation in all aspects of human endeavour – in education, in professional practice in all its forms, in research methods, and indeed as an ontological and metaphysical principle (the academic paper 'A participatory inquiry paradigm' (Heron & Reason, 1997) had a significant impact). He was an iconoclast, ruthless and courageous in challenging authoritarian practices wherever he saw them. The difficulty for his close colleagues was that he often saw these tendencies in us as well. In the later years of our collaboration, I often said, 'John is dedicated to collaborative approaches… so long as you collaborate in his way'.

John was also dedicated to inquiry, not as arid research but to learning through risk-taking in living, inquiry based on the experience of novel and at times challenging practices, on careful and imaginative reflection on that experience, theorising from that reflection and taking the insights back into new practice. In his later work he applied this inquiry model to participatory spirituality and transpersonal experience. His final articulation can be found in Heron & Sohmer, 2019.

Over the past four years I have initiated a series on co-operative inquiries with Rivers as sentient beings (Kurio & Reason, 2022). I find John's insights continue to be relevant. His inquiry models have been adopted and adapted, applied formally and informally across the world.

The work, and John Heron's significant contribution, continue.

References

Heron, J. (1971). *Experience and Method: An Inquiry into the Concept of Experiential Research.* University of Surrey at Guildford: Human Potential Research Project.

Heron, J. (1977). *Dimensions of Facilitator Style.* University of Surrey at Guildford: Human Potential Research Project.

Heron, J. (1981a). Experiential research methodology. In P. Reason & J. Rowan (eds), *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research*. Chichester: Wiley.

Heron, J. (1981b). Philosophical basis for a new paradigm. In P. Reason & J. Rowan (eds), *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research*. Chichester: Wiley.

Heron, J. (1985). The role of reflection in a co-operative inquiry. In D. Boud, R. Keogh & D. Walker (eds), *Reflection: Turning Experience into Learning* (pp. 128–38). London: Kogan Page.

Heron, J. (1986). *Six Category Intervention Analysis*, 2nd edn. University of Surrey at Guildford: Human Potential Research Project.

Heron, J. (1988). Validity in co-operative inquiry. In P. Reason (ed.), *Human Inquiry in Action* (pp. 40–59). London: Sage Publications.

Heron, J. (1989). *The Facilitator's Handbook*. London: Kogan Page.

Heron, J. (1996a). *Co-operative Inquiry: Research into the Human Condition*. London: Sage Publications.

Heron, J. (1996b). Quality as primacy of the practical. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2 (1): 41–56.

Heron, J. (1998). *Sacred Science: Person-centred Inquiry into the Spiritual and the Subtle*. Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books.

Heron, J. (1999). *The Complete Facilitator's Handbook*. London: Kogan Page.

Heron, J. (2012). My early engagement with Humanistic Psychology. *Self & Society*, 40 (1): 48–55. Available at https://tinyurl.com/5d2x5cfb (accessed 19 December 2022).

Heron, J. & Reason, P. (1984). New paradigm research and holistic medicine. *British Journal of Holistic Medicine*, 1.

Heron, J. & Reason, P. (eds) (1985). *Whole Person Medicine: A Co-operative Inquiry*. University of London: British Postgraduate Medical Federation. Available at https://tinyurl.com/53pbx3ea (accessed 19 December 2022).

Heron, J. & Reason, P. (1997). A participatory inquiry paradigm. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3 (3): 274–94.

Heron, J. & Reason, P. (2001). The practice of co-operative inquiry: research with rather than on people. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (eds), *Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice* (pp. 179–88). London: Sage Publications.

Heron, J. & Reason, P. (2005). The practice of co-operative inquiry: research with rather than on people. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (eds), *Handbook of Action Research* (concise paperback edn) (pp. 144–54). London: Sage Publications.

Heron, J. & Reason, P. (2008). Extending epistemology with co-operative inquiry. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (eds), *Sage Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice* (pp. 366–80). London: Sage Publications.

Heron, J. & Sohmer, O. (2019). An interview with John Heron: exploring the interface between cooperative inquiry and transpersonal studies. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 38 (2). Available at https://tinyurl.com/2fdccy6w and at https://tinyurl.com/yc24czj6 (accessed 19 December 2022).

Kurio, J. & Reason, P. (2021). Voicing rivers through ontopoetics: a co-operative inquiry. *River Research and Applications* (Special Issue: 'Voicing Rivers'), 1–9; doi: https://doi.org/10.1002/rra.3817.

New Paradigm Research Group. (1981). New Paradigm Research Manifesto. Available at http://peterreason.net/Papers/New_Paradigm_Manifesto.pdf (accessed 19 December 2022).

Reason, P. (1988). Whole person medical practice. In P. Reason (ed.), *Human Inquiry in Action* (pp. 102–26). London: Sage Publications.

Reason, P. (1998). Co-operative inquiry as a discipline of professional practice. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 12 (4): 419–36.

Reason, P. (2002). Special Issue: The Practice of Co-operative Inquiry. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 15 (3): 169–270.

Reason, P. & Marshall, J. (2001). On supervising graduate research students. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (eds), *Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice* (pp. 413–19). London and Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Reason, P. & Rowan, J. (eds) (1981). *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research*. Chichester: Wiley.

Rowan, J. (1981). A dialectical paradigm for research. In P. Reason & J. Rowan (eds), *Human Inquiry* (pp. 93–112). Chichester: Wiley.

About the contributor

Peter Reason is currently engaged in a series of experiential and co-operative inquiries exploring living cosmos panpsychism: What would it be like to live in a world of sentient beings rather than inert objects? How would we relate to such a world? His most recent publications (with artist Sarah Gillespie) are *On Presence* and *On Sentience* – http://peterreason.net/OnSentience.html.

2. My Experience of Encountering John Heron

– RICHARD HOUSE

I heard of John's passing from my dear friend Denis Postle a couple of weeks ago. A few days after I heard the sad news, the AHPb held a gathering at the Open Centre in London, at which I gave this personal reminiscence about John.

I will start by reading the biography of John that was included in the *Implausible Professions* anthology that was published in 1997, and which included two chapters by John (on which, more below):

> **John Heron** runs the Centre for Co-operative Inquiry in Tuscany, Italy. He was Founder and Director of the Human Potential Research Project, University of Surrey, and Assistant Director, British Postgraduate Medical Federation, University of London. He is a researcher, author, facilitator and trainer in: co-counselling; co-operative inquiry; educational development; group facilitation; management development; personal and transpersonal development; professional development in the helping professions. His recent books include: *Co-operative Inquiry* (London: Sage, 1996); *Group Facilitation* (London: Kogan Page, 1993); *Feeling and Personhood* (London: Sage, 1992); *Helping the Client* (London: Sage, 1990); *The Facilitators' Handbook* (London: Kogan Page, 1989).

A few biographical words about John are in order. Born in 1928, he was a pioneer in the creation of a participatory research method in the social sciences, called 'co-operative inquiry' and based on his work in 1968–9 on the phenomenology of social encounter. The approach can and has been applied across a whole range of fields encompassing professional and personal development, as a basic form of relational and participative spiritual practice.

John founded and directed the Human Potential Research Project (HPRP – see http://www.jameskilty.co.uk/hprp.htm) at the University of Surrey, UK, from 1970 to 1977, being the first university-based centre for humanistic and transpersonal psychology and education in Europe. From 1977 to 1985 John was the Assistant Director of the British Postgraduate Medical Federation (University of London), and was in charge of an innovative programme of personal and professional development for hospital doctors and GPs, including a co-operative inquiry into whole-person medicine, and from which the British Holistic Medical Association (https://bhma.org/) was formed.

From 1990 to 2000, John was also the director of the International Centre for Co-operative Inquiry at Volterra, Tuscany, Italy, where radical forms of spiritual inquiry were developed. From 2000 he was co-director of the South Pacific Centre for Human Inquiry at Auckland, New Zealand (see https://tinyurl.com/2v5nyr6h), focusing on long-term co-operative inquiries into charismatic and relational spiritual practices.

A group facilitator and trainer in the fields of co-counselling, in 1974 he was one of the founders of Co-Counselling International after a split from the Re-evaluation Counseling of Harvey Jackins. His work also encompassed new paradigm research, educational and staff development, group facilitation and interactive skills, management development, personal and transpersonal development, professional development in medicine, psychotherapy and the helping professions.

John was also a group facilitator on British television programmes on the following topics: medical stress (ITV, 1981), racism (BBC2, 1985), AIDS (Channel 4, 1987), Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (BBC2, 1990), divorce (BBC2, 1991), and parents and teenagers (BBC1, 1994).

I first came across John Heron's work in the 1980s when I began my path of personal and professional development, discovering

'experiential learning' and devouring everything I could find about it. Before long, John's name kept coming up in the course of my questing, especially in relation to the pioneering Human Potential Research Project and the Institute for the Development of Human Potential. I also soon became aware of his provocative work on co-counselling, which John describes thus on his website (https://johnheron-archive.co.uk/categories):

> ...the peer-to-peer approach of Co-counselling International (CCI), an independent association founded in 1974 – by John Heron, Dency Sargent and Tom Sargent – to develop co-counselling within an international federation of autonomous co-counselling communities, now active in several countries worldwide. CCI is entirely separate from, and has significant differences to the centralized approach of, the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, founded in Seattle, USA, by Harvey Jackins in the 1960s.

I recall reading some very robust and lengthy exchanges on co-counselling penned by John and others, but alas I've not been able to track these down. A 60-page paper from 1981, 'Co-Counselling: An Experiential Inquiry' by John and Peter Reason, is available online here – https://tinyurl.com/2npxvvew. The co-counselling course I did in the 1980s, facilitated by Julian Briggs in Norwich, was one of my first forays into the therapy world.

When I started reading *Self & Society* in the late 1980s, I soon became aware of the professionalisation debate in the humanistic world, that was soon to precipitate a split in the AHP in the early 1990s. In a special theme issue on this question (volume 18, number 1, 1990), John made one of the most seminal contributions to the professionalisation question in the history of the field – namely, his 'Politics of transference' article (which we reproduce in this symposium in its entirety) – a piece that never ages, and is as fresh and prescient today as when he penned it. When, in 1996, I was preparing an anthology on these issues with Nick Totton that was to become the book *Implausible Professions* (PCCS Books, 1997), it was unarguable that John's 'Politics of transference' article should lead off the anthology of 30 chapters.

I never met John personally, but we spoke many times on the phone and exchanged numerous emails – not least in negotiating his other contribution to *Implausible Professions* – a chapter titled 'A self-generating practitioner community' (pp. 264–77 in the 2010 edition of the book). My idea for this specially written chapter came from my close reading of his 1996 book *Co-operative Inquiry* (see the review essay in this symposium), and my involvement in the then newly formed Independent Practitioners Network (IPN). John's chapter provided the best possible philosophical foundation for all that the IPN was endeavouring to achieve – and again, it is as relevant today as it was when written a quarter of a century ago (it can be read online here – https://tinyurl.com/3erc3urk).

John's 1998 book *Sacred Science* took his work in the spiritual direction that many humanistic practitioners find themselves embracing as their personal and professional path unfolds. As Campbell Purton presciently wrote in the *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*,

> There is an important question about whether our contemporary views on 'reality' are an aberration induced by the scientism of our culture over the last few hundred years. Books like this which challenge our 'robust' assumptions with genuine and well-argued alternative proposals are surely to be welcomed.

I was also thrilled when, a decade ago, John agreed to write an article for *Self & Society* on the theme of ' My early engagement with Humanistic Psychology' (available at https://tinyurl.com/5d2x5cfb) – a hugely important historical document about HP as well as about John's massive contributions to it.

One anecdote I recently heard about John relates to his writing style. I personally loved his writing style – never easy, rigorously and

exhaustively argued with no hostages left to fortune or promissory notes, and above all calling forth the *thinking capacities* of the reader! But at one event, someone asked John whether he could write in a more accessible way. He replied that he did his best... – and '…if you'd like to re-write it more simply, you are absolutely welcome'.

In volume 50 (1–2) of *Self & Society*, we featured a piece from long-friend of the journal, Denis Postle, on a film he made many decades ago of John's work. Denis suggested that I reprise here some of the piece he sent, as it is very generic of why John was so influential. The film 'DOCTORS: Stress and Distress' is viewable at https://vimeo.com/576887905), which sees John and his medical education work flourishing. Denis writes: 'I made this film in 1982. While it features doctors, general practitioners, what it has to offer will be relevant to anyone who has frontline service contact with human condition concerns.'

Here is an excerpt from Denis's piece in our commemorative edition:

> ...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.
>
> *Doctors* was 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 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 John's facilitation of workshops and training situations in which six GPs share their experiences of stress and distress.

Denis' piece then contains a full verbatim transcript of John's words from the film, which can be found on pp. 32–4 in issue 50 (1–2) of *Self & Society*. Here are some excerpts from what John said in the film, courtesy of Denis Postle:

> '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 be 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.'
>
> '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 behavior and it can distort professional behavior, 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.'

Denis also speaks about his work with John Heron on Catherine Llewellyn's 'Truth and Transcendence' podcast episode, 'Power with and Getting to Yes', available at https://tinyurl.com/4beks46t. And Catherine Llewellyn also speaks about John on her podcast episode, 'What is Humanistic Psychology, What Does It Mean to Me and Why Is It Important Right Now?', available at https://tinyurl.com/2p8mp4mv,

Also, at https://alchetron.com/John-Heron, you'll find a 9-minute video introduction to John's celebrated 'Six Category Intervention Analysis', introduced here by Paul Ackerley.

In closing, I want to say that John was one of many human beings whose monumental life work and contributions received nothing like the public recognition they warranted and deserved. His Wikipedia entry, for example (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Heron_(social_scientist) should surely be far more substantial than it is. Perhaps this is the pretty much inevitable fate of those with little ego and self-publicising ambitions – and it's perhaps one of the great paradoxes of the human condition that the people whose wisdom humanity most needs to hear and learn from are often little recognised in their own lifetime. I hope that those who were touched by John's work – his great wisdom and intelligence – will do all they can to keep the flame of his seminal contributions alive – to which this open-access symposium in *Self & Society* magazine will hopefully make a small contribution. Thank you, John, for all you gave us.

3. The Politics of Transference – JOHN HERON

Editorial Introduction

This seminal paper of John's was first published in *Self & Society* in 1990, and it then appeared as the first chapter in the edited anthology *Implausible Professions* (ed. House & Totton, 1997). In the article, John sets out in masterly fashion the arguably toxic psychodynamic contradictions and lacunae lying at the heart of the professionalisation and regulatory project. At the time this paper became a must-read starting-point for all psy practitioners who had doubts about the regulatory directions in which the psy therapies seemed to be headed in the early 1990s. As with all great writings, it is freshly relevant today – the arguments John develops and the concerns he expresses certainly haven't gone away or been satisfactorily resolved in the three decades since this article was written.

The following paper by John Heron was first published in* Self & Society, *Volume 18, No. 1, 1990, pp. 17–23.

In 1971 the government published a report on the scientologists, who were at that time causing much public disquiet. It was written by a well-known QC, J.G. Foster, who knew very little about psychotherapy, and therefore took advice from the psychoanalytic lobby. Following this advice, he condemned the scientologists on the grounds that they were exploiting emotionally vulnerable people and *abusing the dynamics of the transference.* And he recommended the statutory registration of psychotherapists in private practice in order to protect the public from this kind of abuse (Foster, 1971).

This led to the formation of a working party on the statutory registration of psychotherapists in private practice, attended by all the primary established bodies in the field. Their report hit my desk at the British Postgraduate Medical Federation, where I was Assistant Director, some time after 1977. The majority of organisations involved supported nominal registration, that is, the names 'psychotherapist' and 'psychoanalyst' would be registered, with a list of associations providing approved training and accreditation. The report argued that this was all necessary in order to protect the public, quoting with approval the 1971 recommendation.

The behaviour therapists disagreed in a minority report. They wrote that since there was substantial research evidence that psychotherapy did not do anyone any good, there could be no case for giving it statutory recognition. Privately, they put it to me in much stronger terms. They said that statutory recognition, far from protecting the public, would lead to widespread exploitation, because it would legitimate psychotherapists taking money under the pretence of offering a service that did some good – when studies showed that it did no better than having no therapy at all.

They also said, in more radical tone, that psychoanalysts in particular were hypocritical in wanting to protect the public from transference abuse, when their own therapy was riddled with this very phenomenon. They let their clients slip into emotionally regressed attitudes, sustained them there over long periods by manipulative interpretations, and exploited this state of disempowerment to make money by recommending an increase in the number of sessions per week. What the psychoanalysts really wanted, said my behaviour therapy sources, was to manoeuvre the government into protecting their lucrative monopoly on transference abuse. Strong stuff indeed, but with an important grain of truth, in my judgment and my experience.

The report of that working party came to nothing. A private member's bill, the Bright Bill, based on it was put forward, but the government, having been advised that there was too much dissension in the field to warrant statutory intervention, made sure that there was no time available for the bill to be taken up by parliament. The Royal College of Psychiatry was secretly opposed to a bill, for fear that it would expose many of their members, consultant psychiatrists who were, alongside their NHS appointments, in lucrative private practice as psychotherapists without any proper training whatsoever.

However, in several European countries, authoritarian and restrictive legislation was already afoot and in some cases in place. This has led to the fear that as the UK participates more fully in the European Community, it may have to take on board after 1992 a pan-European model of accreditation or statutory registration. Thus the Association of Humanistic Psychology Practitioners, getting itself ready for 1992 and beyond – or for any separate UK registration – through affiliation with the Standing Conference for Psychotherapy, says that applicants must show they have had a long training and supervision in the understanding and handling of transference and counter-transference, if they want to be accepted as a member. The concept of transference again becomes central to the political argument. There is, however, a disturbing paradox here.

For it is fear that has, in my experience, characterized the response of psychotherapists to the whole political process of professionalisation. They fear loss of livelihood, loss of status and recognition, loss of legitimacy. And in this fear I detect a strong element of transference itself: the acting out of infantile survival patterns in the face of all powerful authority figures. So the political argument for professionalisation, based on legally accredited competence in handling transference, is itself a rationalisation of a more deep-seated transference phenomenon. This is the paradox. One can scarcely have much confidence in psychotherapists whose need to have their management of transference government approved is itself a sign of unresolved transference material.

The case against statutory registration of psychotherapists, especially the case built on the exclusive professionalisation of transference competence, is as strong as ever it was. The phenomenon of transference is very widespread throughout our emotionally repressive society, whose rigidity is sustained by distorted and unprocessed psychosocial dynamics. People carry around a great deal of buried infantile distress which drives them to act out in adult life submissive and dependent behaviours in the presence of those on whom they unawarely project oppressive parental

status. Most professions – medicine, law and the judiciary, education, social services, politics, to name but a few – exploit this. The professionals, caught up in the same widespread patterns of repression, deal with their own infantile insecurity by identifying with their internalised authoritarian parent, and exercise too much power and control over their clients – upon whom they unawarely project the repressed, hurt child within.

If the insecure child within psychotherapists drives them to use this whole distorted system to legalise a new, exclusive, highly trained and protected profession to handle transference, they too will fall foul of their own introjected authoritarian parent – which will subtly contaminate the way they theorise about, and work on, their clients' transference material. In the guise of protecting their clients from the unqualified, they will oppress them. They will use the transference dynamic improperly to sustain it. This is the half-a-head-out half-a-head-in phenomenon: the therapists both have insight into a distorted dynamic process and at the same time fall foul of it within themselves when working on it in others. Put in other terms it means that a lot of their counter-transference is not spotted for what it is and is displaced unawarely into a warped form of therapy. This is a peculiarly unfortunate kind of helping treason.

Competence in handling transference by its very nature cannot, without serious distortion, be professionalised and legalised in an emotionally repressive society. The professionalisation of it takes it away from the public domain into mystification and expert knowledge accessible only to the few. And this exacerbates and reinforces the very processes which it is supposed to be dealing with. There is no better way to sustain compulsive infantilism in society (and thus an endless supply of clients) than by setting up a highly specialised, government-protected profession that alone is qualified to deal with it. This is the ancient corruption of priestcraft: to organise your hierarchy in such a way that you generate the sins you are appointed to redeem. It is significant that the pressure for statutory registration in this field always comes *in the first instance* from those who are already caught up in some kind of transference abuse and want to preserve and protect the improper exercise of professional power.

The concepts of psychotherapy and therapy are historically close to the concepts of psychopathology, treatment and the patient. The tendency of such association is to relegate the notion of transference to the domain of those who are in a state of psychological deficit, with emotional problems, and who have fallen out of the mainstream of social life. This obscures, and distracts awareness from, the fact that transference is a psychosocial dynamic that affects every aspect of life in our society. And the relegation reinforces the bad old distinction between education and training on the one hand, and emotional therapy and treatment on the other. Once this distinction is made, then education – which is of universal application – excludes the acquisition of emotional competence, which is purveyed only by an esoteric profession for a disturbed minority of citizens. This creates the absurd anomaly that the majority remain emotionally incompetent, and only patients with problems qualify for affective growth.

There is another profound anomaly in the argument that seeks to protect the public from transference abuse in psychotherapy. It overlooks the fact that one area where transference abuse readily occurs is in the sphere of religion and the spiritual life. Gurus, perfected masters, evangelical preachers, traditional priests of all persuasions, mediums entranced by spirit guides, the hierarchs in psychic and occult groups, charismatic teachers with a spiritual message – all these abound in our society today. They generate and often exploit, wittingly or unwittingly, a great deal of transference material. The exploitation is for purposes of power, control and dominance; and often for money as well. This indeed is where the story began in the UK in 1971, with a concern about the

scientologists – who were operating as a church.

There was, however, no talk in 1971 or thereafter about the statutory registration of practitioners of the spiritual and religious life, about protecting the public from the transference abuse perpetrated by many of them. The reason is not far to seek, for such talk would offend one of our deepest and most cherished traditions – that of religious liberty and toleration, the right of every person to affirm and practise whatever creed they choose. To define a religious practitioner, and specify the training required, for statutory purposes would inevitably protect some limited dogmatism by law, and cause an outcry that the state was busy with religious oppression and persecution. A deeper reason is perhaps our tacit awareness that everyone has a right at some time to be a spiritual practitioner for others – praying, blessing, invoking, exhorting, healing – and that this universal right transcends matters of legislation.

So in this field the claims of religious tolerance and liberty are so strong that they override any concern about protecting the public from transference abuse. We leave people to find their own way, through trial and error, and to exercise the right of the pilgrim to undergo – for however long a period – whatever travails and snares are to be found upon the path. Why, then, such protective paternalism in the field of psychotherapy?

The answer is uncompromising and rigorous. To define transference for purposes of training and accreditation, in order to underwrite statutory registration of psychotherapists, will enshrine a limited dogmatism in law. This is logically inescapable: for any definition is bound to exclude the transference dynamic – for both putative practitioners and the public – involved in the very pursuit and application of such legislation. In other words, the widespread social and political dimension of transference will be absent from the definition. Hence psychotherapists, in possession of a half-truth, repress their anxiety involved in handling the whole truth, through the social defence mechanism of statutory restriction. In claiming legal protection for themselves as personal change agents, they abdicate their responsibility as social and organizational change agents. The legislative claim is in reality nothing to do with protecting the public, but everything to do with protecting the unresolved transference material – in its social and political dimensions – of the psychotherapists themselves.

What, then, is the way forward? There seem to me to be some simple and quite fundamental principles to guide us. The first is that, both theoretically and practically, the intrapsychic and interpersonal dimensions of transference are to be seen always in relation to the society-wide and political dimensions. This leads on to the second principle, which is that the right to be emotionally competent – which includes the ability to understand and master the dynamics of transference – is the birthright of every person in society. Until this claim is acknowledged, the whole social, organizational and political process will be distorted by people unawarely acting out compulsive victim, compulsive oppressor, compulsive rebel and compulsive rescuer roles.

This in turn leads to the third principle, that the right to emotional competence is an inalienable and central part of the right of everyone to a proper education. What we need, therefore, is an educational system for all in which emotional and transference competence is the hub around which intellectual, technological, interpersonal, organizational and political competence revolve.

These three principles entail certain consequences for current practice. We need to interrupt every tendency to hive off the handling of transference into restrictive psychotherapy. We need progressively to introduce it into general education. One obvious place to start is in adult education through the provision of personal

development workshops for the general public. This, of course, has been going on now for several decades in the UK, both in independent and in institutionally-based centres. What is perhaps needed more and more on these courses is that in-depth work on emotional competence should relate the intrapsychic and interpersonal aspects of transference to the social and political aspects.

The other obvious place to start is in continuing education, especially in-service further training for the teaching, helping, management, political and other service professions. What is needed here are more and more experiential courses in which professional and personal development are seen as inseparably combined, in which skill on the job has transference competence as a central component.

The psychotherapists can aid all this educational development by ceasing to call themselves psychotherapists and by abandoning the term 'therapy' and the lugubrious and out-moded language of 'psychopathology', 'cases' and 'case-work', 'referrals' and 'supervision'. They could serve the purposes of social transformation much better if they were to call themselves affective educators, facilitators of personal growth, practitioners of emotional competence, and thus stake out a claim to be central to much needed educational reform. They could quite overtly – as a matter of policy and public nomenclature – supplement and augment, through intensive one-to-one tutoring and facilitation, the development of emotional competence through group-based programmes in adult education and professional in-service education. And they could still reach out, using an educational model and working over long periods, to those with special emotional difficulties.

For it is clear that good psychotherapy does not and should not involve a treatment and cure model. This model derives from physical medicine, where the physically diseased and passive patient is treated by the expert doctor who thus procures a cure. Even in medicine today this model is now out-moded with a new emphasis on education for patient power and active self-direction in promoting the healing process. Where psychotherapy has been contaminated by the treatment model, it has made the patient too passive – lying back and free associating, and the therapist too active and controlling – with a series of unilateral, theory-laden interpretations imposed upon the client's mental process.

To treat the psyche like a *body* with the fluid of association flowing through it – a fluid into which interpretations are injected – is to adopt the method of indoctrination and subtle dominance. It induces *passive* regression and may prolong it with a degree of disempowerment that can turn into sustained depression and, in some instances, depressive suicide. Some psychotherapists today still use this method.

By contrast, to relate to the psyche as a *person* is to enable, educe and cultivate the client's emerging awareness, insight and skill in dealing with deep-seated emotional processes. The client is being facilitated, through *active* regression, in self-directed emotional learning and growth. This educational model – of the client acquiring understanding and skill – is the one which *in practice* a large number of humanistic psychotherapists today to a greater or lesser degree espouse. It is surely time they made this explicit, dissociated themselves from indoctrination-psychotherapy, and abandoned the narrow and ultimately self-defeating pursuit of statutory legitimacy.

Of course, on the wider canvas of emotional education, there are still very important issues about the competence, training and accreditation of the affective educators, whether working with groups or one-to-one. But these matters should be entirely outside the jurisdiction of government and of state legislation, as they are in relation to the competence, training and accreditation of spiritual teachers.

Our society has already grasped the point that general education and religion relate to such fundamental human rights that anyone can, and should be allowed to, set themselves up as an independent educator or an independent religious teacher. For this is the only way to honour the right of people to acquire knowledge and spiritual practice from any source they choose. It also honours the responsibility of people to sort out the consequences of whatever choices they make. The extension of education from intellectual to emotional competence only serves to take this right even deeper – into the domain of self-knowledge and personal mastery.

The right to emotional growth is too profoundly related to the exercise of human autonomy for the state to have any say in who is or is not fitted to facilitate it – just as the right to spiritual growth is too deeply engaged with the inner freedom of the soul for the state to prescribe who is allowed to foster it. These two rights are closely related, for emotional growth rooted in human autonomy sooner or later leads over into spiritual growth expressing the freedom of the soul. It is the business of the state *only* to affirm and protect the unfettered exercise of these twin rights. It is the business of the facilitators of these kinds of growth to develop forms of training and accreditation that are both responsible and at the same capable, in terms of their content and method, of unlimited progression and unfoldment.

The 1989 guidelines for membership of the Association of Humanistic Psychology Practitioners, in the section which gives details for applying for full membership, represent a sorry mess. This section falls between the stool of self-assessment and self-selection of practitioner categories, and the stool of imposed criteria for the category of psychotherapist imported from the UK Standing Conference for Psychotherapy. These criteria are not only imposed, they also appear to be restrictive and out-moded, implying a total separation – within a closed, hierarchical professional enclave – of psychodynamics from socio-political dynamics. It is all very unhealthy, and looks as though humanistic practitioners are incongruently choosing a form of professionalisation quite at odds with the interrelated values of self-realisation and social transformation which have so far distinguished humanistic psychology.

Reference

Foster, J.G. (1971). *Enquiry into the Practice and Effects of Scientology.* House of Commons Report 52. London: HMSO

4. Research in a New Key: Towards 'New Paradigm' Methodology – A Review Essay[1] – RICHARD HOUSE

This review essay was written 25 years ago, in 1997, after I had read John's seminal book *Co-operative Inquiry* (1996). Immediately below is the preface to the review that appeared in my book *In, Against and Beyond Therapy* in 2010 (Chapter 18, p. 247).

'...John Heron is one of the most important figures in the history of the British Human Potential movement (though he now resides in New Zealand), having published a number of books that span both the relatively mainstream and the more esoteric literature. A central figure in the legendary Institute for the Development of Human Potential, he has profoundly influenced several generations of human potential and therapy practitioners around the world. His brilliant and far-sighted critique of the regulation of the psy therapies, 'The politics of transference', published in 1990, still makes for seminal reading. When his book on Co-operative Inquiry came out in 1996, I wrote two review articles on the book, the longer one of which I have, alas, been unable to trace for this volume. The shorter of these review essays follows, as it provides an effective portal into a fundamental consideration of the nature of research in the psy field.'

*****

With the recent and highly welcome resurgence of interest in Goethean science

(Bortoft, 1996; Naydler, 1996), the idea of *participation* is becoming a central focus in any account of how we derive embodied values or construct valid knowledge about the world (Edelglass et al., 1997; House, 1997a; Skolimowski, 1994). One of the leading figures in this movement is John Heron, who first developed an account of the participatory world-view in his book *Feeling and Personhood* (1992). His latest book, *Co-operative Inquiry* (hereafter referred to as CI) will be warmly welcomed by those looking for epistemologically mature and sustainable alternatives to the positivist *Weltanschauung*.

CI is fundamentally concerned with research *with* people, not research *on* or about them. All those involved are *both* co-researchers doing the thinking that generates, manages and draws conclusions from the research, and also co-subjects involved in the experience and action that is the focus of the inquiry. The inquirers move through several cycles of reflection and action, taking account of a range of validity procedures in the process.

CI contains detailed discussions of the various types of inquiry, and the range of inquiry topics: the setting up and facilitating of an inquiry; the stages of the inquiry cycle; and types of outcome and the enhancement of research validity. Heron uses his wealth of practical experience with the CI methodology to fill out the text with fascinating illustrative vignettes of actual CIs. The dangers of collusion in the CI research process are explicitly addressed, with detailed procedures outlined to minimise its effects (pp. 146–8).

COMMENTARY

Within a CI, 'the primacy of the practical is privileged' (pp. 34–5) over and above the so-called propositional outcomes of over-intellectualised academic discourse and culture. Practical knowledge, then, 'takes the knowledge quest beyond justification, beyond the concern for validity and truth values, into the celebration of being values...' (which will be defined below – p. 34; see his Chapter 9), In such a knowledge hierarchy, intellectual knowledge is *not* (as it is in positivist discourse) at the pinnacle, controlling everything below it; rather, in what Heron calls 'a dynamic up-hierarchy' (p. 34), practical knowledge is afforded privilege over intellectual, propositional knowledge, and the latter is only of value to the extent that it can facilitate and inform practical being-values. For Heron, the central issue is whether the outcomes of the inquiry enable the inquirers to act in a coherent and concerted way within the inquiry domain.

CI fundamentally and refreshingly challenges 'the current mould still upheld by the majority of researchers today, that only the expert elite know how to acquire real knowledge, and how to apply it' (p. 100), For Heron, CI is 'the collaborative accomplishment of lived inquiry as an art-form' (ibid.). There are echoes here of the Goethean view of science to which Heron himself refers (pp. 91, 174): for Goethe, science should be concerned with the phenomenological experiencing of the 'authentic wholeness' of nature, and with communicating such experience through artistic media, rather than atomising and reductionist approaches that necessarily do a violence to the indissoluble holism of nature by creating a fetish of split-off analytical ways of knowing. The CI methodology is as relevant to the natural or 'hard' sciences as it is to the social sciences; and the CI procedure promises the 're-enchantment of nature' (Berman, 1981) for which new-paradigm scientists like David Bohm, Frijof Capra and Rupert Sheldrake have long been calling.

With his 'participative paradigm', Heron skilfully negotiates a sustainable path between the anti-science, 'anything-goes' anarchistic, post-structuralist epistemology of a Paul Feyerabend (1975), and the soul-less mechanistic positivism that currently dominates much of Western science. For Heron, 'it is clearly not the case that any old articulation will do' (p. 143), and he therefore calls for 'critical, rigorous and disciplined subjectivity' (ibid.). While he recognises the inherent limitations of propositional,

conceptual ways of knowing, Heron carefully avoids the anti-intellectual, anti-conceptual positions sometimes embraced by the so-called 'New Age' movement.

In Chapter 9, Heron describes in detail the procedures by which validity within a CI is secured. For him, research can easily become 'a kind of pathological acting out of [researchers'] own repressive denial of the truth about themselves' (p. 150) – and indeed, 'the whole scientific enterprise can be seen as a defensive collusion' (ibid.). Thus, so-called 'objective' empirical research procedures routinely ignore the role of *anxiety* in distorting both the methodology and the findings of the research process (cf. Devereux 1967). In CI, by contrast, the effects of anxiety and other potentially 'acted-out' emotions are directly and experientially addressed in the research procedure itself. Trust-building will clearly be crucial in such an emotionally demanding process (pp. 155–6).

In the CI research process, 'outcomes ... are valid if they are well grounded in the forms of knowing – practical, propositional, presentational, experiential – which supports them' (p. 158). Furthermore, and following Goethe again, 'Valid outcomes alone are not enough They need to be self-transcending, and metamorphose into exuberant outcomes. Beyond epistemological validity is the joy of human life' (p. 168). In this process, then, *passion and knowledge* become holistically reunited, and the artificial positivist splitting of reason from emotion can potentially be healed.

Heron's notion of 'being-value' is central to his CI philosophy, and one which surely has enormous potential. Being-value refers to that which is 'intrinsically worthwhile as a state of being' (p. 172). It seems to me that it is one's *'being-stance'* (p. 172) that must lie at the heart of CI: for in CI, being-orientation is just as important as doing-orientation; openness, iterative reflexivity and process monitoring are explicitly privileged over premature closure; and uncertainty, ambiguity and chaos are accepted as a natural aspect of the unfolding inquiry, rather than as unwelcome irritants to an allegedly 'objective' research process.

Heron's CI epistemology, then, moves beyond the conventional philosophical 'theories of truth' (correspondence, coherence) to offer what he calls an integrated, or 'congruence' theory of truth (p. 168), which notion broadens the meaning of truth to embrace *all* forms of knowing, and echoes Skolimowski's 'participatory truth' (Skolimowski, 1994; cf. House, 1997b).

It will no doubt be very tempting to scour Heron's book for a recipe or template with which to implement a CI. It cannot be sufficiently emphasised, however, that, as Heron writes, 'There cannot be in this field such a thing as the one and only right, proper or correct method. There can only be my, or your, or our view as to what is a good method' (p. 49). The only true way holistically to learn about CI is to experience it for oneself.

Heron's Chapter 10, 'A Postconceptual World-View', both summarises beautifully the limitations of prevailing world-views, and also articulates the possibility of a far less alienated, more integral way of being in the world. My only slight disappointment is that Heron doesn't say more about the psychodynamics of our alienated ways of being, rooted as they most surely are in commonly repressed anxiety and pain. Anyone familiar with the likes of Professors Lewis Wolpert and Richard Dawkins – and the quite contemptuous disdain they show for any approach which doesn't conform to the world-view of positivist science (House, 1997c) – will be acutely aware of the desperate rigidity with which the scientistic mentality clings to its 'objective' certainties, and must rubbish, perhaps through unacknowledged anxiety, any alternative world-view.

Heron also convincingly demonstrates just why control trial methodology (or CTM) (in which there is random allocation of subjects to an experimental treatment group and a

matched control group) is woefully inadequate from a scientific viewpoint – namely, because: (1) its statistical methodology hides, through the comparison of means, what actually happens to *individuals* in the trial – meaning, for example, that there may easily be some people in *both* groups who are worse off after treatment; (2) CTM therefore ignores the different responses of different individuals to the same treatment, so that, as Heron argues, '[CTM] cannot help with the everyday question, "What is the treatment of choice for this individual patient?"' (p. 198); (3) CTM ignores the powerful effect of mind on body and the latent phenomenon of self-healing; (4) In true naïvely causal-empiricist mode, CTM assumes the validity of its mechanistic univariate approach which separates out the single treatment variable from all other influences to assess its causal impact (as if real, lived life were like that!); (5) CTM objectifies suffering as a 'thingified' process, reifying 'external' causal influence and ignoring subjective illness categories experienced and made sense of by the patient/client, and ignoring the meaning or 'tacit intentionality' (Heron) of the illness; (6) and finally, CTM ignores the possibility that its so-called 'statements of fact' (including variable specification and measurement) must inevitably be theory- and value-laden, and can only be formulated *within a pre-existing (and self-fulfilling) set of theoretical assumptions* (p. 197).

The CTM researcher also assumes that patients/clients are essentially the same, whereas the best of clinicians strive to be open to client uniqueness, difference, and even destiny. Of course clinicians will make all manner of human perceptual errors, misattributions and the like; but a far superior way to respond to such shortcomings is surely to strive ongoingly to loosen and deconstruct one's assumptions and associated practices, than it is to throw out the 'baby' of individualised treatment with the 'bathwater' of the occasional errors it makes – or far worse, replace it with the technocratic positivism of CTM-informed clinical practice.

It follows from this (to my mind) devastating critique of CTM (and Randomised Controlled Trials) that what is urgently needed is a paradigmatic meta-view that attempts to locate and account for our historically and culturally specific methodological procedures within the context of the evolution of human consciousness (Steiner, 1966; Crook, 1980), if we are to gain a reflexive purchase on those methods and, hopefully, deepen and widen them.

CONCLUSION

As the modernist and anxiety-driven craving for certainty, controllability, replicability, audit, cost-effectiveness and the like takes hold in our culture (e.g. Power, 1997), so the dangers of an uncritical (and epistemologically naïve) embracing of positivist research procedures should be all too obvious. CI certainly provides a welcome antidote to the soul-less positivist *Zeitgeist*.

The Scientific and Medical Network has recently begun experientially to explore David Bohm's Dialogue form of large-group inquiry (Bohm, 1996), and there is enormous potential here for a rich cross-fertilisation between Bohmian Dialogue and Heron's CI methodology. Certainly, *Co-operative Inquiry* will be essential reading for anyone dissatisfied with or troubled by conventional 'old paradigm' approaches to apprehending and understanding the world, and I unreservedly recommend it to researchers of every hue.

Note

1 Published in this form in Richard House's *In, Against and Beyond Therapy: Critical Essays Towards a Post-professional Era*, PCCS Books, Ross-on-Wye, 2010, pp. 269–90; originally published in *Network (Scientific and Medical Network)*, 65 (December), 1997, pp. 57–8.

References

Berman, M. (1981). *The Reenchantment of the World.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Bohm, D. (1996). *On Dialogue*. London: Routledge.

Bortoft, H. (1996). *The Wholeness of Nature: Goethe's Way of Science*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.

Crook, J.H. (1980). *The Evolution of Human Consciousness.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Devereux, G. (1967). *From Anxiety to Method in the Behavioral Sciences*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press.

Edelglass, S. & others (1997). The Marriage of Sense and Thought: Imaginative Participation in Science. Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Books.

Feyerabend, P. K. (1975). *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*. London: New Left Books.

Heron, J. (1992). *Feeling and Personhood*. London: Sage.

House, R. (1997a). Participatory ethics in a self-generating practitioner community. In R. House & N. Totton (eds), *Implausible Professions* (pp. 321–34). Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books (updated edn 2010, pp. 349–62).

House, R. (1997b). Therapy in New Paradigm perspective: the phenomenon of Georg Groddeck. In R. House & N. Totton (eds), *Implausible Professions* (pp. 225–40). Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books (updated edn 2010, pp. 248–63).

House, R. (1997c) Bleached skeletons and new science (Letter – Reply to Lewis Wolpert). *The Therapist*, 4 (4): 47.

Naydler, J. (ed.) (1996). *Goethe on Science: An Anthology of Goethe's Scientific Writings*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.

Power, M. (1997). *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Skolimowski, H. (1994). *The Participatory Mind: A New Theory of Knowledge and of the Universe*. London: Penguin/Arkana.

Steiner, R. (1966). *The Evolution of Consciousness as Revealed through Initiation-knowledge*, 2nd edn. London: Rudolf Steiner Press (orig. 1926).

5. Some Online Memories of John Heron

Facebook: Original Post by CATHERINE LLEWELLYN – see https://tinyurl.com/3kykp6r7

The great John Heron passed away a few days ago, after a lifetime of service to the consciousness and expansion of humans everywhere.

Since the early 80s I've had the pleasure of participating in several learning experiences with John, attending his book launches, reading his books and applying much of his work in service to my clients. He's been a leading light in my life.

In Memoriam to a very great man.
Thank you John, from the bottom of my heart.

Responses [as of 1 January 2023]

5 hearts, 8 likes, 11 hugs, 1 share, 7 comments

John Nugent
Yes, his work had such a profound influence on my developmental journey. I feel a deep gratitude for that and celebrate his wonderful life and works.

Jane Anglin
Thank you John.

LinkedIn: Original Post by CATHERINE LLEWELLYN – see https://tinyurl.com/4km8wmxx

The great John Heron passed away a few days ago, after a lifetime of service to the consciousness and expansion of humans everywhere.

Since the early 80s I've had the pleasure of participating in several learning experiences with John, attending his book launches, reading his books and applying much of his work in service to my clients. He's been a leading light in my life.

If you and I have worked together, I may have mentioned John to you, or even offered you bits of his writings here and there.
For anyone interested in such matters, I recommend perusing his publications list, enclosed in the attached document. Lots of rich and enlightening material to be found there.

In Memoriam to a very great man.

Thank you John, from the bottom of my heart.

Responses [as of 1 January 2023]

1,157 views, 4 hearts, 6 support, 10 likes, 6 hugs, 3 shares, 7 comments

Dr Lynne Sedgmore CBE.
I too love his work and every interaction I had with him at Surrey Uni, remarkable man. RIP.

Jim Sharman
Sad news that, Catherine, but thanks for sharing.
Heron's Intervention styles set me on the coaching pathway. Without them, I would likely never have understood my purpose.
Rest in peace, John.

Thom Dennis
Thank you for highlighting the passing of John Heron, Catherine. He was a towering influence for me, most particularly in the arena of #facilitation (). What a towering, deep thinking influencer he was.

Ray Martin
I still think about and refer to his six categories of interventions after all these years (don't ask me to name all six though) - what a great man.

John Nugent (in response to Ray)
Yes both his Six cats and dimensions and modes of facilitator style have influenced my work for over 25 years now. Helping the Client, The Facilitator's Handbook and Feeling and Personhood were three of my favourite reference books throughout the years.

Catherine Llewellyn
I just experienced the privilege of witnessing John's funeral. Deeply moving. So many accolades and much heartfelt gratitude from all corners of the planet. His gift lives on - in spades. I am filled with awe and love and gratitude. For John and for all who hold, embody and gift the principles he espoused and shared so widely. Some of you are reading this right now. Salut friends.
Amen.

Lynne Sedgmore CBE (in response to Catherine)
Thank you Catherine- sounds beautiful

Catherine Llewellyn (in response to Lynne)
Dr Lynne Sedgmore CBE thank you yes it was ... and I am profoundly struck by the awareness that there are so very many of us out there doing important work to help the human condition, in many cases enhanced by John's work.