



Editorial

Welcome to the 7th issue of our online magazine for *Self & Society*. For this issue, we've reverted to our normal custom of making less than half of the online magazine 'open access', in order to secure the integrity of our membership and subscription base. In a psychology world so desperately in need of what Humanistic Psychology has to offer, I would love to make all of the excellent contributions to our online magazine free open access; and it's always an 'impossible' decision-making process to choose what to make open access, and what to be 'restricted access' to members only.

Warm thanks are due to the Board of the Association for Humanistic Psychology for allowing so much of the past few issues to be full open access, as our small contribution to the travails of the Covid era. As I write, it hardly seems possible that it is almost 18 months since the Covid era started; and there are few signs yet of what has been unleashed coming to an end. This journal will continue to cover pandemic issues; for example, in the next (Autumn) issue we will include a phenomenological account of a psychologist's suffering and recovery from Covid-19, as well as two lengthy pandemic-centred interviews with esteemed previous contributors to the journal. Readers are encouraged to submit contributions on these or on any other themes and topics. The Autumn (paper) issue currently being planned will have a strong spiritual and transpersonal focus.

But I wish to begin this editorial with the very sad news of the death of one of our most brilliant contributors, **Dr Faysal Mikdadi**. Faysal had

been writing regularly for the journal for several years, having been introduced to me by Julian, our Poetry Editor. I can honestly say that Faysal was the most delightful person I have ever met 'just by email'. I deeply regret that we never met personally; but his generosity and kindness were seemingly limitless. Even from his hospital bed having just had major surgery, he would reply to an email from me – and even apologise for not having replied sooner! Faysal's writings were inspirational and always presciently grounded in the humanities; a former Ofsted inspector himself, would that all Ofsted inspectors had this pedigree and background. I am delighted that we have some contributions in this issue to mark the passing of this great man, notably from **Susan Walpole** and **Julian Nangle**.

Now to the rest of this issue of the magazine. I'm a great believer in drawing on the wisdom of past writings in so far as they can help to illuminate current events (Faysal, indeed, always began his writings for this journal with a searingly apposite epigraphic quotation from our literary canon). For me, modern academia is far too quick in assuming that the relevance of past writings has necessarily been superseded by the inexorable march of so-called (scientific) 'progress'. The first two, very substantial, articles in this issue come from much-esteemed elders in their respective fields.

We start with a very prescient piece from **Denis Postle** on the much-neglected work of psychologist Michael Kirton. As those who know him will testify, Denis has an enviable knack of being ahead of the game; and many

years ago now, he shared the work of Michael Kirton in our then ‘Leonard Piper’ IPN peer group. I have often hauled out this model of ‘adaptors and innovators’ in many and diverse conversations since that time; and in the context of the current global Covid crisis and people’s revealing responses to it, I’ve been feeling that Kirton’s model is relevant to a full understanding of the psychological dimensions of what is currently unfolding. With characteristic generosity, Denis agreed to *Self & Society* re-publishing his detailed description of Kirton’s pioneering insights, from his interactive Human Potential e-book, *Letting the Heart Sing: The Mind Gymnasium* – a digital interactive guide to personal and professional development (see Postle, 2003; Bazzano, 2012).

For me, the importance of this A/I approach is well captured in the following quotation:

The way other people approach bringing about change is likely to be very different from our own, and so at first sight it may seem unattractive, or even alien and wrong. Adaption/Innovation (A/I) Theory underlines how important it is to be actively open to this possibility.

And as Denis concludes,

If you are concerned in any way to awaken a lost or dormant creativity, whether your own or others around you, I believe that along with creative process, technique and application, Adaption/Innovation (A/I) style could become a cornerstone of that development.

In this sense, then, Kirton’s A/I style approach is supremely relevant to the core concerns of Humanistic Psychology – something that Denis was the first to notice. It would certainly be fascinating to do some empirical research on the Innovator/Adaptor mix one finds amongst different branches of the Psychology field! Warm thanks to Denis for allowing us to bring this important work to *Self & Society* and the Humanistic Psychology world.

Next, we’re delighted to include an extended excerpt from emeritus professor **Brian Martin**’s important but much-neglected book *Confronting*

the Experts, which has perhaps even greater relevance today in ‘the era of Covid’ than when Brian published the book exactly 25 years ago this year. I recently had the great pleasure of interviewing Brian for a book I’m currently writing on medical science, and I was thrilled when he agreed to allow us to reprint the introductory and concluding chapters to *Confronting the Experts* – a book that’s not easy to get hold of these days, and to which he has also written a contemporary contextualising introduction especially for this issue.

As Brian writes in the introduction to his article, his core concern at the time was an ‘interest in the social role of experts, in how experts gain and exercise power, and how they can be challenged’ – an interest that led him ‘to investigate various academic studies of experts, to read many revealing exposés of establishment positions, and to prepare a handbook on methods for challenging experts’. It is highly sobering to read, further, that

There are many examples where – ...according to later judgements – the dominant experts have backed wrong ideas, dubious or corrupt practices, and illegitimate vested interests.... [When] a whole body of experts is linked to a powerful institution... [when] the expertise is systematically used to serve the institution at the expense of the public interest, [and] when influential experts are wrong in this situation, then it is serious indeed.

And perhaps with particular relevance to the age of Covid-19, Brian writes that ‘society needs more... critics. Without critics, expert establishments have too much power.... In order to promote a more open and participatory society, it is crucial that dissident views be heard.’ And his resounding conclusion is that, ‘*Without debate, no position is worthy of the unreserved support that establishments come to expect.* That is precisely why it is necessary for more people to learn how to confront the experts.’ (italics added)

I think Brian is saying something very important when he writes (as of August 2021), ‘These days, there are many more voices competing for attention, especially on social media. One

consequence is that counter-experts who are careful and rigorous have a harder time standing out from the welter of critical voices.’ And his invitation is also a siren call to readers of this journal! – viz. ‘It would be wonderful to see a new generation telling their stories of how to go about confronting the experts’.

Next, in her article ‘Confessions of a Covidiot’, **Anna Dusseau** takes us on a personal journey that can be seen as an experiential counterpart of the excerpt from Brian Martin’s book and the Martin Cohen interview (see below) – viz. (in her own words), that ‘Science today, like religion yesterday, provides personal comfort and shelters us from the fear of our own mortality; but science also, like religion before it, is a *political tool, leveraging cooperation and stamping hard on dissent.*’ (my italics) Refreshingly raising the question of death in relation to the current Covid-19 pandemic (I was immediately reminded of Ernest Becker’s seminal *Denial of Death* from 1973), you won’t find over-cautious fence-sitting in this essay – e.g.

[R]eplacing one monopolistic belief system with another gets us precisely nowhere. I am all for tolerance, all for healthy debate and discussion; but when one way of thinking gets so big that it can no longer be questioned, then it should be kicked in the teeth.

And it’s highly sobering to read that ‘coercive mass health programmes erode the path of nature itself, with consequences for the future of our species – and for all life on this planet – *that we simply can’t fathom*’ (my italics). I think Anna is a writer we’re going to hear a lot more from.

Next, to our interviews. In the book I’m currently completing on the limits to medical science, I include a series of interviews with eminent medical professionals, philosophers and researchers, and one of the interviews is on the question of paradigms and paradigm change with philosopher and writer **Martin Cohen**, whose excellent book *Paradigm Shift* was published in 2015. This interview conveniently follows on from, and is complementary to, the interview on Paul Feyerabend that I conducted with Ian James

Kidd in the winter issue of the magazine (Kidd, 2021). In the interview with Martin (which contains far more words from me, the interviewer, than I’m comfortable with), we dive deeply into the question of how it is that paradigms and worldviews seem to be so resistant to change and transformation, even when the evidence and arguments that refute the prevailing paradigm continue to pile up. As Martin concludes, in a view that chimes with the views of Brian Martin, ‘the warnings of philosophers of science like Kuhn and Feyerabend are all too true: science is at root about politics, and when it cannot operate freely, as I think it cannot now, nor can any of us be truly free either in what we do – or in what we think.’ Sobering words indeed.

In the second interview in this issue, and in her second contribution to it, home educator and writer **Anna Dusseau** brings her wisdom and insight to an issue that has variously challenged and delighted many parents and grandparents during Covid – viz. children’s learning and education. We keep hearing that in the Covid era, the number of children now being home-schooled is at a record level – with both the UK Parliamentary Education Committee and Ofsted making noises about increasing the state regulation of the home-education world. Anna is a former teacher herself, and so brings the perspective of both teacher, parent and home educator to her insights into the complex dynamics of children’s institutional and *post*-institutional learning. For Anna,

when we first left the school system, I felt as if there was a hole in our lives (social, structural, academic) that needed to be plugged; a feeling that was quickly replaced by the realisation that we are all happier now, and that the only reason we initially experienced leaving school as an absence was because it had already eroded so much of our lives.

For anyone interested in children’s learning in a New Paradigm perspective, this is an unmissable interview. And as a heads-up, hot on the heels of this interview with Anna, the next (Autumn) issue will contain a complementary review essay on the theme of humanistic education, titled ‘The struggle for the soul of the teacher...’ – which

will include a detailed bibliography of the humanistic education literature.

We have four ‘regular columns’ in this issue – including two new ones – from Paul Atkinson, Manu Bazzano, Miki Kashtan and Lucy Scurfield. First, in her regular column for the journal, **Miki Kashtan** treats us to her penetrating wisdom about boundaries, limits and capacity. I’m thrilled to have discovered Miki and her work, and even more thrilled that she brings a priceless gift to Humanistic Psychology (HP) through this journal: viz. sharing her deeply humanistic and spiritually informed insights for the world of HP without being handicapped by the often taken-for-granted ‘regime of truth’ that accompanies *any* field – including HP, of course! With therapy as a practice being so concerned with boundaries, I find it especially useful to have her insights about boundaries from someone who doesn’t work formally as a therapist. In the context of my own interest in childhood, one of Miki’s statements really spoke to me, that

The training that we get in being born and raised in patriarchal society is to ignore our livingness. It’s a fresh assault on each of us. Childhood is being trained to go against the natural flow that comes from within... [and] Accepting rather than judging our limitations is a key milestone on the path of liberation from patriarchal conditioning. It melts away shame and opens us to receive from others where we are lacking. This aligns us with life in all its mystery.

Therapy as a healing practice has a great deal to learn from Miki’s insight and wisdom, and it is a delight to have her writing for the journal.

Next we have a new column by an old friend and former Reviews Editor of *Self & Society*, **Manu Bazzano** – which, in one of my more inspired moments (modestly written, of course! ;-), I thought could be called ‘Manu Without Portfolio’ – to which somewhat mischievous proposal, I’m delighted to say that Manu enthusiastically agreed. I don’t think I’ve ever read a more sacred-cow-free-zone writer than Manu; and I’m sure that his new column will provoke and challenge us in ways that most

writings, even purportedly ‘critical’ ones, rarely if ever do. *Complacency Warning!*... – Suspend all assumptions, and be prepared to have one’s taken-for-granted ones exposed, and robustly poked, when reading this column! This is surely ‘fearless speech’ (*à la* Michel Foucault, 2001) at its provocative best.

Next, a warm welcome to another of our esteemed former contributors, **Paul Atkinson**, who I’m delighted to announce has taken on the regular ‘Political Column’ for the journal. For some years now, Paul has been a great pioneer of low-cost therapy in the UK, and for well over a decade he has also been a prominent member of the Alliance for Counselling and Psychotherapy. In this, his first column, he returns to an issue that this journal has regularly covered over the past three decades – viz. the vexed issue of the professionalisation of counselling and psychotherapy. I know readers and members have strong (and not always identical) views about this question; and as always, I would welcome letters to the editor on this issue, perhaps picking up on the vital questions and contemporary ‘politics of the profession’ that Paul so penetratingly and forthrightly addresses in his column.

Elmer Postle then offers us a fascinating review of an online conference he recently organised, on a theme that has been covered many times in this journal’s near-50-year history – namely, pre- and perinatal psychology and experience – and specifically in his current review, ‘trauma-informed’ care and choices in the maternity field. It is a great pleasure to have two generations of the Postle family adorning this issue of the journal! And Elmer will be retro-reviewing Sarah Buckley’s important 2005 book, *Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering*, in the Autumn issue of *Self & Society*.

Shortly before going to press, we received a letter from **Derek Lawton**, General Secretary of our sister organisation, the Association of Psychology Practitioners (AHPP), which raises major concerns about future intentions of the Professional Standards Authority that could have a deleterious impact on the humanistic therapies. Derek urges us all to give this our attention and

take the actions suggested in his letter. Excerpts from the AHPP's Briefing Document on this issue are also included.

Finally, we have some stirring, moving poetry from **Morris Berman**, **Julian Nangle** and **Susan Walpole**, and some great book reviews – including **Alex Gooch** on *Re-visioning Existential Therapy* (Bazzano), **Richard Brinton** on *A State of Fear* (Dodsworth), and two reviews from the USA by **Christopher Schaefer**.

As I put this, the latest issue of the online magazine to bed. I do have concerns and some anxiety about what some might perceive as a bias in the contents – specifically in relation to critiques of science, and the officially designated ‘pandemic’ and mass Covid-19 injections. My own reading of, and involvement with, Humanistic Psychology since the mid-1980s has always been one of critical, out-of-the-box engagement (perhaps an ‘Innovator’ rather than an ‘Adaptor’, to use Michael Kirton’s terms). I make no attempt to hide my own views on these issues; but it’s crucially important to emphasise that if members, subscribers or readers feel they would like to write for the magazine about anything Covid- or science-related, from *whatever* viewpoint – either *pro* or *anti* the mainstream narrative, or somewhere in ‘the non-polarised middle’ – of course your submissions will find a welcome place in the journal. In my view, dissent, and dissent from dissent (etc.) – and the mutually respectful engagement that hopefully ensues – are the very life-blood of free and open debate in a democratic society – as Brian Martin’s excellent *oeuvre* of writings going back decades resoundingly illustrates. And it goes without saying, also, that letters to the editor are always welcome.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as I’ve enjoyed putting it together; and as always, huge thanks are due to the design expertise and reliability of **Adrian Barker**, without whose hard work you wouldn’t now be reading this! And finally – do please share the link to the online magazine far and wide: for as **Lucy Scufield** regularly reminds us in her Chair’s Page, the time to get Humanistic Psychology

perspectives and commitments out into the world has surely never been more urgent than it is today. Go well till our Autumn issue pops on your doormat!

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