

[Outgoing Editorial]

A Look Back, an Expression of Gratitude, and a Farewell

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Two Roads Converged

I could never have imagined, when I was asked at an executive board meeting in Toronto in March 2006—chaired by our then-President, David Rennie—to take on the interim editorship of the division's journal, that I would still be serving in that role two decades later, now writing this farewell editorial. At the time, David was urgently seeking to secure the future of the journal, having just received a letter of resignation from the current editor along with a bundle of all the recently submitted manuscripts, with instructions to pass them on to a new editor. I had only recently assumed the role of Associate Editor, having contributed to the production of one or two issues in each of the prior three volumes. Given this experience, David and the rest of the executive committee considered me the most logical choice to step in and keep the journal running—despite my deep reservations about taking on the role.

For context: I was already well aware of the considerable effort required to produce even a single issue. For 15 years, I had edited *Methods: A Journal for Human Science*. When that smaller annual journal officially merged with *The Humanistic Psychologist (THP)*—which had been publishing three issues per year—*THP* expanded in 2004 to four issues annually. Not long after the merger, I was again approached to produce an additional issue for each volume to help keep the journal on schedule.

At that pivotal meeting, when I was asked to take on the role of "interim" editor, two members of the Executive Committee—David Cain and Harris Friedman—immediately offered

to serve as Associate Editors to support me. Even with their generous commitment, the prospect remained daunting. One significant concern was the lack of institutional support I knew I would face. Unlike my predecessor, I would not receive significant “released time” from teaching, nor administrative assistance, or even basic resources like a new computer or graduate assistants.

I remember returning to Dallas from that board meeting feeling like I had the weight of the world on my shoulders, wondering how long I would manage to remain in this new position as Interim Editor. I was already feeling overloaded with my workload as fulltime professor and graduate program director, along with my ongoing responsibilities as past president for Div 32 and as secretary-treasurer for Div 24 – so taking on the interim editorship was going to be an additional strain. The idea of suddenly being responsible for four quarterly issues weighed heavily up upon me because I already knew the toll that producing just one annual issue had taken. How would I ever have time to work on my own research?

Behind the scenes in the spring of 2006, discussions intensified within the Executive Board. Two factions were quietly advocating for different candidates to be appointed Editor-in-Chief at the upcoming APA summer meeting in New Orleans. After considerable deliberation, the decision was made—and I was formally named as the next editor. Upon stepping into the role, I chose to keep the journal’s masthead largely unchanged. I retained those who had ably supported previous editors, along with several of the original visionaries who had helped found our movement. I was deeply grateful to feel their continued support as I began this unexpected chapter of my professional life.

Thus began what ended up being a 20-year journey down a path of editorship that took my professional work in a much different direction than I had imagined for myself when I began my teaching career 25 years earlier. When I add to this the 15 years I’d already spent as editor

for *Methods*, I realize now that I've devoted a good portion of my professional career to the task of editing, alongside my vocational "calling" as a teacher. Editing, I came to understand, is not merely a matter of managing submissions or complying with production schedules. It is, at its core, a vocation of service to both writers and readers. Just as in the classroom I sought to cultivate students' clarity of thought and expression, so too in editorship I endeavored to support authors in presenting their ideas with precision, coherence, and impact.

Over these years, my role as editor has also afforded me a broader vantage point on the evolving conversations within our discipline. I have witnessed shifts in research priorities, methodological innovations, and ongoing debates that have shaped—and will continue to shape—our collective intellectual landscape. Qualitative research has attained more of a presence within the field of psychology, even as humanistic psychology has continued to engage in some degree of quantitative and mixed methods research. And within qualitative research, I am pleased to observe that phenomenological methods have been on the rise, and *The Humanistic Psychologist* has continued to be at the forefront in the development of these methods.

Serving as editor has therefore been not only a professional responsibility but also a privilege, allowing me to contribute to the stewardship of knowledge in ways that extended beyond my own scholarship. As I reflect on this dual calling, I am struck by how teaching and editing, though distinct in practice, are united by a common thread: a commitment to fostering growth, whether in individual learners or within the scholarly community at large. To have been entrusted with both roles is something for which I am deeply grateful.

A Further Note of Gratitude

The work of editing a journal is not something that one can do alone. Even when I had no editorial board for the much smaller journal *Methods*, I still had my publisher and his secretarial

assistant to carry out the job of producing and distributing the print issues of the journal. So, I wish to offer a heartfelt expression of gratitude to APA journals, under the leadership of Rose Sokol-Chang, with our current publisher Mare Meadows (and her predecessors) and production editor Rebecca Cottrell. Peer review coordinator Nick Millington was my “right hand man” in staying on top of my editor’s dashboard, serving as proxy when I was traveling or recovering from illness, and generally “watching my back” through some challenging times. More recently, Nick has been succeeded by Katt Fambrough, whom I hope will be with the journal for years to come.

In addition to the staff on the production side, there are the review editors and consulting editors who are truly the unsung heroes of the editorial process. These colleagues are entrusted with the delicate task of shaping discourse, refining arguments, and amplifying voices, all while maintaining the integrity of scholarly exchange. I particularly wish to acknowledge my current Associate Editors Harris Friedman and Christopher Mruk. Harris, whose tenure as Associate Editor has coincided with my own, has been a steadfast presence, handling articles outside my expertise and producing special issues on transpersonal psychology and human-animal relations. Chris, whom I have known since our Duquesne days, joined early as an Associate Editor after consistently providing exceptionally constructive reviews. Indeed, he has gone so far as to personally assist several authors in rewriting their articles, even to the point of helping to reconstruct them. His contributions also include the preparation of special issues on mindfulness (with Belinda Khong) as well as on the interface of humanistic and positive psychology (with Brent Robbins). Both Harris and Chris have chosen to retire alongside me, a fitting close to our shared service.

Other Associate Editors, including David Cain, Fred Wertz, and Ed Mendelowitz, contributed deeply before moving to the Honorary Board of Advisors. Ed deserves special mention for his deeply contemplative reviews, which were more like creative essays drawing upon sources from Nietzsche and Dostoevsky to William James, Rollo May and other literary giants to enrich our authors' work.

According to APA's records from the past decade, Ed Mendelowitz, Chris Mruk, René Muller, Belinda Siew Luan Khong, Dominic Barraclough, Eugene DeRobertis, and Harris Friedman have led the pack in the sheer number of their reviews, but also with regard to their high quality. Several others, including Erik Craig (who also produced two special issues), George Howard, Louise Sundararajan, Bruce Levi, and Terry Pulver have continued to provide reviews even into their retirement (when I have sometimes shamelessly reached out to them). Many of these colleagues have been there to help advise me with some of the difficult submissions, and they have come through for me on many occasions when no one else would step up to review. Moreover, all the above-named individuals have at one time or another helped to guide some of our international authors through several revisions, thereby enabling their diverse voices to be heard, when the easier path might have been for me to simply issue a desk rejection. That THP's rejection rate remains around 50%—lower than most APA journals—is a testament to this commitment to inclusion and to the extraordinary generosity of our editorial team.

Finally, I would be remiss if in acknowledging the contributions of our editorial team, I were to overlook the profound and meaningful presence of our Founding Editor, Christopher Aanstoos, in the ongoing life of the journal. It was his vision that first put in motion the work of

this journal, and it was his steadfast dedication to that vision that set a high bar for all to follow. Thank you, Chris, from the bottom of my heart.

Our move to APA as our publisher in 2016 has been nothing short of a great success. When we transitioned from Taylor & Francis, none of us anticipated the revenue windfall that would follow. Thanks to the APA's generous revenue-sharing formula, the journal has significantly grown the Society's financial nest egg while allowing the board to support conferences, hospitality suites, and student participation in Society events. Beyond financial strength, joining APA Journals has added legitimacy and visibility to our work. The professionalism, expertise, and collegiality of our colleagues in APA Journals have made this partnership deeply rewarding, one that I shall look back upon with fondness and satisfaction.

The Current Special Issue

The final issue under my editorship is this current special issue on the impact of Erich Fromm, one of the originators (along with Karen Horney and Harry Stack Sullivan) of what is known as the interpersonal school of psychoanalysis. Among his works that I have cherished over the years from the time of my graduate studies into my professional life in the academy, several stand out as touchstones for me: *Escape from Freedom* (1941), *The Art of Loving* (1956), *To Have or To Be?* (1976), *The Art of Being* (1989), and *The Art of Listening* (1991). These works have shaped my teaching and my professional identity as a humanistic psychologist.

When Niclas O'Donnokoé approached me in February of 2024 with a proposal for a special issue on Erich Fromm, I was immediately enthused – especially when I learned it would feature an international group of scholars from the 2023 Erich Fromm Conference in Germany. Their work explores contemporary humanist positions and theoretical perspectives as they relate

to current political and social developments, taking their points of departure from various aspects of Erich Fromm's multi-faceted psychoanalytic humanism. Thanks to the dedication of Niclas, his contributors, and APA staff, we are able to present this issue in record time as the closing volume of my tenure.

Moving Forward

I look forward to seeing future volumes of THP take shape. The new editorial team inherits a healthy backlog of articles already through production to ease the transition. As I take my place on the masthead among the “Editors Emeriti,” I do so with confidence in our incoming Editor, Louis Hoffman. Louis is a conscientious and fair-minded colleague, as well as a gentle and kind-hearted friend. His thoughtful reviews and feedback as a consulting editor have given me every reason to believe he will be an outstanding Editor-in-Chief.

As I now bring this chapter of editorial service to a close, I do so with a profound sense of gratitude. To the authors who entrusted me with their work, the reviewers who gave so generously of their time and expertise, and the colleagues and staff whose dedication sustained the publication, I extend my deepest thanks. Editing has taught me that the vitality of our field rests not in any single contribution, but in the collective endeavor of many voices working together in dialogue. It is my sincere hope that *The Humanistic Psychologist* will continue to flourish under new leadership, fostering inquiry, innovation, and critical exchange for many years to come. For my part, I step aside with a heart full of appreciation for the privilege of having served and with confidence in the future of the discipline we share.