

*I do my thing and you do your thing
I am not in this world to live up to your expectations
and you are not in this world to live up to mine
You are you and I am I
and if by chance we happen to find each other, it's beautiful
If not, it can't be helped'.*

The extent to which the irrational 'spontaneity' of the encounter differs from everyday experience may enable the participants to derive some titillation from the proceedings, justified by drawing on the sense of awesome mystical significance with which events may be invested, and by fabricating complacent theories about the 'revolution' (an 'inner' one, of course) having already started.

Encounter groups in Britain may not yet have matched the decadence of those in the U.S., where self-absorbed intelligentsia with time and money on their hands may lounge around for days or weeks on end in sumptuous country retreats; but their ideological and diversionary function is the same. They are a means of drawing large numbers of intellectuals into active promotion of extreme individualism, hedonism, and the psychotherapeutic ideology - the ideology of personal adjustment as opposed to political commitment and organisation, of self-fulfilment as opposed to social change, and of serving self and not serving others.

Gaie Houston

The Creative use of Hostility

I flipped through Barry Richards' article in a meeting, and warmed to some of his complaints, so I volunteered to write a response to it. But on a second reading, some of his complaints seem based on an extremely partial interpretation. Carl Rogers can answer for himself; he speaks of the 'desire to understand' being highly communicable and helpful. Helpful in allowing the speaker to experience and express his meaning, and helpful in allowing the listener - or reader - the possibility of expanded awareness. So I want to ask Barry Richards to use a Rogerian technique before dismissing Rogers. The technique is that of expressing your opponent's case in a way which is full enough to satisfy both you and the opponent himself, before expressing your objections. If he did this, Mr Richards would find himself stating much that he has omitted. For example, he ridicules the incompatibility of 'genuineness' and 'unconditional positive regard'. Rogers knows about this too. He confesses to having tried to maintain a front of UPR at times, and having been sussed out by his clients. Page 51 of 'On Becoming a Person' is one of many places in which he emphasises this contradiction and his praxis.

So I accuse Mr Richards of the sort of partiality which is producing defensiveness and cavilling in me. And what else is he evoking? An impatience, that he seems at times to be saying 'These men and these ideas are not in all respects perfect; therefore they are totally contemptible'. So what contradiction could underlie that? Maybe: 'I believe

that people can function in ways that are more satisfying, more reality-based, nearer direct expression of their needs, and emotions - their unity and fraternity! v 'I fear that any bourgeois-based philosophy of psychology will be elitist, 'liberal' in the sense of assuming that the individual can be free of, or transcend, the group, and blind and deaf to social reality'.

Hm. There is evidence around to support this. I think of my distrust of seeing the little attache-cases of middle-class hang-ups being opened up in Encounter, then apparently closed again till next week, same time, same place, same spot on the dial. I remember the contradiction, deeply symbolic to me, of hugging a Personal Growth Trainer at Bethel, and finding my nostrils filled only with the baby-powder smells of detergent and deodorant-like 'Let's Be Real, but not offensive'. I was disillusioned the other day when the decorator did not turn up till 3 one afternoon, because he had been 'into something really heavy' on his intensive group the night before. As if some mystic toxic quality of exploring his own emotions was of very much greater importance than fulfilling the contract to earn the bucks to keep himself. He didn't know there was going to be an Election, either.

Insofar as humanistic psychology stops short at individual insight, insofar as it is a commodity to be sold pot-like to the initiates, I distrust it. Insofar as it reestablishes openness in personal relationships, humility, creativity, social insight and heightened consciousness, I want to be associated with it.

So what do I want to happen differently from now, underneath the Humanistic Psychology umbrella, in this City? I want the Group and its effect on the people in it to be a focus, and The Group and its relevance to the rest of society. That means . among other things that I want group-leaders to go to and learn from the dreaded Fascist bogey, the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, instead of behaving towards it at times, much as Barry Richards seems to behave towards Rogers and Maslow and Perls.

I want the insight and sense of self-worth that often come to people through Encounter, to be the basis for their trying to trace out, and then oppose or change, the repressive forces that have worked on them through work-organisations and social institutions. In parenthesis to this, I suspect that many of the divorces and separations associated with the Encounter culture are a naive personalisation of social ills. The housebound mother gets it together in Encounter to rage against her husband. But she is only dealing at symptom level when she does so. For some wives, a re-organisation of the labour force of herself and her neighbours might be a more effective solution to her real miseries, than booting her mate out of bed.

So I want the focus within small groups to move for part of the time to working out effective social interventions. Which is not the same as buying an off-the-peg ideology.

What I want too is for more of what I call Real Issues to be confronted. One of these is money. John Southgate has suggested (for other circumstances) that if a leader is to be paid, the whole group should decide an appropriate hourly rate for him, then divide that cost between them, in a way related to their income or lack of it.

Another issue is leadership itself. I am aware of a sort of lovey sugar-coated authoritarianism in some encounter groups, which covertly holds the members in a non-confronting set. How can you turn father into brother, if all the while he is pretending he's little Sis?

Another issue is elitism, at all levels. Another is the double-standard - the open and confronting style in groups, and the gossip and back biting between them. Another is how people are *used* by groups. This can be an experiential path to a reverberating social insight.

I wrote the title to this article before I began. Then indignation made me begin a defense of the writers who had been attacked. A righteous and elegant defense. But it sounds to me now to be for the most part a loud 'Boo' in answer to Barry Richards 'Yah'. Daft really. I feel better pleased with my try at clarifying the developments I want within humanistic psychology. Ah. We must love our enemies: they give us life.

Claudio Calvi

Transcendental Meditation

A Special School Subject?

Introduction

A growing number of scientific studies are suggesting that Transcendental Meditation (TM) has exciting educational and psychotherapeutic potential. Perhaps the time has come for educators in this country to consider the evidence and study the feasibility of incorporating TM as an adjunct to current educational programmes, particularly those concerned with educational handicap.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who personally trains all 'teachers' of TM, brought the technique to the West some 14 years ago. He is also the founder of the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI), an interdisciplinary study which purports to explain and apply the experience of TM.

Anatomy Of Meditation

TM is a simple relaxation technique for gaining very profound levels of rest, and is based on an innate, but hitherto untapped ability of the nervous system to neutralise stress effortlessly and at will. The nervous system, which includes the brain, controls body functions and is the machinery of experience. Its style of functioning is cumulatively refined and integrated by regular practice of TM (two daily 20-minute sessions).