

John Raphael Staude

Consciousness in self and society

Notes about the forthcoming international conference

I'd like to tell you something about the origins of this conference, and the reasons why it has been organized as it has been, around the theme of 'consciousness' viewed both in terms of personal growth and in terms of social concern. The idea for this conference was born out of a conversation between Jay Stattman and myself last year when we both agreed that something should be done in response to the statement we so often hear: 'What is the next step after you've been in groups and gotten over some of your own hang-ups and inhibitions? What is the next step? Where can we go from here?' Since we agreed that none of us can be really free while many others are still unfree, we felt that the 'next step' would be to get together a group of people interested in this problem to explore it further on the basis of their own experiences coupled with some stimulus from a few people who have already given the matter a good deal of reflection. We hoped that at this gathering we might join with others in looking for ways of translating group experience into daily life interactions at home, at school, on the job, on holiday, wherever we might be. Our larger concern would be the generation and diffusion of more authentic, open, honest relationships into the larger society in which we live, and the transformation of institutions where they seem recalcitrant to serving people's need for personal satisfaction, and self-actualization.

As I argued in *Humanistic Society* (1972), the search for self always reveals the influence of the social world. Person and world, in fact, make up an interlinked Gestalt. There is a continuous tension between the needs of personal transformation and the dictates of social change. Effective action in one area generally discloses a need for changes in the other area as well. Both the individual and the family structure reflect and often reproduce conflicts in the larger society. At this conference we intend to explore in depth the question: How can the whole person, or the person who is growing towards greater personal integration, function as a heating agent in our broken world? We want to build some bridges between those people who put their major emphasis on personal self-development (transforming consciousness) and those who direct their energies to promoting social change (raising consciousness).

I hope that the conference on 'Consciousness in Self and Society' can be a gathering place for many different people who have, for one reason or another, come to question their traditional society and values and are looking for something more. I have in mind particularly the many people who have been personally touched and, perhaps, changed through their personal contact or involvement in encounter groups or in the human potential movement, people who are looking for a social direction that might follow from - or be in accord with - the new humanistic values they have come to hold.

Most conferences have the aim of a meeting of peers of similar professions, attitudes and specializations. We do not have this aim. Although most of the speakers on the programme are social scientists, their talks will be designed so as to stimulate discussion with maximum participation by conferees. Each day there will be several lectures presented by specialists to provoke discussion of the themes: 'Political and Social Consciousness', 'Creativity', 'Relations Between the Sexes,' and 'Transpersonal

Consciousness'. In the afternoons we plan to split into small discussion/encounter groups to pursue themes of common interest. We will use the 'mini-society' experience to foster integration of the substance of each day's activities. Of course, there will also be plenty of free time for wandering in the woods or socializing with other conferees at the lodge. We hope to use the conference as a source of practical ideas about human relationships and about personal and social change as well as to explore the limits of contemporary knowledge about consciousness in self and society.

Some of the names of speakers on the programme may be unfamiliar to you. Most of them are well-known sociologists, philosophers, historians, or social psychologists, but few of them (who are not humanistic psychologists) are known in humanistic psychology circles. Furthermore, a number of them may be unknown here because they come from abroad, from Germany, Switzerland, France, or the United States. The speakers were purposely so selected because we wanted to introduce some new - or at least unfamiliar - ideas and perspectives into humanistic psychology circles and the growth movement here in Great Britain. Furthermore, we sought to bring together a number of people with a strong commitment to *social change* to pool their knowledge and experience with those of us who have been primarily interested in personal change and in the transformation of our own consciousness. In short, we have attempted to build a bridge across the personal/societal dichotomy, using the concept of 'Consciousness' as the common ground from which to *begin* our dialogue.

The conference will take place at Cumberland Lodge in Windsor Great Park. It is a beautiful country manor within the grounds of the Great Park surrounding Windsor Castle. The registration fee for attending the conference is £10. Accommodation and full board at the lodge is £5.50 per person per day, except for bona fide students who will pay £3 a day. We can accommodate about eighty persons at the lodge. Reservations will be taken on a first come first serve basis upon payment of the registration fee and a £2 room deposit. For reservations and/or further information write to me, J.R. Staude, 13 Endsleigh Street, London W.C.1.

CONSCIOUSNESS IN SELF AND SOCIETY CONFERENCE APRIL 14-18, 1975 PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

First Day : Political and Social Consciousness

1. Zygmunt Bauman: 'Emancipatory Consciousness and Society Consciousness' - University of Leeds
2. Troy Duster: 'Marginality and Political Consciousness - University of California (Berkeley)
3. Richard Grathoff: 'Biographical Frames and Social Consciousness' - University of Konstanz
4. Herminio Martins: 'Consciousness of Time and Change in Social Theory' - Oxford University

5. Paul Walton: 'Consciousness and the Production of Consciousness in the Mass Media' - University of Glasgow

Second Day: *Creativity, Work and Leisure*

1. Hans Peter Dreitzel: 'In Search of Authenticity' - Frei Universitat, Berlin
2. Corinne Gilb: 'Problems of Self-Space' - Wayne State University
3. Lillemor Johnsen: 'Personal Growth, the Body and the Unconscious' - Oslo
4. John O'Neil: 'The Self and Embodiment in Montaigne' - York University, Toronto
5. Hugh Willmott, et al.: 'Identity Accomplishment as Existential Pastime' - University of Manchester

Third Day: *The Family and Relations Between the Sexes*

1. Bennett Berger: 'New Patterns of Coupling, Kinship and Sex Roles in American Communal Life' - University of California (San Diego)
2. Peter Smith: 'Conditions for Personal Change' - University of Sussex
3. Benjamin Zablocki: 'Communes, Extended Families and the New Consciousness' - Columbia University

Fourth Day: *Transpersonal and Spiritual Consciousness*

1. Zev Barbu: 'Consciousness and Imagination: On the limits of Self Transcendance' - University of Sussex
 2. Fred Blum: 'The Development of a New Consciousness' - London Society of Analytical Psychology
 3. John Crook: 'Personal Change and Enlightenment: East and West' - University of Sussex
 4. Christian Delacampagne: 'Transpersonal Basis for Society' - Paris
 5. Geoffrey Whitfield: 'Personal Transcendance in Zen, Christianity and Gestalt therapy' - University of Sussex.
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