therefore a technique of non-meeting, of manipulation and control . .,. (12)

By its very methodology and basic assumptions, behaviourism and 'behaviour therapy' reinforce implicitly an authoritarian frame of reference and dependency which is ultimately the very cause of self-repression and self-alienation - for which the patient came for therapy. Behaviour therapy is basically anti-therapeutic because it negates not only the human psychological experience, but it *denies* by its very method, the process of self-determination and the regaining of meaning, which is a central process in psychotherapy.

to be continued next month

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John Rowan

'I Create my World':
The Grammar of Growth

Jill Tweedie recently summed up her views of the growth movement in the Guardian, referring to the emphasis of self-responsibility in these terms: 'You're wretched, mate, because you chose to be wretched. So rot.'

Naturally we who are in the growth movement resent this kind of misunderstanding, as David Brandon pointed out in a letter in the following week. But it is important to get this point right, because it is so central to the whole case that humanistic psychology is trying to put forward.

I want to put it in these terms: saying 'I' is quite different from saying 'he' or 'she' or 'they'. In terms of grammar, first-person use is quite different from third-person use.

FIRST PERSON USE

If I say 'I create my world', that can be an incredibly liberating step for me. It can give me the energy to lift myself up by my own bootstraps - or more accurately, it can give access to my own energy, which was there all the time.

I once heard Charles Hampden-Turner describing the Delancey Street Project, a house for ex-convicts in San Francisco. It was full of people who were victims of society, if that phrase ever had any meaning. And yet he said that for each person there, it was only at the moment that they said - 'I create my world' - that they could change their destiny. Once they had that, they could create a healthy community with a genuine capacity for healing and for survival.

Few of us are buffeted by fate as much as the men and women in Delancey Street - for most of us it is easier to take control of our own lives. And this is one of the main effects of personal growth, this ability to say, this is my life, and I run it.

In doing this, we are not denying that the world is complicated, or that we are subjected to many pressures. We are just saying that *we decide* which pressures to respond to, and how to respond to them. Different people choose differently. But if I pretend that I have no choice, I am just copping out, avoiding the issue, letting myself off the hook - and therefore not learning anything, not changing.

Taking this attitude, of taking responsibility for creating my world, is not like hiding behind a role. It is more exposed, more honest more risky. It is responsive as well as responsible. It makes me feel like a human being. When I do this, it makes me into a person, and takes me away from behaving like a thing.

So I value this as a key part of the whole message of humanistic psychology.

THIRD PERSON USE

But look what happens when I change it slightly, and say 'He creates his world', or 'She creates her world' or 'They create their world'. Immediately this turns me into an observer, a commentator, even a judge. I am standing outside the person and the situation, and making myself superior to them both. And I am implicity witholding any help, assistance or sympathy I might be capable of offering: it is a *cold* thing to say. It is a statement that *removes* me from the person and the situation. It is *nothing to do with me.*

And so the third-person use of this kind of phrase is a denial of solidarity, a negation of community. It is also contradiction of *my* responsibility for the situation that people find themselves in. I am not owning up to my part in the social situation in which a person may be suffering.

So there is nothing healthy or productive at all in the third-person use of this

statement. It is not conductive to growth at all - neither mine nor that of the *philosophy of humansitic psychology at all.*

SECOND–PERSON USE

So now, in the light of all that, what are we to say about the statement in its second-person form - 'You create your world'?

It seems that it must depend on context. In a context where I am identified with you, or emphatic with you, or very close to you - a situation where you trust me and feel my support - it may be just what you need. It may be the spark which ignites you. Even in this situation, however, it will be most effective when you see it for yourself; and the *least* effective thing I can do is to lay it on you as a truth. The nearer it gets to being first-person, the better it will be.

But in a context where I am *not* close to you, and where you do *not* trust me particularly, such a statement may well be seen as an even further reason for distance and mistrust. In that situation, it will seem more and more like a third-person use.

So in what Jill Tweedie objected to - 'You're wretched because you chose to be' - she was right in seeing its inhumanity and lack of feelings, its close approximation to the third-person use which we have seen is so harmful. But she was wrong in thinking that this is what Will Schutz or anyone else in the growth movement is saying. What we are talking about, and using in our own lives, is the first-person version of the statement.

A COUNTER EXAMPLE?

What we have seen so far is that the statement *I create my world* is potentially liberating, even though the statement *They create their world* and *S/he creates her/his world* are oppressive, and the statement *You create your world* is ambiguous.

But what if a person already takes responsibility for their world *too much?* We have come across the person who continually introspects and ruminates and goes round in a circle of guilt and self-blame. And a recent article says that alcholics quite often picture themselves as omnipotent:

The experience at work here is best described in the phrase, 'I can do anything I want'. It consists basically in an overblown sense of the world's malleability to one's own decisions. . . This. . .adds up to *unrealistic volition.* . . The ironic upshot. . .an actual condition of growing impotence.

How can we say that *I create my world* is a healthy attitude in the face of such strong evidence showing it is false and phoney? There seem to be two main parts to the answer.

1. The first part is to ask the question - 'Who is the *I* we are referring to?' It seems that

most psychologists who have studied personality have made a distinction between at least two things we could be referring to by the word 'I'.

JUNG	Self	Persona, complex
ADLER	Creative self	Guiding fiction
ASSAGIOLI	Self	Subpersonalities
LOVE	Primal Will	Conscious will
LAING	Real self	False self
PERLS	Self	Self-image

Now when the humanistic psychologists says I create my world, it is something in the first column that he is referring to. But when an alcholic says 'I can do anything I want', it is something in the second column that he is referring to.

It is one of the essential characteristics of the second column that the entities within it very easily get inflated, unreal and highly coloured. They are prone to idealization. They can get very much tied up with sex roles. They can get festooned with *shoulds* and *oughts* and *have tos*. This is why one of the main aims of humanistic psychology is to find ways of enabling people to get in touch with what is in the first column.

2. The second part is to see the point that was discovered in one Mowrer's integrity groups - *You alone can do it, but you can't do it alone.*

When someone says - 'I create my world' - this does not mean that s/he is condemned to some kind of isolated individual struggle or some lonely peak of perfection. It just means that there is no evasion any more. No stories, to excuse, no hiding behind roles, no pretending that we didn't really mean it.

And in action, other people are involved - need to be involved. One of the nicest discoveries we can make is that we don't have to do it alone. It sounds at first as if we have to - and many people get taken in at first by the illusion that they have to - but we don't have to make it on our own. I alone can do it but I don't have to do it alone.

CONCLUSION

It seems to me that it really matters to get this right. Humanistic psychology is open to many misunderstandings, because it is all based on experience rather than theory, and experience is such an individual thing. It is hard to explain something which feels so clear, and so I may give up the attempt to explain, and say - 'Forget the explanation until you've shared the experience.' But if I do this I leave it open to Jill Tweedie, or any other honest listener who has *not* shared the experience, to get it all wrong and therefore reject the whole thing. I just hope this attempt to explain works.