

read from D H Lawrence: because his work is one of the places where a uniquely British energy is at its most vibrant. It kept me alive and breathing for years before I found the growth movement.

...The Conference began with a Huxley: his father and grandfather were closely associated with the intellectual tradition that is embodied in University College. And the college was a characteristically British academic structure for us: solid, amusedly if uneasily tolerant, controlling, but somewhere genuinely interested. The sort of hosts the British have always been - and that is what draws foreign energies to us; our receivingness and our groundedness are positive strengths.

Perhaps from a sense of what was missing in that rationalist tradition Francis Huxley turned to anthropology and therapy. Yet alongside that elitist tradition was another that lay in the working classes, and for generations British working-class energy has been suppressed by all kinds of control. But it's undeniably there - and emerging everywhere; not only neurotically, but in positive creative ways also that need validation and nourishment. The split between the classes, between thinking and feeling traditions, mind and body, between traditionalists and progressives, 'them and us', can be healed, as we heal the split in ourselves. John Rowan's model for a training in therapy, which he introduced at one of the conference sessions, seems to me to offer just that.

D H Lawrence was the son of a coal-mining father and a middle-class-oriented mother. His struggle, his intelligence, his response to the life in all people and all the nature, his creativity, his faith in the phoenix and the constant renewal of life, can be ours.

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Jim Scott

## **The Social Relevance of Humanistic Psychology**

This surely needs to be the subject of the next European Conference. Unless it is tackled, and soon, I believe Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi will be proved right in implying Humanistic Psychology 'pacifies the alienated and neutralizes the angry' (Humanistic Psychology: Progressive or Reactionary? Self and Society April 1977). The danger then is that HP will go the way of Mystical Scene, Flower Power and others who might like to think they are still alive and kicking.

I may be jaundiced. In one way, let us hope I am. In another, acting too soon is a lot better than too late.

Benjamin B-H (please excuse the progressive abbreviations) throws down a very serious challenge and it must be answered, either by refutation or by a course of action. Even if you have read his article, I think it helps to precis his main points:

- 1/ Maslow's commitment to self-actualization almost ignores society in discussing individual problems;
- 2/ Peterman's 'optimal interpersonal environment' involves no change in power relations or economic arrangements in society;
- 3/ HP and Maslovian metapsychology are elitist and authoritarian, potentially being used to support South-African apartheid policies.
- 4/ The people involved in HP (like others in psychology and social sciences) are white, middle class comfortable liberals.
- 5/ Most of HP is humanistic but not radical, and often even conservative.
- 6/ Overemphasis upon psychological factors in conflicts which are caused by real opposition of interests.
- 7/ The emphasis in HP on personal change predominates over group issues and like psychoanalysis offers the message of adjustment to the world around.
- 8/ The exclusively private view of personal problems tends to neutralize people who may otherwise be politically active.
- 9/ The mystical strand in AHP is escapist from personal and social problems.
- 10/ Encounter groups are symptoms of alienation but not its cure, and since they do not deal with the causes of dehumanization in society they may be regarded as perpetuating the problem
- 11/ Humanistic psychologists may be contributing to the illusion of change in society, offering a change in 'life style' without looking at basic problems and inequalities in society.
- 12/ Successful individual therapy will minimize motivation for becoming a 'social change agent'.
- 13/ HP offers a safety valve, an island or refuge of feelings and warmth, providing a shelter from social evils.
- 14/ The real sensitivity of humanistic psychologists to social inequality is accompanied by a reluctance to look at structural problems, on account of their ethic of being non-judgemental and accepting people as they are.
- 15/ Humanism emphasizes what human beings have in common. Radicalism emphasizes what separates them and starts with negation as prerequisite for struggle.

*Before going further I want to thank Benjamin B-H for a very penetrating attack, which, if you have read, I commend to you, for my precis loses a great deal of its power. I also realize as I write this that I am adopting John Rowan's ethic of collaboration through conflict. (1)*

*I want to return to a number of John R's potential responses to the challenge, but before that to comment on a number of other contributions to recent issues of S & S, which indicate how very pertinent is the challenge to HP and to its future.*

*I also want to make quite clear that the challenge is important to me personally as a facilitator in a growth centre to which I feel strongly committed.*

Having re-read Jerome Liss's series on 'The Politics of Group Participation and the New Social Revolution' (S & S, March, April & May) I can only say honestly that I find it embarrassingly naive and inadequate as a possible response to Benjamin B-H.

He takes up an anti-revolutionary position, saying it is only through evolution to non-dependency on the security offered by authoritarian structures that (gradual) change will take place - and then everybody wins. But what if those with an investment in authoritarian structures resist the change? - which they will, as I know from personal experience. It is no good saying they will be won over through recognition that they are imprisoned by their roles. As John Rowan says (2), those at the top find their work interesting, challenging, varied, satisfying and engaging a lot of their personality and skills. In other words they feel self-actualized.

What is strikingly lacking from Jerome's approach (as well as HP generally, with the possible exception of T-Groups and Organization Development) is comparable attention at the level of the group to that which Encounter does well at the level of the individual. Particularly I mean: the group discovering what it really wants, the power that this gives to the group, and how to get what it wants; group authenticity, group actualization and the ability to be (self?) group regulating. Even our language is individual orientated!

Jerome fails to recognise and utilize the power of the group in its transactions with management, being another power group. Does TA take this into account? I doubt it. And where in HP are there resources for training in group self-regulation? Jerome begs the question and I would dearly like to know the answer, since I am a member of non-hierarchical working group which has terrible problems in this respect. Incidentally I believe the Anarchy movement failed in its positive aims for lack of an answer to this crucial question.

*I now want to explore with you the extent to which John Rowan, in his book 'Ordinary Ecstasy' answers Benjamin B-H's criticisms. I use the word explore deliberately because I have decided to allow this article to develop as I write rather than to convey conclusions which I have already reached. My present intention is to*

*end with a final section on the remaining criticisms which still need to be met, if any, and the next steps that I think HP needs to take. But it may not turn out that way - like any good encounter group.*

To start with one or two facts. One of the most significant events at the inception of T-groups which John Rowan recounts (p4) was the request of trainees to take part in a meeting of their group trainees to take part in a meeting of their group trainers, organized by Kurt Lewin in 1946. The result was 'emotional, involving, almost explosive, but a fantastic learning experience for those (including the trainees who took part'. 'The principle of feedback was discovered'. The early development of T-Groups, and the changes expressed in the people who had been on them 'led to the development of the encounter group' (p 87).

The point which I am trying to make is that the initiative of the trainees was a social and a political action taken by the group as a group. So what? Well, it raises the question: is the collective action of the group an intrinsic ingredient of T-Groups and encounter groups and therefore of HP? If so, how is it that Benjamin B-H can accuse HP of being elitist and authoritarian (3/), conservative (5/) and promoting an exclusively private view of personal problems (8/)?

Curiously, despite the early events recounted - incidentally in connection with people learning democratic leadership, which John Rowan a few pages later refers to (significantly) as 'democratic training' (p 8) - the aim of T-Groups has developed 'to produce a person who is sure enough of herself not to need to push others around or restrict their freedom' (P5). Carl Rogers (6) gives the following descriptions: *T-group* originally tended to emphasize human relation *skills* but has become much broader in its approach.

*Encounter group* tends to emphasize personal growth and the development and improvement of interpersonal communication and relationships through an experiential process.

*Task-oriented group*. Widely used in industry. Focuses on the task of the group in its interpersonal context.

*Organizational development group*. The primary aim is growth in skill as a leader of persons.

Nowhere, in any of these descriptions, is there any reference to the training of the group as a group. Carl Rogers goes further, in saying the primary thrust of the National Training Laboratory T-groups 'has been in the industrial field, reaching managers and executives This direction developed primarily because industry could afford the expense of such group experiences for its top personnel'. In both task-oriented and organizational development groups the authoritarian context is obvious. Here seems to be the basis for the charge that HP is elitist and authoritarian etc. and the point where 'democratic training' went out of the window!

Worse still, it would appear there was conscious or unconscious deception on the part of some of those early promoters of T-groups in terms of their democratic

implications. As John R. says (p 87), 'the people who had been through T-groups (were) more open, more flexible, more creative, better at communication, altogether more nourishing' - and surely more egalitarian. John continues: 'But what often happened was that the person went back to her organization and was quite unable to be what she wanted to be, because of the restrictions placed on her by the nature of the organization itself. So either she conformed which meant giving up everything she had learned; or she resisted, which meant a long and often painful struggle, sometimes won and sometimes lost? or she left.'

John goes on to say the lesson was learnt from such experiences and 'the view gradually took root that it was not enough to work at the level of the individual atom. One had to start at the top of the organization and work on changing the whole culture of the hospital, or industrial company, or school, or whatever the organization happened to be.' Moreover the organization consultant became a facilitator instead of an expert involving a movement 'away from 'power over people' orientation towards a 'power with people' orientation'.

So far the direction appears to be increasingly democratic, particularly as far as the internal workings of the group are concerned, but is it really? The initiative comes from the top and the consultants could simply be used by management to 'pacify the alienated and neutralize the angry' (Benjamin B-H) and make the hierarchy work more smoothly, and unwittingly or otherwise the consultants may be 'contributing to the illusion of change etc. (B.B-H 11/).

John himself says just two pages earlier: 'Any form of education which adopted an authoritarian approach, laying great stress on hierarchy and formal roles, would actually make genuine democracy either impossible or very difficult. So the educational system we adopt has enormous political implications, either way.' He also quotes Schrank as saying: 'Real freedom involves the students' ability to choose the alternatives they want rather than accept the one they are driven to. . . They must win it for themselves'.

The point I am leading up to is this. Given that John, Schrank and others want to see HP utilized in increasingly democratic ways; given that hierarchy does harm to people as described succinctly on page 89 of John's book and elsewhere; given the alternatives which he describes in the following pages; is not the only way of meeting most of Benjamin B-H's accusations is for humanistic psychologists to refuse to provide their services to hierarchical organizations except where the aim is to transform them into non-hierarchical structures?

For HP to take such a stand would of course have many ramifications, and to take it at all would in my view require a social values encounter group (or many!) among human psychologists themselves. Related decisions would have to be taken in a similar way on such questions as: whether to accept work in institutions which themselves are organized hierarchically, such as schools and hospitals, but where the students or patients can be prepared for more self-determined futures; what to do if the institution

regards such preparation as a threat and starts to interfere in the process; what stand to take if the students or patients show a wish to apply what they learn in the groups to their present relationships with the institutions etc.

Another set of decisions would need to be taken on the principles affecting the organization of humanistic psychologists' own growth centres etc.: how to ensure they are run on non-hierarchical lines; how those taking part in the centres' programmes might participate in and influence the organizations; what forms of leadership are consistent with the aims of HP; whether it would be appropriate for humanistic psychologists to belong to professional organizations of say psychotherapists, most of whom are elitist (accept the role of the expert), authoritarian and exclude feedback to the organization from members - does one join such an organization in the hope of influencing it or decline membership (an immediate problem for me!)?

Along with denying support to hierarchical organizations I would like to see HP encouraging the self-motivation of disadvantaged groups in society, community development work in deprived areas of cities, among the homeless etc. I am attracted to William Biddle's work in this field, (7) which John R. quotes, and have experience of a rather more informal and spontaneous approach to CD in clearance areas for future redevelopment than John describes (pp128-30).

Biddle describes very thoroughly the function of the community development encourager (equivalent to facilitator) and the effects of his or her relationship with different types of sponsoring organizations. I would like to see the involvement with disadvantaged groups taken a step further, whereby means are established for those benefitting from the activities of the growth centre to become part of the centre and, to the degree that they are able, to become HP encouragers or facilitators within the community or group - as has already happened quite extensively among ex drug addicts. Such a progression would, I believe, go some way towards answering Benjamin B-H's accusation that 'the people involved in HP are white, middle class comfortable liberals' (4/) while not excluding them from publicly announced and privately paid for events as at present.

*I believe the changes mentioned above would meet most of Benjamin B-H's very real criticisms of HP. There remain a few others with which I now want to deal.*

*Yes, the mystical strand in HP can be escapist from personal and social problems, (9/) but is by no means necessarily so. I believe HP already has the potential answer to escape from personal problems through the recent introduction and development of events which integrate meditation and other forms of spiritual growth with encounter group work. I am keenly interested in this development myself. There will always remain the problem of individuals not admitting in a group to a motivation to use meditation as an escape or encounter as a refuge (we have all come across encounter addicts) but given the existing ground rules which discourage such a hidden motivation these individuals must take responsibility for persisting in such action themselves.*

*I believe that should HP adopt the new social direction as outlined earlier, given time it too will be integrated in events along with spiritual growth and encounter work.*

*The accusation of human psychologists being reluctant 'to look at structural problems, on account of their ethic or being non-judgemental and accepting people as they are' (B.B-H 14/) is without foundation provided that such a view is balanced by an equal emphasis on an individual or group discovering and acting upon what he, she or it really wants and recognising the boundaries between own responsibility and the responsibility of others who might be affected by acting on such wants. The attention that Psychosynthesis gives to the development of will provides a further response to this accusation*

*I see the resolution to the paradox contained in 'Humanism emphasizes what human beings have in common (whereas) radicalism emphasizes what separates them' (15/) in John Rowan's ethic of collaboration through conflict. He unequivocally says: 'It (HP) sets a very high value on conflict, and regards the serious pursuit of conflict as an important road to wisdom.' (p 164). He paraphrases Lawrence and Lorsch (8) as saying 'the thing to aim at is the interweaving of differences, because that is what one actually has got to work with. Conflicts are then carefully brought out and worked with, rather than being overridden, smoothed over or ignored. And the outcome of this is that creative solutions emerge, which nobody had in mind at the beginning of the process. All growth is a process of differentiation and integration, and the differentiation is just as important as the integration.' John also talks about 'looking for the needs behind the wants' as does Psychosynthesis; and this also is the underlying theme, on a prosaic level, of the teachings contained in The Bhagavad-Gita. Herein lies the integration and resolution of opposites and the unity of existence. The problem on a social level is no different in principle from that which continually arises in encounter groups, with which humanistic psychologists have ample experience. It remains to apply the principle to the social sphere.*

My plan of action for the last two sections of this article has not worked out entirely as I expected, and I am glad of that. However, there remain a number of conclusions which I want to draw, together with a number of suggestions for the first steps to be taken towards a social and political development for Humanistic Psychology.

Humanistic psychologists need to decide very urgently and very seriously:

1. Whether to take a common stand on democratic non-hierarchical organization both for themselves and for those whom they serve, in the belief that such a stand is intrinsic to the philosophy and outlook of HP; and if so -
2. Whether to stop serving hierarchical organizations except where the aim is to transform them into non-hierarchical structures;
3. how to ensure their own organizations are run on non-hierarchical lines;

4. how the recipients of their service might participate in and influence their organizations;
5. how the training of the group as a group could be effected; and in particular how a non-hierarchical group could become self-regulating;
6. whether formal leadership is necessary in non-hierarchical groups, starting with their own organizations as groups;
7. whether to become or stay members of other psychotherapy organizations which are at present authoritarian;
8. to which individuals and non hierarchical organizations in society to direct their services; specifically whether these should include disadvantaged groups;
9. whether and if so how to attract into HP others who are at present outside its limited middle class white culture;
10. whether to become involved in community development work and train encouragers/facilitators within the community.

These are only a start. Please add your own questions!

As I said at the beginning, these issues surely need to be the subject of the next European Conference. Prior to that, the time could be well used in exchanging ideas and experiences, printed in *Self and Society* and elsewhere, and experientially in what I have called social values encounter groups, which I hope the Association for Humanistic Psychology would agree to arrange.

I am very conscious of and sympathize with John Rowan's view of HP as 'closer to the politics of experience than to the politics of platform and programmes'. There are indeed real dangers that the idea of HP taking a stand in the way I have suggested could turn into an ideological platform devoid of feeling and experience. Benjamin B-H has convinced me that the dangers of his accusations being confirmed are much greater if humanistic psychologists take no collective action on these issues - and then I think HP would fade away as irrelevant to society's main needs. Besides we can take account of and respond to dangers which result from our own actions. We are helpless in the face of dangers which follow from our inaction.

I wish to end with five fundamental beliefs representing democratic values which Elizabeth Simpson found to be correlated with the satisfaction of psychological needs which Maslow has said is necessary to mental health. Conversely, the more psychologically deprived the subjects (in this instance children) were, the less did they hold a democratic attitude or outlook. The beliefs are therefore a particularly appropriate expression of humanistic psychologists' political values. I quote from p 83 of John Rowan's book:



- a) Faith in human nature - the belief that human beings are basically good and trustworthy.
- b) Belief that people have some power over their own lives, rather than being controlled by the environment, or luck.
- c) Desire to think for oneself, rather than accepting the opinions of others as to what is right.
- d) Belief in the validity of the experiences and opinions of others - they have a right to be different. High tolerance and low dogmatism.
- e) Belief that the rights of other people are to be respected, just because they are human beings.

### References

1. Rowan, John '*Ordinary Ecstasy*' Routledge & Kegan Paul 1976 p.170.
  2. idem p.88
  3. idem p.96
  4. idem p.93
  5. idem p.184
  6. Rogers, Carl '*Encounter Groups*' Harper & Row 1970 p.5.
  7. Biddle, William W. *The Community Development Process: The rediscovery of local initiative* Rinehart & Winston 1965.
  8. Lawrence, P.R. & Lorsch, J.W. *Developing Organizations: Diagnosis and action* Addison-Wesley 1969.
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Roy Ridgway

## The Reality of the Other Person

The ability to see through things, which Nietzsche called 'the art of mistrust,' has always been a normal function of intelligence, even among primitive people, because we usually can't see people at all unless we are able to penetrate their disguises.

One of the ways of getting to know a person (though not very well) is through analysis and the integration of particular things about her, studying what behaviourists call the 'psychological events' - i.e. what is observable.

You listen to a person's words, but you also study the way a person moves, smiles, frowns and so on, the non-verbal language which is often more reliable than words. Words say one thing; the body may say something quite different. A person says 'I'm all right' when the shoulders are hunched, the body is sagging and the eyes look sad

A person may be afraid of the other's look. She's afraid of rejection. So she rejects herself. If you're 'not there', no-one can reject you because there's nothing to reject.

It may be more true to say that a person is what she hides than to say, as many do, that she is what she does. In other words, a person is what she cannot bring herself to