

John Rowan

The July Conference

SESSION ON "A BASIC QUALIFICATION IN PSYCHOTHERAPY"

This was a well-attended session - it seems that a lot of people are very - concerned about the whole question of how the field of psychotherapy is - developing, and of the best way of responding to the various pressures. Some people want to abandon the whole idea of psychotherapy, and talk instead about counselling, or personal education, or aided development, and probably some things will happen along these lines.

But this meeting was held to discuss a specific set of proposals - a three-page draft - which I put forward for consideration, after getting feedback from two previous drafts. These proposals involved a full three-year course of degree standard, resulting in a proper qualification as a practising psycho-therapist.

These proposals aroused so much interest that it was decided to set up a working party to carry the idea further and make it happen. Quite a large group of people volunteered from the meeting to be on such a working party. There are in fact a number of detailed tasks to be performed. These include:

Finding out what courses are at all similar, here or abroad, how they got set up and what we can learn from their struggles.

Finding out what groups of people are at the moment working on similar lines, so that perhaps we can make common cause, or at least not duplicate efforts.

Making contact with friendly people in the general area of psychoanalysis, so that we do not do anything foolish or ill-informed in that area.

Making contact with friendly people in the general area of behaviour therapy and behaviour modification, so that we can take account of their particular approach.

Deciding on the best composition and format of the working party itself, and in particular the question of what identity it should have, and specifically what relationship with the AHP.

Deciding on a list of people who should be invited to address the working party on the problems of getting something like this set up. Possibly, for example, someone from the child psychology side.

This is only a very rough and preliminary list of things to be done, but it

does indicate that there is plenty of work to be done, and that a large working party (probably working mainly in small sub groups) is in fact needed at the moment. The first meeting of the working party took place Wednesday 21st September at the Polytechnic of Central London. It was a rather difficult meeting, with several different points of view being expressed, and several different sets of interests being represented.

Ronnie Felton agreed to collate information which was sent to him about courses available, in line with the first two of the aims mentioned above. But the mood of the meeting seemed to be that the thing to aim at was not a basic qualification in psychotherapy, but *a foundation course for the caring professions*. A further meeting has been arranged, and it will remain to be seen how this works out.

John Rowan

THE JULY CONFERENCE

A DIALECTICAL PARADIGM FOR RESEARCH IN THE HUMAN SCIENCES

In a small room at the top of the building, two of us were talking. Bob said - "How many people are you expecting to come to this session?" I replied - "I should think at least ten, and maybe twenty - that sort of number." A few minutes later, I started the meeting, with five people in the room. Twenty minutes later, the room was bulging with nearly fifty people!

I started with a general description of how research in psychology is taught at the moment, with quotes from current text books to show how quickly the authors move from general statements about science as such, to experimental design and statistics, often describing the latter as true scientific method. The main criticisms of this position were briefly covered.

Then Bob Cobbing got up and read some poems of mine which stated some of the same things from the *inside*, as it were - my subjective anger and other reactions to the same things I had been talking about fairly coolly in the preceding bit. The poems seemed to get through to the meeting a lot better than the prose, in some ways.

Then I went on to mention briefly that there were a lot of different kinds of research which didn't use the experimental - and sometimes not the statistical - approach, but which were still important and highly regarded, in many cases. And I draw from them a new general model (or paradigm) of research methodology, which I proceeded to describe - Bob interrupting with more poems at various points. A lot of questions came up, and then we had a coffee break.

Coffee breaks are, of course, the great time for losing an audience - and this conference was particularly tempting for that, because of the number of competitive offerings, all sounding very attractive. So I was very pleased when about twenty-five people came back, and listened to Peter Reason (Bath

University) talking about his research approach, John Heron (Human Potential Research Project) talking about his, and Giora Doron (Goteburg University) talking about his.

At the end of the meeting there was so much energy that we could have gone on for another two hours easily - several people had detailed questions and problems which there was no time to deal with - and contributions too. So it was decided to have a follow-up meeting. This was held on Monday 19th September at the Polytechnic of Central London. This was a *practical* meeting, rather than an exercise in intellectual discussion. As a result, seven more meetings were decided on, at which most of the time would be spent on one specific Research Project, though some time would be spent on more general questions.

The longer term perspective would be to have a research network covering the whole country, giving aid and comfort to those doing non-traditional types of research. As a first step towards this, we are getting out an annotated reading list of books and papers on the new methodologies. When this is ready, it may be obtained from the New Paradigm Research Group, c/o Peter Reason, Centre for Organizational Change and Development, University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath.

The formation of this group seems a very exciting development, and once the initial group has clarified its way of working, and discovered a bit more about what it can and cannot do, it may be possible to invite others to join, or divide into sub groups some of which are more open.

WOMAN'S THERAPY – A DECEMBER CONFERENCE

In association with the Women's Therapy Centre, a group of women therapists and educators are organising a conference for women:

- A. who spend a substantial amount of their time doing therapy;
- B. **and** who believe that therapy can be useful in helping women to gain control over their lives;
- C. **and** who feel that current therapeutic models do not adequately address the issues in women's lives;
- D. **and** who wish to work toward the evaluation and improvement of training in order to better meet the needs of women.

The conference is to be held in London on December 3rd and 4th, 1977.

This is a working conference for women committed to rigorously and systematically examining the therapy relationship and their attitudes, practices, and premises in therapy. The further work of those attending the conference will be to assess the implications for training which this examination provides and to design and undertake action to improve training.

For application forms and further details send s.a.e. to the Conference Secretary, The Women's Therapy Centre, 19a Hartham Road, London N.7.
