



Frank died on May 10th and it was difficult to grasp: I had not seen him for over a year. His ties with the growth movement were not as close as they had been, and he was latterly working very hard at his research within the framework of the Clinical Theology Association and under considerable pressure. I felt I'd lost touch. Only when I came to write about him did I realise how great his influence had been, and how I'd taken in so much of value from him in the past five years and integrated it into my way of being and of working in therapy.

He was, above all, a person I could trust, because of the fineness of his understanding and his basic goodwill and plain common sense. "To trust each other with our mistrust", he once said, "is to speak beyond the boundaries". And we knew where we might mistrust him, for his dedicated largeness of spirit could give way to a startlingly wilful deafness and blindness - particularly in the furtherance of the research to which he devoted himself with all the maddening self-centredness of the true genius.

Frank's contact with the growth movement developed largely through his work on birth and rebirth: his kind of 'primal' therapy, his integration of Gestalt, T.A. and other techniques into pastoral counselling, provided many links, and for two or three years he was active at Quaesitor, running a training course, weekend groups, residentials, lecturing and participating in the memorable workshop led by Stanislav Grof in 1977. He was loved and admired by many people in the 'group world' and his impact was considerable. Suddenly the glamorous male leader image was being replaced by a very different father-figure: the elderly, astute, physically rather gauche British missionary-psychiatrist who offered a prayer before putting people through a birth primal, and whose benign and effective concern was backed by sound rigorous counselling principles and a profound sympathy with those in pain or fear. Inevitably this aroused in many who came into touch with him a need to re-assess and re-connect to their British Christian upbringing: this I think was a vital bit of grounding. For his part he clearly enjoyed the contact with lively feeling people and the change of milieu offered by the human potential movement.

I trained and worked with Frank and was supervised by him. He gave me wise and firm support at a difficult period in my life. We had many rewarding hours of conversation, in which I enjoyed his warmth, his mischievous humour, his extraordinary knowledge and phenomenal memory, and his chivalrous generosity. His published books and papers were invaluable contributions to

study and training. The beautifully compiled and embellished charts and maps, rich in therapeutic experience, imagination and familiarity with a wide range of literature, are unique. In the last years he was working on the fascinating broader social implications of life in the womb.

The conviction and vitality of Frank's Christianity led me to look again at the relative spiritual poverty - or denied riches - of my Jewish background, and to reflect increasingly on Jewish/Christian interaction. An important dialogue began there that we were unable to complete: indeed it halted at the place where I began to find myself in emotional and theoretical disagreement with his outlook. His tendency, as I saw it, to urge self-denial, and to ignore the body's needs, derived from an asceticism and an identification with the crucified that I couldn't follow. When he suffered a minor stroke in 1978 I told him he got no credit from me for overwork and self-martyrdom: if our suffering as Jews had taught us anything, it was that there is no virtue in being a victim: the pursuit of joy and life is the healthier activity. But I had to watch him become almost obsessively preoccupied with affliction, primal pain and the 'Maternal-Foetal Distress Syndrome'. While I amongst others saw rebirth work as the basis of transformational experiencing, leading to a celebration of life, joy, sex, creativity, Frank seemed stuck in a paranoid place in his research and in relation to the 'shrinking world', as he described it, around him. This perhaps was the developing cancer: his work had begun to seem depressed and ingrown. And with characteristic honesty he wrote, in a letter to CTA members, when he knew he was dying:

My clear priority, as I lie here, at times sleeping off what feels like aeons of tiredness, is to rest and grow directly into the welcoming tenderness of the Father. Almost always I have either been in the 'others first' posture, or, even when 'resting in God' for myself as I have increasingly learned to do, it has been on the faith-heart level, with the gut-level emotional needs walled off - disastrously so. I'm learning to be open on visceral levels. I'm arrested by the Latin which translates into 'Renew a right spirit within me'; 'Spiritus rectum innova in visceribus meis'. That is my prayer, 'Renew a right spirit in my viscera'.

Whether this will, with other faithful opennesses to your prayers for me, modify in any way the behaviour of the chaotic cellular rebellion, who can say?

I think it is the quality of self-confrontation in that letter I most love him for, and take with me: the free acknowledgement of his blindnesses, alongside his wholly clear determination to do good, to heal, to establish loving values in the world and to use his remarkable intellectual talents and indefatigable perseverance in that pursuit.

Of the many insights he gave, which I daily quote to myself and others, two came to mind when I thought of writing about him: "Idealisation is persecutory" and "Bad choices are the result of suppressing the creative alternative". Which is why I didn't choose to write an idealising 'obituary': it would have been a suppression of the creative alternative, of appreciating the humanness of someone it might be simpler to idealise. At times Frank would use his Christian aura to fend off criticism. But there was a deeper Christianity in him that in its open-ness, flexibility, and recognition of the power of its own mythology, gave me and countless others an enormous amount: not least the encouragement to continue the struggle to incarnate the spiritual in our work and in our living and loving.

Alix Pirani

Something New

Supposedly something new grew where dead
limbs dried and shrivelled
6 months ago I thought I felt a regeneration, new leaves,
life stir in the mud

--- Not to be cryptic, just dead love
damages foliage.

But nothing new has grown, no new shoots
out of the dead heart stump

--- Strong language for words on paper
Poetic form doesn't carry it
Too self conscious to feel right about growing.

Another year, no new growth, older, sad, no joy
Something's wrong

Life isn't just one love, romantically lost
Don't believe that

Life is the growth of my spirit to new joy
to new joy, buds and then leaves and then
joy

Beverly Feinberg