

skills. It was at this point that I began to review my experience of Eva Rosenfeld, and it all came back — the many days in her flat, everything I had told her and everything she had told me. I recalled things I had thought were long buried and forgotten. It was like beginning analysis all over again.

I began to turn away from fiction to write short pieces on bereavement. I decided to do a two-year diploma in psychoanalytic psychology at the University of London. I have become happily immersed in the vast body of literature on psychoanalysis and other kinds of therapy which is written by some extremely talented people, not all of whom are psychoanalysts. My interest in psychic reality and behaviour, the links therein, keeps growing. I have finally found that 'absorbing interest' which Eva Rosenfeld alluded to. There is no doubt in my mind that my analysis with her, after lying dormant all that time, several years ago resurfaced and became once again extremely important in my life. This past significant experience has led to my pres-

ent direction.

I now consider that I had a successful analysis and that part of its success is my recognition that more therapy will be useful to me in the rest of my life. I am now in once-a-week therapy. I can admit to myself that I have unresolved conflicts. Eva Rosenfeld would be the first to say, 'Ah, Patricia, I made a mistake, you did not finish your analysis,' if she thought this to be true. I have incorporated her way of thinking into my own.

When she died her family sent me an announcement of her death. They said she had died peacefully in her sleep. This short poignant note saved me from despair. I felt that Eva Rosenfeld was all right. She had gone to her paradise. Yet I realise that I am trying to complete my mourning for her by writing this memoir to tell others of her special creativity, and to celebrate her life and her great gift as a psychoanalyst. Perhaps I write this in her place, because she herself did not publish papers, nor write about herself. She wrote her ideas, her enduring messages, her 'self' upon her patients. She is lovingly remembered.

Eleven Embarrassing Problems for Psychotherapy

John Rowan

On 24th January 1998 Professor Alvin Mahrer spoke to the Psychotherapy Section of the British Psychological Society. His challenging talk was received with much interest and a few tough questions. What follows is not meant to be an accu-

rate report of the meeting, but rather a record of my responses to it. Here are the eleven issues he raised.

1. *Is there a field called psychotherapy?* He pointed out that in North America (including the USA and Canada) there were no

university departments of psychotherapy, and that degrees and diplomas never mentioned psychotherapy. If it were mentioned, it would only be in postgraduate degrees and diplomas: in other words, psychotherapy does not exist as a mainstream subject. This means that so far as academia is concerned, it does not really exist. I am not particularly worried because I think the scene is changing in this regard, both here and in Europe.

2. *Who owns psychotherapy?* There are many contenders, each one saying that psychotherapy is really just a part of what they offer. This includes psychology, social work, nursing, education, medicine, pastoral studies, guidance, family studies, philosophy . . . Each one has some claim, which they are reluctant to yield. So what is psychotherapy, really? This is a strange problem, and I do not see any ready answer to it, because of the territorial 'instinct' which seems so strong in people.

3. *What is the population which psychotherapy addresses?* It has no name, no identity, no boundaries, no limits. It includes all manner of problem groups, including people with problems in living, which is virtually everybody. This makes it even more difficult for psychotherapy to exist as a separate entity. I think this is true, and the same applies to counselling. Again I can't really see an answer.

4. *Psychotherapy often tries to fix problems which are unreal fictions.* Much of the jargon used by psychotherapists refers to problems which cannot be pinned down to any specific structures or actions. I'm not sure about this one.

5. *Psychotherapy often embraces pseudoscience.* Particularly in research, we seem

to think that if we can measure something, it must really exist. But in reality, the ability to construct statistically sound measures tells us nothing at all about the reality of the phenomenon being measured. This seems to be true, but not a great worry to the practitioner.

6. *We are supposed to learn how to do psychotherapy without studying the live work of good psychotherapists.* This is unlike the training of any other trade or profession. It is indefensible. In Mahrer's own training programmes, watching and analysing videotapes and audiotapes of excellent psychotherapists is an essential feature. This seems to me a very telling (and actionable) point, and I shall say more about it below.

7. *We accredit psychotherapists without assessing their competence.* There are all sorts of exceptions, but in North America for the most part licences are still handed out without any test of competence. Again, this is unlike most other trades and professions. I don't know if it is true here — all the training courses I know have some kind of live assessment.

8. *Using the most effective training methods people can be taught how to do good psychotherapy in two or three days.* Research evidence was quoted to demonstrate this, and it formed a good part of the discussion after the talk. People did seem to find it quite a shocking idea, and tried in all sorts of ways to wriggle out of it. But Mahrer appeared to have good evidence, which he quoted at length.

9. *Psychotherapists are mainly distinguishable by their ability to spout psychobabble.* In training, they pick up the way of talking in their training institute, and this

becomes their badge of proficiency. I feel there is some truth here, but it is not a big issue for me.

10. *Research is not used by practitioners, and is almost entirely useless to practitioners.* It has made no difference to practice in the hundred years of its existence. This is something I have also been urging for years. But Mahrer's own research, together with some others, shows that there can be exceptions.

11. *The basic beliefs held by psychotherapists are not open to falsification.* This can easily be checked. Ask a psychotherapist for one of his or her basic beliefs. Then ask what evidence would be sufficient to produce a change of mind. Actually this is true of most scientists, as Ian Mitroff discovered and explained many years ago, so I don't find it too worrying.

Here was a powerful and striking list of accusations, and people were quite stirred by them. But the one which aroused the most interest was number eight. Mahrer explained that the people he had chosen to take part in this experiment were actors. It was then suggested that drama training was like psychotherapy training, in that people were encouraged to explore their own experience and their own personality and obtain a good deal of self-knowledge. So that instead of two or three days training, they had perhaps had several years. But it was still striking to people that in terms of watching and evaluating videotapes, the experienced psychotherapists and the people with only two or three days training were indistinguishable to a professional audience.

To me, one of the most important issues was the question of the use of expert dem-

onstration tapes in training. Why do we not do more of this? It would be interesting to do a survey of all the training courses in this country, and discover how many do use this resource. In my own experience I have never seen it, except for the use of the 'Gloria' tape, which is quite limited, and in any case quite dated. I have shown a tape of Fritz Perls in action, but again this is from twenty years ago or more, and in any case is of a group rather than of one-to-one therapy. It has apparently taken Mahrer many years to build up his library of tapes, and even then he is forbidden to use some of them except under the most stringent conditions. But there is nothing to stop trainers on any course from taping their own sessions, of course with the written permission of the client, and showing these to their seminar or supervision groups for discussion. The book by William Console and his associates (*The First Encounter*, Jason Aronson 1978) shows how useful and lively this can be.

Of course, tapes can be threatening to a therapist, and research has shown that the objections of therapists are much more prevalent than the objections of clients. But humanistic therapists have been far more open than psychoanalysts to this process — Carl Rogers was a pioneer of taping sessions back in the 1940s, when the equipment was a lot more cumbersome than it is today. Of course the family therapists have also used tapes a great deal in their work and in their training, and seem to find no difficulty.

If, as Mahrer suggests, this is one of the most efficient ways of teaching psychotherapy — and his actor subjects were taught almost entirely in this way — it seems crazy not to use it more than we do at present.