

Yvonne Craig

A Sanctuary for Women

The Dance Centre, Floral Street.

I had a dream. . . . as have so many others in the human potential and growth movement of sanctuaries where people could go to find peace and healing, stimulation and purpose, joy and fulfilment for body, heart and soul.

Here, in London, in the regenerating Covent Garden, Gary Cockrell has shown an exciting entrepreneurship in establishing his own dream of an ideal sanctuary for city women. As he has already enjoyed an excellent general press describing the Garden of Eden he has created within an old warehouse complex, where pools of water flecked with drifting goldfish are sculpted at different levels, overhung with tropical creepers, fringed with exotic plants, and surrounded by the softest seats where brightly coloured birds can be watched and all the latest papers and journals read at leisure; it is only worth adding the explicit comment that this warm, watery lush world had a wonderfully releasing effect upon me - though, of course, I have never been able to afford holidays in countries where such an atmosphere is natural. All the more reason, I felt, for creating such a world around the corner from the council flats where I visit a woman whose schizophrenic son has just committed suicide. But could I afford to treat her to a day at the Sanctuary?

At the moment it costs £8 to use all the many facilities from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., these include a heated swimming pool (with swing!), sauna, solariums, gym., games room, free towels and swimsuits, a *superb new thermal pool* with pulsating water, and the free use of accessories for beauty care including hair and body oils, etc. During this period one can also enjoy, under skilled teachers, classes in Yoga, Ballet, Keep Fit, Body Conditioning, Swimming, Rock, Jazz, etc., which are similarly free. There is a Health Food Bar, set between pools, and, at extra cost, massage and other treatments with herbal oils.

We women wandered around naked and timeless, floating between the pools, feeling primitive, feeling precious - peaks of experience as eternal as the Alps. It is no intention of mine to write a commercial for Mr. Cockrell, but merely to testify truly to the tremendously therapeutic effect, at the time, and in retrospect, this special Sanctuary had upon me. I wanted it for all women - and for all men and for all children too - although I respect Mr. Cockrell's judgement that, with the present state of consciousness, women can generally feel more relaxed in a Sanctuary of their own.

So my dream would be, in the now, for such Sanctuaries to exist in every large community - some single-sexed, some mixed - *but* somehow run in a partnership of professional and voluntary workers, so that prices could

be kept within the reach of those who needed such refuges most. . . . and the only thing that spoils my day was a sense of selfishness that I was experiencing such pleasure that was much more desperately needed by Joan with s spastic son, Tina having had her eight operation, Sally just deserted at 50, Marion worn out with looking after aging parents, Nicole still grieving though her bereavement depression, and young Chrissie worried and afraid about her adolescent body. The only way these persons could afford such sanctuarial care would be in perhaps forthcoming social situation where automation means people retire early or work three days a week, in which there is a reservoir of voluntary help to build and maintain such places, under the direction of skilled paid staff.

But why, friends will ask, has she missed out the entire counselling component, which many of us have also dreamed about in setting up centres where people can take their problems and receive help in trying all the many different psychotherapeutic options of treatment which are now available from the analytical to the behavioural and expressive therapies? Could, or should, such sanctuarial care also be offered at this deeper level? Do we know enough about the workings of body and mind and soul to say other than that carefully experimental mixtures might be tried? Would the presence of a psychiatrist, or a chapel for meditation, or an arts and crafts room, or a gestalt group, perfect or perhaps pervert the flow of energies and restfulness which I experienced at this Sanctuary? And was mine merely the exaltation of the novice? Certainly it was an experience deliberately structured, as distinct from the spontaneously unique joys of making love, nursing one's baby, and doing the work one loves most, but shouldn't the AHP be interested also in similar promotions of potential and pleasure, even though personal growth is a much longer, deeper and more mysterious process?

Roy Ridgway

The Sparsholt Centre

As one of the critics of the Growth Movement said to me the other day, humanistic psychology is a reaction to a lot of mechanistic psychology, but it has its own problems too. And one of the main problems, I think, is that many of us are doing just what others in the past have done when they have stumbled upon some new, exciting way of living: they make rules, construct some kind of framework to practise what they believe, and then eventually the framework becomes more important than what they believe. They get hold of some technique and, after a while, it's like an actor who goes onto the stage with nothing more than his technique - he's played the part so often that he can do it in his sleep. He just relies on his technique to get him through. But he's just a mediocre actor if he thinks there's nothing more to acting than technique.

What I am saying is that to try to put into words what we are doing here in Sparsholt would, in a way, defeat what we are doing, because we are travelling