

So the fiery horses of hate and love
Were tethered fast below
And I acted the tepid part of care -
No flames, only a glow.

She lies now, lone and bitter
All her fake niceness laid bare
A grotesque, dry-eyed, hollow thing
With no love that she can share.

All the anger she held down
In the effort to be caring
Now drowns and chokes her every hour
In a pain where there's no sharing.

She ignored the tiny peaks of pain
The envy and the rage
The mighty surge of feeling
Which she felt at an earlier age.

And yet **you** tell me *never mind*
These little spots of feeling . . .
Brush them aside, they're trivial
A kind of emotional peeling?!

Bruce Laurie Douglas



Letter to the Editor

Dear Vivian,

Today I received through the post an unsolicited pamphlet about groups run by Therapeia Collective. I read through it and mulled over it and was prompted to write something about the phenomenon of the therapy-junkie. I doubt whether you and **the readers of Self and Society will take kindly to this but here it is.**

For the past ten years or so I have been on the fringes of the awareness-movement. I did my yoga and meditation, encounter and other things; I studied religion; I went to California for primal therapy (while friends went to India for enlightenment). Throughout this time I maintained an 'interest' in Krishnamurti. Currently I am on a training programme for counsellors and am exposed to a great number of therapeutic models, all more or less at vari-

ance with one another. I know that some people involved in the humanistic psychology movement find the plethora of approaches acceptable and even exciting. But there are outright contradictions between therapies - e.g. between rational-emotive and primal therapy - which cannot happily be glossed over. And in my view these contradictions are legion. Now, is it all part of life's rich tapestry, or does it recall the well-known Buddhist parable of the blind man feeling the various parts of an elephant and each claiming that the thing he felt was such-and-such, but certainly not an elephant? We must deal with **cognition**; with **feelings**; with **the body**; with **the spirit**; with **the Gestalt**; with **movement**! Or the wise birds say: ah, no, we must deal with **all** these things, it is all one flow, they can all enrich us. So we can spend our lives doing one workshop after another, regressing, stroking, dancing, massaging, encountering, re-evaluating, and so on. Wow!

I'm not saying we don't learn from all these approaches. I know I've learnt from my experiences. But somehow when it comes down to it, to the hard work of change, it looks like we'd all rather run off to the latest group than take our lives in hand and clean up our own mess. Sometimes it's easier to 'feel your pain' than it is to get off your arse (or vice versa); sometimes it's easier to champion 'a

cause' than it is to put your own life in order. I know this is certainly true for myself! Now, as someone (else) about to be loosed on the suffering public as a professional listener-facilitator, I ask myself if I have heeded the warnings of Szasz and Illich: am I interested primarily in change or in philosophy? Do I very subtly want clients to look to me for the answers, or do I, as therapists so often claim, want to put myself out of business? As therapists, don't we in fact commit ourselves to a belief in slow or placement change? (The political and religious parallels are obvious). We may not be outrageously false prophets, but we may be in danger of becoming gurus-keeping-a-low-profile.

I believe that we are all, as humans, addicted to the easy answers, and easy answers multiply and multiply and get nowhere, we convince ourselves that we've got lots of personal obstacles to 'work through', just as political change has to be mediated by parliament. We may adhere to so-called third-force psychology, while meanwhile a fourth-force psychology grows under our feet: the fashion is changing. Often I wish my reading of Krishnamurti had really sunk in years ago and saved me the weary treading of other men's paths. Shall we be junkies and pushers, or shall we be serious for once? - A serious question.

Colin Feltham