

Psychosynthesis Research Foundation, Inc.

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April 1, 1971

Dear Colleague:

The seventh and last meeting of the 1970/71 series of Psychosynthesis Seminars will be held on Friday, April 23rd at 7:30 P.M. (N.B.: the fourth Friday, not the third.)

Our speaker will be Martha Crampton of Sir George Williams University, Montreal, Canada; her subject will be: "Psychosynthesis in a Group Setting." Following the talk will be the usual group discussion.

We hope it will be possible for you to be with us at this meeting.

Cordially,

JACK COOPER, M.D.
914-669-5105

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PLaza 9-1480

DATE & TIME OF MEETING: Friday, April 23, 1971 at 7:30 P.M.

PLACE: Directors' Room, Mezzanine floor, Park Sheraton Hotel, 7th Avenue & 56th Street, New York City. (Please consult notice-board in hotel lobby in case of room change.)

SPEAKER: Martha Crampton

SUBJECT: Psychosynthesis in a Group Setting

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS SEMINARS

1970-71 SERIES

Seventh Meeting: April 23, 1971

Speaker: Martha Crampton, M.A.
29 Winchester Ave.
Montreal, CANADA

Subject: Toward a Psychosynthetic Approach to the Group

Participants:

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Barbara Bornquest
Sylvia Booth
Evelyn Bush
Jon A. Castle
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(and others)

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TOWARD A PSYCHOSYNTHETIC APPROACH TO THE GROUP

Martha Crampton

"For where two or three are gathered together
in my name, there I am in the midst of them."
Matthew 18:20

What is it that distinguishes the psychosynthetic approach to work with groups from other kinds of approaches? This is the question which we have set in this paper - a question which it would be premature to pretend to answer in a definitive way, but toward which we should begin to make some preliminary probes, if only to stimulate discussion. Our tactic will be to analyze certain fundamental principles and premises of such a group rather than to concentrate on the description of specific techniques, though some of the latter will be referred to for purposes of illustration.

Dr. Assagioli himself has provided few guidelines on this question, and once made it clear to me when I was working with him in Italy that he looks to us in North America to help fill in this gap in the psychosynthesis outline. By temperament he was more inclined toward the quiet and meditative intimacy of the one-to-one relationship than toward work in a group setting. Historical conditions were probably also a factor in his lack of emphasis on group techniques, as group psychotherapy and growth groups are predominantly a North American phenomenon and are still not wide-spread in Europe. Assagioli is, however, deeply interested in groups and in interpersonal relationships, and I feel that his framework is sufficiently open and comprehensive that one can at least begin to derive a psychosynthetic point of view for group work from his basic principles and orientation.

In Assagioli's book itself, Psychosynthesis: A Manual of Principles and Techniques (Assagioli, 1965), only a few techniques designed specifically for a group setting are described. These include the Exercise on the Legend of the Grail and the Exercise on Dante's Divine Comedy, in which the group members focus on the symbolism in these works, attempting to identify with the symbols, to penetrate their deeper meanings, and to relate them to their daily lives. In these exercises the group members write down any experiences they have had in connection with the symbol and bring them to the discussion at the next group meeting.

In addition to these exercises intended primarily for use in groups, Assagioli mentions that some of his other exercises are appropriate for use either with individuals or with groups. For example, he mentions that the Exercise in Dis-identification and Self-identification may be used in a group setting, and that the reciprocal stimulation and encouragement the group members give each other may be of great value. Although he does not specifically mention the possibility of group application for many of his other exercises, it is my own finding that almost all of them can be profitably used in a group setting - possibly more effectively than by individuals alone. Particularly in the beginning of conscious work on oneself, as de Ropp points out in The Master Game (de Ropp, 1969, p.25), it is most valuable for people to have the support of a group. Students benefit from the experiences others have had in using the exercises and may be unwilling to try something which seems difficult or pointless to them until some other group member has

reported success with the method. Further, as most people derive satisfaction and stimulation from sharing their learnings with others, this gives them an added motivation to work with the exercises.

Once the techniques have "caught hold", with the individual firmly established on a path of inner growth and experiencing its rewards, the group becomes less necessary. And this is another advantage of the what I'm calling the psychosynthesis group - that people do not tend to become addicted to it as so often happens in other kinds of groups. With techniques they can use on their own outside of the group setting, people are more inclined to feel they can help themselves to grow even without the support of the group. A general format of weekly meetings in which group members are introduced to a particular technique or exercise and asked to make their own observations in a notebook as they work with it during the week, is most effective. It is also a format which is easy to apply in educational or other institutional settings.

But we should return to our original question of what distinguishes a psychosynthesis group from any other kind of group. How could we recognize a psychosynthesis group if we stumbled upon one - particularly in view of the fact that a psychosynthesis practitioner may be using techniques developed in another context? Some of my colleagues like to say that "anything that works is psychosynthesis," and I must admit the idea is seductive, but the statement requires elaboration if it is to be of any use in answering our question. Further, there is a great danger that psychosynthesis - because of its flexibility and capacity to assimilate diverse approaches - may be regarded as an eclectic system without any definite point of view of its own and without any clear criteria for selecting from other approaches.

In the recent writeup that Esalen made about psychosynthesis in an Association for Humanistic Psychology Newsletter, it was described as an "eclectic system," and this troubled me because I do think we have a point of view and we should be more explicit, perhaps, in trying to define it. Many people get this reaction, I find, from reading Psychosynthesis. Dr. Assagioli, with his very loving and positive nature, doesn't like to criticize anybody. He always points out the best in every system and sometimes I find that people are confused as to what psychosynthesis really stands for. It seems to be everything in the minds of some people. So I think perhaps, in view of projecting our own image, we should try to think a little more about these questions and what we stand for and what we don't stand for. It's great to be able to draw from all other kinds of approaches, but what criteria do you use in drawing from different sources?

When we say something "works," the idea is implicit that it does so in relation to a particular goal. One can employ techniques to achieve all sorts of ends - from brainwashing people to make a false confession, to killing others more effectively or buying an unnecessary new car; so first of all we must examine our aims and objectives in relation to which something may be said to work. One sense in which the word "work" is used which is particularly suggestive for our purposes, is the sense which the alchemists intended when they spoke of the "Great Work" - the transmutation of lower into higher substances - and which Gurdjieff intended when he spoke of "working on oneself." (Ouspensky, 1949) This is the work with which psychosynthesis is essentially concerned - the transmuting, harmonizing, and integrating of the various physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual energies in the process of Self-realization.

So perhaps we could say that anything that "works" in this sense - that anything that contributes to the "Great Work" - is psychosynthesis. And, as a

corollary, that a group in which things work in this way is a psychosynthesis group. This may be a start toward a general perspective, but practical application requires the delineation of more specific objectives which lie along the way, and we must try to assign some sort of priorities to these objectives in order to choose where to place our emphasis. So this is the next question I'd like to address myself to.

Perhaps the most important distinguishing feature of psychosynthesis is its emphasis on the self - on the center of consciousness and will within each person which is able to observe what is going on from a detached and objective viewpoint and which is able to direct the energies of its various vehicles (the body, the emotions, and the mind) in accordance with its own values. The self is, one might say, like the leverage point from which Work - in the sense we have described - can be done. Without a point of leverage, one is rather like the proverbial person trying to pull himself up by his own bootstraps. As Archimedes said, one could lift the whole world if one but had something to stand on. So the first thing we need, if we intend to raise ourselves, is a point on which to stand - and this point is the self.

One of the outstanding characteristics, then, of a psychosynthesis group will be a concern with awakening the sense of self and a respect for the manifestations of this self. In this sense, psychosynthesis is close to the existentialist approaches which likewise stress authenticity of being and the need to develop the sense of self as a free and responsible agent. Although the stated goals of a number of other approaches would probably also include these values, certain practices common in the group culture today, as we shall discuss later, tend to be inimical to the goals of psychosynthesis. In particular, the tremendous and often subtle pressures toward conformity with group norms and the tendency toward uncontrolled emotional expression of a lower level, may cause an individual to lose contact with his own center or higher self.

There are a great number of techniques for awakening the sense of self - many of which are described in Assagioli's manual. These include the Exercise in Dis-identification and Self-identification, the exercises for training the will, various meditative and imagery techniques, the use of a notebook, and the techniques for the transformation and sublimation of energy. The important factor is not so much the employment of a particular technique, but rather the attitude of respect for the self in each person on the part of the leader and the other group members.

The manipulation and lack of respect for the individual in many group situations has frequently been pointed out. Maliver states that "Many observers feel that there is in the encounter movement the essence of a profound emotional fascism - not necessarily a political fascism, but one that elicits emotional conformity, demands the correct behavior and the correct emotion at the designated time, and suppresses criticism." (Maliver, 1971, p.43) The "tyranny of the majority," as de Tocqueville pointed out well over a century ago, has long characterized the egalitarian democracy of America - an observation which struck him so strongly he was able to say "I know no country in which there is so little true independence of mind and freedom of discussion as in America." (de Tocqueville, 1845) It is interesting to speculate on the extent to which the forms taken by the encounter movement are a reflection of our national character, and it is probably not by accident that it sprang up on native soil rather than in Europe. Somehow it is difficult to imagine many Europeans voluntarily subjecting themselves to the indignities and manipulation which are so common with groups on these shores! Many

observers since de Tocqueville's time have commented on the other-directedness of the American character, the comment by D.H. Lawrence being one of the most eloquent:

"The land of the free! This the land of the free! Why, if I say anything that displeases them, the free mob will lynch me, and that's my freedom. Free? Why, I have never been in any country where the individual has such an abject fear of his countrymen. Because, as I say, they are free to lynch him the moment he shows he is not one of them." (Lawrence-in Rapson, 1967)

As conformity and other-directedness are antithetical to the goals of the psychosynthesis group, it must be concerned - both through the tone it sets and the methods it employs - to counteract the almost inevitable pull in this direction when a group of people get together.

Perhaps the most useful technique for this purpose in my own work has been the psychological workbook or journal. Having the group members keep such a journal provides them with a point of focus for their developing awareness and helps them learn to value, to pay attention to, and to accept responsibility for, their own experience. Further, by emphasizing the primacy of intrapersonal work, a notebook helps to balance the frequent overemphasis on interpersonal awareness, reminding one of the fact that communication with oneself is a necessary prerequisite to meaningful communication with others. Using the journal to record their experience with the exercises introduced in the group and other significant inner experiences they may have, seems to help people to be more conscious of themselves and to work through the problems they encounter during the week. The notebook is a valuable tool for developing self-reliance and helps prevent dependence on the group or a feeling that one cannot progress by oneself outside of the group context.

The journal is also a useful adjunct to the group sessions themselves, providing an opportunity for inner focussing and periodic retreat to the eye (I) within the hurricane when the person feels himself pulled off center or in need of solitude or clarification. Ira Progoff uses a psychological notebook in this way in his "Intensive Journal" workshops which, in fact, like some of the other neo-Jungian approaches, such as Martin's Experiment in Depth, for example (Martin, 1955; Progoff, 1963), have much in common with psychosynthesis groups as I am defining them, though the techniques employed are less varied than the Jungian groups. Use of the journal during the group sessions also affords an opportunity for training in the technique of keeping a psychological journal - without which, I find, many people become discouraged with the task because of its unfamiliar nature and confusion as to what constitutes a useful entry. Many people seem to require some practice in introspection - in paying attention to their inner worlds as well as in recording their experiences. This is greatly facilitated by the group situation in which members share their recorded experiences, providing examples for those who have difficulty with the task and giving support to all by valuing the uniqueness of each person's awareness.

Use of the notebook during group sessions affords the further advantage of helping to assimilate experience as one goes along, alleviating some of the psychic indigestion to which we too often fall prey in these days of experience bombardment and information overload. We need to slow down our pace enough to benefit from the nourishment in the experiences we have already had rather than spending so much energy in the quest for new and undigested sensations. Unassimilated experience, just like unassimilated food, leaves toxins in our system, for which the best cure is a good fast from further input and a turning inward.

Only when we have taken the time to taste and digest our experience in this slow and meditative way, can we begin to discriminate those experiences which are nourishing and growth-promoting from those which are poisonous and growth-defeating. And only on the basis of such discrimination are we in a position to consciously and wisely choose those experiences to which we wish to expose ourselves - and this is a vital, in fact a quantum step on the path of Self-realization. Perhaps the best discussion of this point is de Ropp's, in his section on "Awareness and impressions" in The Master Game. (de Ropp, 1969, pp.79-82) He states that,

"As far as impressions are concerned, man's instincts seem to give him little guidance. A cow or horse grazing in a meadow is generally warned by instinct to avoid poisonous plants, but a man, whose impressions are just as much a food as his bread, shows no such discrimination. On the contrary, he will often deliberately seek poisonous impressions, compelled by some perverse impulse to degrade his own inner life, already sufficiently polluted without that....Accept or reject - this is the basis of the inner work that leads to the genesis of a truly free being...man in the third state of consciousness suffers from a state of chronic malnutrition in one part of his being not because he is deprived of impressions, like the subjects in Hebb's and Lilly's experiments, but because he does not properly metabolize the impressions he receives."

This digression on the use of a notebook was not intended to imply that only groups in which participants keep such a notebook can rightfully be considered psychosynthesis groups. It was simply to serve as an illustration of one type of approach which tends to develop awareness of the inner self and to help people live from that level. There are numerous other ways of doing this, some of which have already been developed and many more of which will surely emerge as therapists, educators, and group workers generally become sensitized to the key role of the self

There is a further aspect of awakening the sense of self within a group setting to which I would like to devote some attention, and this involves the use of the will. A conscious act of will is one of the most powerful ways of experiencing oneself as a center of self-directing energy, a free and responsible agent. Yet the will is only free to act when one is not swept up in a state of identification with powerful drives, impulses, attachments, and emotions. We can only exercise true will when we are in a state of what Assagioli would call Self-identification or Gurdjieff would call self-remembering - when we are moved from the center rather than activated like puppets by some false identification or some partial and mechanical aspect of ourselves.

The concept of the will is intimately linked with moral and ethical questions, which is another realm in which the point of view of psychosynthesis tend to distinguish itself from other prevailing views. Psychosynthesis holds that one of man's most precious assets--indeed, one of the features which sets him apart from life forms lower on the scale of evolution - is the capacity for rational judgment and planning, which is linked with the ability to articulate values and to conduct one's life on the basis of some sort of ethical principles. "Man's intentionality is the basis on which he builds his identity, and it distinguishes him from other species." (Bugental, 1964)

In a different context from Bugental's existential point of view, Miller, Galanter, and Pribram have demonstrated the importance of "plans" in human behavior ("A Plan is any hierarchical process in the organism that can control the order in which a sequence of operations is performed" - Miller, Galanter, and Pribram, 1960) and they postulate this construct as the key mediating variable in that elusive theoretical problem of the relationship between knowledge and action. It would form the topic of a separate paper to go into this question in depth, but I would like to at least draw attention in passing to the need for research and theory in this vital area of the role of inner programs and conscious thoughts in the life of man. As Maltz has pointed out,

"There is a widely accepted fallacy that rational, logical, conscious thinking has no power over unconscious processes or mechanisms, and that to change negative beliefs, feelings, of behavior, it is necessary to dig down and dredge up material from the 'unconscious'.... Yet, it is conscious thinking which is the 'control knob' of your unconscious machine." (Maltz, 1960)

In the creative process generally - and this includes that highest form of creativity which is involved in the process of Self-realization as well - the dynamic and well balanced interaction of conscious and unconscious elements seems to be of prime importance. A conscious program or working hypothesis is not necessarily inhibiting, as the Dionysian extremists would have it, but it can and ought to be used to stimulate a creative response from the unconscious.

When psychosynthesis points to the need for values and principles as a guide to action, it is understood that these should not be overly rigid and should be continuously revised in the light of the individual's experience and evolving consciousness. The experience gained through feedback from the outer world, the compensatory processes of the unconscious which help correct our conscious values, and experience gained in the inner worlds through meditation and the activity of the Self, are all means by which it is possible to develop and redefine our goals and values. Though these may change, it is nevertheless valuable to set conscious goals for oneself and to attempt to live in accordance with the highest principles one can conceive at any particular time. One's guidelines for action may include the employment of "suprarational" or intuitive modes of cognition as well as general principle but they should at least be something more substantial than simply acting on the impulse of the moment, without regard to the level from which the impulse originates

So much of the group encounter culture seems to be predicated on something like Jerry Rubin's "Do it!" ethic - a kind of mindless and irresponsible action for its own sake or because you "feel like it." Rubin's language - "There's no such thing as a bad tactic. Put down nothing" (Rubin, 1970, p.127); "Abstract thinking turns the mind into a prison" (Rubin, 1970, p.213) - is the language of anarchy - not even a very sophisticated anarchy at that - and, indeed, the anarchic quality of many encounter groups is striking. As one recent critic of the movement says, "Intelligence, rationality, and thoughtfulness turn out to be negative values in the encounter culture." (Maliver, 1971, p. 41)

A most interesting analysis of the counter-culture of the 1960's written by an anthropologist, attempts to draw some parallels between the values of certain New Left groups and the prevailing ethic of the group scene. He particularly stressed the a-historicism of this generation, with its emphasis on what the

American historian, Warren Susman, has called, in speaking of the Beat Generation of the 1950's, the "ritual burning of the past, preferring the immediate sensation, the experience of the moment." (Susman, 1964) He concludes that "There is the contradiction between the spontaneous immediacy of 'directly expressed feelings' and the deliberation necessary to formulate the concepts of a counter-cultural revolution; this is a contemporary version of the classic conflict between impulse and forethought." (Klein, 1971) One might add that there would also seem to be a conflict between unfettered acting out of impulse in a group and the deliberation necessary to formulate a sound program of personal growth or a revolution in consciousness.

The doctrine of the Here and Now has reigned unquestioned in most group circles, and one would not want to dispute the great value of being fully present to each moment. But one must not forget that man is also a time-binding animal, as Korzybski said. ("I define humanity to be the time-binding class of life" - Korzybski, 1950) To deny this is to deprive ourselves of an important evolutionary conquest and a tool which can be used to liberate if one does not become its slave. As Assagioli points out, in speaking of the technique of critical analysis and the need for impersonal observation,

"to act on the spur of an impulse, a drive or an intense emotion can very often produce undesirable effects which one afterwards regrets," and one must learn "to 'insert' between impulse and action, a stage of reflection, of mental consideration of a situation, and of critical analysis of his impulse, trying to realize its origin, its source." (Assagioli, 1965, p.107)

And such a stage of reflection requires reference to experience and principles which go beyond the immediacy of the moment.

It might be nice if we were all sufficiently enlightened to be able to follow St. Augustine's maxim, "Love God and do what you wish," but to "love God" in this sense implies a level of development which most of us have not yet attained. Confucius himself said that it took him 50 years of hard discipline before he could throw away the rulebook and "spontaneously" do the right thing. True spontaneity - in the higher sense of living in accord with the Tao - is something which can only be acquired by hard work and should not be confused with impulsiveness. When you have climbed the ladder, says the Zen story, then you can throw the ladder away. If we try to dispense with the ladder of discipline altogether, we may find ourselves turning in circles on the ground floor, unable to rise. To pick up another ladder metaphor, the first two rungs of the ladder of Raja Yoga as codified by Patanjali (in what might be called the first programmed text) involve moral discipline: the practice of the commandments or abstentions (yamas) and the rules or observances (niyamas), making clear that moral purification must precede any higher development. In its emphasis on this point, psychosynthesis follows in the line of all the great religious traditions, East and West, providing a rationale from the psychological viewpoint and some practical techniques whereby this can be accomplished.

What conclusions for group work can be drawn from these considerations? If they are valid, it would suggest that the optimal group climate is one in which members do not permit themselves to indulge in the unbridled expression of impulse and emotion, without consideration of the consequences of such behavior for themselves and others. This point of view, I am aware, is not a popular one in groups

today where the "no holds barred" approach tends to hold sway, and where a few broken bones - not to mention broken psyches - are commonly looked upon as a small price to pay for new vistas of awareness. I still remember vividly my first group experience at one of the prominent growth centres which I entered with some trepidation after meeting one of the local "habitués" who was strapped up with a slipped cervical disc from a "therapeutic" wrestling match!

One frequently notes an uncritical acceptance in group circles of the dogma of "free expression" which - as understood by many of its proponents - has little to do with freedom in the true sense and is frequently but a manifestation of driven, impulse-ridden behavior. There is a dangerous assumption that simply giving vent to whatever tensions or emotions one may happen to be in the grip of, and in whatever manner one feels inclined to do so, is necessarily healthy and desirable - particularly when these emotions happen to be of a violent and destructive nature. The recent literature has drawn attention to a number of suicides among the victims of such unrestrained attacks, and the less obvious scars must be numerous. It seems unlikely that even the attacker emerges unscathed from such encounters, for he must bear the burden of guilt (even if the guilt remains unconscious) for his actions, and, rather than having grown, he may have diminished himself by yielding to an ignoble impulse. There is good reason to believe that the sources of hostility and destructiveness are not eliminated simply by externalization. On the contrary, it may well be true that the more they are acted out, the more deeply these response tendencies become programmed into our nervous and endocrine systems.

A principle which a wise friend who is here present tonight once called "feeding the cat" seems to apply here. If a stray cat comes to the door and receives food, he will in all likelihood return for another meal; if, however, we do not provide reinforcement for his visit, he will go elsewhere and leave us alone. Thank you, Dr. Wolf. Similarly, if we feed our negative emotions, they will wax fat and return to trouble us again and again; if, on the other hand, we refuse to yield to them, we will strengthen ourselves and they will go away. The too little known research of Sorokin at the Harvard Center for Creative Altruism summed it up as follows:

"Enmity begets enmity, conspicuous egoism generates egoism, and aggressiveness breeds aggressiveness...kindness begets kindness, friendship generates friendship, unselfish help produces unselfish response....The most effective technique for two or more parties' becoming friendly is the technique of friendly or good deeds, for becoming inimical is the technique of aggressive, unkindly actions, done by one party to the others." (Sorokin, 1954, p.345)

The implications of these findings for the transformations of energy involved in psychosynthesis merit profound reflection. They are, in fact, but a modern experimental verification of the ancient wisdom found in the immortal opening lines of Dhammapada:

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage.

All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts.

If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him like a shadow that never leaves him.

'He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me' - in those who harbor such thoughts hatred will never cease.

'He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me' - in those who do not harbor such thoughts hatred will cease.

For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love - this is an eternal law." (in Burt, 1955)

One should not conclude from these considerations that there is no place for the expression of negative affect in a psychosynthesis group, or that this necessarily has to be a destructive experience. Some people seem to carry such a heavy charge of emotion that if not given an opportunity to discharge it, they are psychologically paralyzed, tense, unable to concentrate on anything else, and blocked from moving forward in a more positive direction. Assagioli does recognize a legitimate place for the technique of "catharsis" in the early stages of therapy. He does not view it, however, as an end in itself or a quasi-religious apotheosis, as it is often viewed in groups today, but rather as a means of eliminating noxious poisons from the system so that they do not contaminate or cripple the real work.

In his discussion of catharsis and, in particular, the technique of muscular discharge, Assagioli makes some crucial points: that the person should perform his cathartic activities consciously and deliberately - as an exercise - that he should maintain the attitude of a detached witness as he does so, avoiding identification with the emotions expressed, and that he should attempt to cultivate a sense of humor and perspective at the same time. (Assagioli, 1965, pp.105-106) His approach to catharsis has much in common with some of the Tantric techniques for transformation of energy, as described by Blofeld - in particular the technique of "yielding." "Yielding means either observing the act, its causes and results in such a way that lessons can be drawn that will henceforth diminish the desire's appeal, or else employing a technique that will render it harmless." (Blofeld, 1970)

Assagioli cites the case of a patient who was subject to uncontrollable and destructive fits of rage who contrived the exercise of ripping up old telephone directories to discharge his anger in a controlled manner, gradually learning to see the humorous and self-defeating side of his destructive bouts. By disidentifying from the feelings of anger, the patient was enabled to regain control over himself, following the basic axiom of psychosynthesis that "We are dominated by everything with which our self is identified" and "we can dominate and control everything from which we disidentify ourselves." (Assagioli, 1965, p. 22)

If these principles were applied to a group situation, aggressive feelings could be viewed as something the individual brings with him from the past - which are in origin directed towards people in the person's past and are not appropriate to the here and now of the group situation, in many cases anyway. If they cannot be left at the door or transformed into positive energy by suitable techniques, and if they are persistent enough to prevent constructive work, they can be permitted expression in some harmless way which does not victimize an innocent bystander, create undesirable rifts within the group, or cause the person concerned to lose his dignity or center of identity. Assagioli's principle that a stage of reflection should be inserted between impulse and action can be applied here. People can be helped to consider in advance the likely consequences of acting out and whether or not anything of value can be expected of it.

As Berlyne says in a different context, "biological adaptation is not a matter of maximum information transmission between external environment and response but of maximum information transmission between optimal response and actual response." (Berlyne, 1965) It is, of course, true that one can learn something from any experience, but the price of certain kinds of learning is unnecessarily high. It is conceivable that one could gain new awareness and manifest a certain kind of perverted existential freedom - like Camus' hero in The Stranger - by a gratuitous act of murder, but one must ask whether such an experience is worth the price - whether it is truly a nourishing and liberating experience or whether it will have consequences which will boomerang (as in the Eastern concept of karma) upon the actor. Though, admittedly, the acting out of aggression in most group situations does not go to such extremes, the basic principle applies, and the "karmic" consequences of much that goes on in such groups have surely not been weighed. In this respect, the consequences of the acting out of sexual impulses should also be borne in mind.

A word of clarification is probably due here, for these reflections are not intended to suggest that impulses such as sex and aggression should be repressed or condemned. This point is, rather, that they should be expressed in an appropriate and integrative way, which is not always the case when they are acted out indiscriminately. If one is fundamentally angry with a parent, it seems healthier to acknowledge this directly and work it out in some suitable manner rather than saddle another group member with the projection, thereby preventing an I-Thou contact with the actual person and introducing divisive feelings into the group.

Similarly, if sexual impulses - which may not be more than skin deep - are aroused within the group situation, the most integrative thing to do is probably to refrain from stimulating these feelings - particularly if one is committed to a sexual relationship with someone else. In many encounter groups, however, people are encouraged to foster and express such feelings, being accused of cowardice and dishonesty if they do not, regardless of what the consequences may be for an ongoing and possibly much sounder relationship. Casual sex is something which has been proscribed in all the great religious traditions, for reasons which go far beyond the repressive morality of conventional wisdom. For the deepest longings of the human spirit to be fulfilled, sex energy must be rightly channeled and integrated with mating on the higher levels of man's being. He who becomes the slave of sex energy on its grossest level of manifestation cuts himself off from the possibility of using its tremendous power to raise one to the most sublime heights of unitive consciousness. The promiscuity with which so many people are experimenting today - encouraged by the attitudes in many growth centres - may have its roots in rebellion against a tyrannical puritanism, but it is equally blind and enslaving in its own way. The esoteric schools, East and West, have generally taught that each plane of manifestation can and should be controlled from the plane above it. Through the advances of psychosomatic medicine, the crucial role of the emotions in bodily function has come to be quite generally accepted. Less well known, but equally important, is the role of the mind in governing and regulating the emotions. And above and beyond this is the role of the soul or Self in directing and harmonizing the activities of all its vehicles.

So, in a well integrated person, the flow is from above downwards - or outward from the Source within - depending on the metaphor one prefers. "Para vidya" or transcendent knowledge always comes from the realms beyond the senses. Yet the sensuality which has flourished in certain sectors of the Human Potential movement often has the opposite effect. When people are overstimulated from the sensory or

emotional levels, they tend to become controlled from these levels rather than directed from their higher and deeper selves.

This leads us to consider the role of the emotions generally in a psychosynthesis group. Someone once suggested that the psychosynthetic group might be described as one which functions from the level of the heart center in contrast to the typical encounter group which might be said to function at the solar plexus level. This analogy, which is based on the concept of the psychic centers or "chakras" in the subtle body, has a certain intuitive fit, if one considers the functions traditionally assigned to these centers. At the solar plexus level, anything goes, and even the most primitive emotions may be given expression; at the level of the heart center, the feelings are of a more refined nature, having been purified of selfish passion and raised to a transpersonal plane. A most interesting description of the types of affectivity operative in the two centers - based on the testimony of the Fathers of the Greek Church - is given by an archbishop-contemplative in this tradition, and is worth noting. Speaking of the heart center, he says:

"Sentiment is vital, fervent, supremely pure, divested of all emotion and all passion. It is ardent, incomprehensible, ineffable peace. It is also power, by its exactions and its impact in the practical sphere, and light. Far from clouding and obscuring thought, as the emotions do, it clears it completely. Intelligence remains fully, intensely conscious and free - for the soul emancipated from its turning in upon itself and from enslavement is never passive, never impelled by an alien force." (Bloom, 1954, p. 101)

Of the quality of affectivity in the lower centers, he has this to say:

"Passing over the distinctive shadings of divers 'secondary points' in this vast region, one may safely say that fixation of attention upon any of this zone's centers induces a progressive obscuration of lucid thought and consciousness, ending in their complete eclipse. This gives rise to more or less stable and more or less permanent 'crepuscular states', exacerbation of kinesthetic perceptions; and finally the appearance of uncontrolled passional manifestations both bodily and mental. Feeling, free and lucid, is replaced by emotion - somatopsychic, passive. Peace, the soul's powers in active repose, is replaced by the turbulent fury of irrational desires and appetities. The body's silence is replaced by the tumult of anarchic passions and impulses; self-mastery by a more or less complete errancy of thought and feeling, which thus becomes incapable of governing the nerves and ruling the body. The whole frequently leads to mental alienation and physiological disorders." (Bloom, 1954, p.103) This is by Anthony Bloom in Sorokin's book Forms and Techniques of Altruistic and Spiritual Growth.

Needless to say, it would be a gross exaggeration to maintain that everything that happens in the average encounter group can be characterized by this description of activity in the lower psychic centers, just as it would be a naive idealization to imagine that people in a psychosynthesis group always function at the plane described for the heart center. Nevertheless, the contrast is suggestive, and we might take the heart center group as an "ideal model" - to use Assagioli's term - for a psychosynthesis group.

To turn for a moment to another analogy, one might say that the Pandora's Box model applies to many encounter groups, where the lid is taken off the id to release whatever may be found within, including the darkest forces, and allowed to circulate with little restraint. The psychosynthesis group, in contrast, might be said to employ an alchemical model - in which the grosser substances are released and worked upon in manageable doses, with the goal of refining their nature and transmuting the negative forces to positive ones. In the typical encounter group, members are urged to take the path of least resistance and freely express whatever they may "feel." In the psychosynthesis group, members are encouraged to take an active stance vis-a-vis their emotions, choosing in the light of higher principles whether they wish to express negative feelings in a disciplined way or whether they wish to seek to transmute and transform these energies through the many techniques available for this purpose (substitution or replacement of a feeling by its opposite, sublimation, avoidance and transcendence, etc.).

In psychosynthesis, a person is helped to view a negative feeling as a challenge and an opportunity for growth. Assagioli likes to speak of the "blessing of obstacles," pointing out the function of obstacles to draw out the latent will and to permit us to develop our spiritual muscles by overcoming resistance. Frequently, more growth can take place through resisting an impulse than by yielding to it, and this type of growth is of the most important kind as it involves the "essential" levels of being. In the words of William James,

"The normal opener of deeper and deeper levels of energy is the will. The difficulty is to use it, to make the effort which the word volition implies....It is notorious that a single successful effort of moral volition, such as saying 'no' to some habitual temptation, or performing some courageous act, will launch a man on a higher level of energy for days and weeks, will give him a new range of power." (James, 1916)

The will, then, is the indispensable tool of inner growth, and efforts should be made at all times to foster its harmonious development. An important factor in so doing is the conservation and concentration of the psychic energy which is required for work on oneself. This can be achieved both by direct methods of energy-building such as the various techniques of concentration and meditation and certain psycho-physical techniques, and by the avoidance of habits which tend to dissipate this energy. One of the ways in which most energy is lost in the life of the average person is the useless - if not actually harmful - expression of lower-level affect. Groups which are focussed on this level tend to expend tremendous amounts of energy stewing in their emotional juices - energy which might be better employed in the work of transforming these primitive emotions into higher forms of feeling and awareness. Christmas Humphreys, writing on the culture of the emotions, expresses a Buddhist view of the alchemical philosophy:

"It must never be forgotten that force is one, manifesting in innumerable forms, and as all but the most advanced students are constantly generating emotion, it is only right that such force should be utilized or sublimated into higher forms. As mind development proceeds through the higher ranges of meditation, less and less force will be wasted in emotion. Meanwhile, let such of the life-force as does so manifest be harnessed without delay to spiritual purposes." (Humphreys, 1935)

The psychosynthesis group, then, generally tends to apply the alchemical model in dealing with emotions. It also tends to be less emotionally polarized than

other types of groups, and to place a more balanced emphasis on the cognitive and affective domains. In many groups, thoughts or ideas of any kind are regarded as intellectualizations or, in the colorful language of Fritz Perls, as "elephant shit." There was an historically understandable reaction in Humanistic Psychology against the verbal-rational straightjacket of our traditional academic values, which brought about a pendulum swing toward cultivation of the neglected aspects of human experience - the sensory and emotional domains in particular - with a concomitant glorification of the moment of impassioned feeling and the irrational in general. "Experiential" was the magic word to set man free and to legitimize whatever one was doing, and it was generally interpreted in a narrow way so as to exclude many kinds of cognitive experience. Theoretical formulations were viewed as an obstacle to direct experience if not downright perverted. But the tide seems to be turning again, now that people have had their fill of sensory and emotional experience and an opportunity to realize some of their benefits as well as their limitations.

One can begin to discern another swing of the pendulum back to a more "classical" approach - though at a higher level of synthesis which incorporates the insights derived from the "romantic" period. The Humanist Psychology Association requested at its 1970 meeting that a theoretical rationale be provided for the experiential sessions; the development of "confluent education" (concerned with the confluence of the cognitive and affective domains) with George Brown (Brown, 1971) and others; and the "discovery" of psychosynthesis at Esalen after our long years of working in silence and obscurity, also seems symptomatic of this shift in direction.

If the 1970's, as many predict, is to be the decade of Transpersonal Psychology, it seems inevitable that this shift will continue to manifest in a variety of ways. It is not possible to live from the transpersonal level if one is helplessly driven by and identified with uncontrolled impulses and emotions, if one loses the capacity for objective self-observation. A necessary tool in dis-identifying from the non-self for many people (particularly those of a strong "Jnana Yoga" bent) is intellectual analysis and discrimination (that wonderful word, "viveka" in Sanskrit). Analysis, conceptualization, and theory - viewed in the right way - can be considered a tool for facilitating, rather than a barrier to, experience. Without a theoretical background which enables people to fit what they are experiencing into some sort of acceptable framework, it frequently happens that experiences which are disjunctive to belief are repressed or pushed aside as illusory or insignificant. This is particularly true in the realm of transpersonal psychology where people frequently have experiences which are impossible to understand in the context of what they have been taught about the world at home and in school. Such experiences may even lead them to believe they are mad or at least not normal - if not actually driving them to madness, as Laing points out (Laing, 1967).

I continuously meet people in my work who express immense relief when the principles of psychosynthesis are explained to them, which typically takes a form such as "You mean I am not crazy after all!" I think of one of my own students recently who mentioned, when I was discussing certain methods of meditation based on concentration on inner sounds, that he had been hearing such sounds since early childhood, and interpreted it to mean that he was going crazy. So, he frantically tried to stop it and was tremendously relieved when I pointed out that in some forms of yogic meditation this is considered a very useful experience to lead one to the higher levels. When its positive value was pointed out, he lost his fear and was able to go with it to move forward very beautifully. But he had always tried to repress it, thinking it was an indication of madness. And this sort of thing is very, very common. I could give you dozens of examples if we had time.

It is a great tragedy that so many people in our society who have had supraconscious experience live with this dread and are unable to even discuss their experiences lest they be "found out" and locked away. Repression of the supraconscious, as Assagioli points out, is a phenomenon as widespread as repression of the lower unconscious, and just as dangerous. Much can be done to alleviate "repression of the sublime" - at least that part of it which is based on ignorance (there are other factors involved, such as avoidance of responsibility)- by clear exposition of fundamental principles. So a psychosynthesis group will be concerned with giving participants an adequate cognitive structure to help them in interpreting their spontaneous experience and to provide a theoretical rationale for the experiences it seeks to induce.

There is another aspect of the integration of the cognitive and affective domains in psychosynthesis on which I would like to touch, and that is the great potential of the psychosynthesis group for developing creative intuition - in which the cognitive and affective seem to merge. The group setting can be used for common exploration of fundamental or archetypal concepts in areas such as philosophy or transpersonal psychology, though one can choose to focus on more personal problems as well. In this method, the group seeks to draw inspiration or illumination from the intuitive levels, using techniques of receptive meditation (Eastcott, 1969), external meditation (White, 1969), or mental imagery (Crampton, 1969). The group member may be asked to concentrate on a particular concept or symbol (e.g. the yin-yang symbol, the cross, the eye in the pyramid, freedom, the will, etc.) seeking to penetrate its meaning and implications for their own lives, and sharing afterwards what they were able to "pull down" from the supraconscious levels. These intuitions are usually clothed in some symbolic form such as visual imagery, spontaneous movement or drawing, words or sound, physical sensations or impulses to action. People can be trained to value and to pay attention to such experiences, thus tapping an important source of creativity within themselves.

Use of this method in a group helps to set an atmosphere in which the participants feel they are drawing on a transpersonal source which belongs to all yet from which each one can pick up different aspects because of his particular attunements. The approach seems to help people learn to respect the inner self and the creative potential within others as well as within themselves, and it is a useful corrective for those who are inclined to believe that they alone have a direct pipeline to truth. The complementary and partial nature of all visions of Reality becomes very evident, so that one learns to value the unique contribution that his particular perspective can make as well as the contributions of others. One also becomes sensitized in this way to the ongoing creative process involved in the search for truth; realizing that no single view can be regarded as absolute and final, one becomes more willing to accept the tentative, approximative, in-process nature of all formulations.

A group climate with harmonious and cooperative relationships among the members seems to be most favorable to this type of work - a group which is linked at the transpersonal level and in which whatever conflicts may exist at the personality level are not allowed to interfere with the common goal. It is also possible to deal with interpersonal relationships in a group of this kind, provided the individuals concerned maintain their objectivity and spirit of authentic search for mutual understanding, avoiding becoming identified with the emotions involved to the point of losing both their own deeper center and the real self of the other person. An "I-Thou" conflict is something very different from the mutually diminishing conflicts in which people lose control and often hide from themselves and each other.

An interesting fact about groups in which a transpersonal climate prevails is the occurrence of parapsychological phenomena, reflecting the depth of the links which have been established between the participants. Ira Progoff has described an incident in one of his groups, which incidentally was held in Montreal, in which he had a clairvoyant perception related to the childhood experience of one of the members. He attributes this to the quality of the group atmosphere, and explains it as follows:

"The metaphor we use is that each person is like a well; each participant goes down into his own well in the course of experiences in the workshop. When we go deeply enough down into the well, we come finally to an underground stream that is a source for all the wells. The metaphorical stream seems to represent the 'place' or level where experiences of psychic perception are possible. It seems that when individuals work intensely in their own personal psyche, they come, in the course of their intense effort, to a depth within themselves that is deeper than personal. This transpersonal level becomes a kind of continuum in which perceptions and cognitions of a parapsychic nature become possible." (Progoff, 1970)

There is a Sufi concept known as "halka" which refers to the blessing which can be received by a group which has found the common underground stream to which Progoff refers, to a group which does not permit its energies to become divided and dispersed by interpersonal conflicts. Just as clairvoyants describe "leakages of energy" in the bioelectric field of an individual which are due to inner conflict or ill health, so they describe similar phenomena in the aura of a group. A group which aspires to serve as a channel for transpersonal energies will do this more effectively if it is an unbroken channel - united on the subtle levels of thought and feeling as well as in action. When this happens, and when the group members are able to go sufficiently deep within themselves to contact the "underground stream," the psychic energies of the group combine synergistically or like batteries connected in series to generate more power for the common search rather than cancelling each other out through conflict.

A word should be said before we finish about the social context in which psychosynthesis groups can be used. It is evident that the focus and emphasis of a therapy group would be somewhat different from that of a growth group or a group in an educational or other non-clinical setting. When people are unable to function because of incapacitating emotional problems, they clearly need more help on the interpersonal and personality levels. They will require more opportunities for defusing explosive charges with techniques of catharsis and analysis, and they will probably require smaller groups in which to do it. But the basic principles of a psychosynthesis group still apply, and the dividing line between a patient and a non-patient - if it can be said to exist at all - is, at the least, arbitrary.

The sphere in which psychosynthesis groups will probably find their widest application is that of growth groups and in the field of education generally - both within and without schools. The emphasis of psychosynthesis on the higher levels of human functioning has special appeal to people who have already achieved the "normal" goals of life adjustment and who are motivated toward greater self-realization. The approach of psychosynthesis lends itself very readily to use in educational settings, with its emphasis on the teaching of specific concepts and techniques. One of the projects our students in the Educational Technology program at Sir George Williams University will be working on next year is the development

of multi-media curriculum materials in what we have called "integrative education," or education for self-knowledge, in which the integrating center or self of the individual is used as the unifying point from which explorations in the cognitive and affective, personal and transpersonal domains can take place. We hope these materials will find a place in humanities as well as science programs, and they may have particular relevance to that much abused and sadly neglected area of moral and spiritual education.

There is a great need for development of a wide variety of techniques and approaches. One man's meat is another man's poison, as the old adage has it, and though we all pay lip service to the concept of individualizing instruction, we do not yet know enough about psychological types and personal learning styles to be able to translate our principles into action very effectively. The experimental attitude seems to be the most fruitful one, both in the development of concepts and materials as well as in work on oneself. To discover one's own yoga or path to self-realization requires attentive study of one's evolving modes of learning and growing, and experimentation with a wide variety of approaches in the laboratory of one's life. Without becoming eclectic to the point where we no longer have a point of view of our own, it is possible within the comprehensive framework of psychosynthesis to make available methods to serve the diverse paths and to meet the multi-dimensional challenge of seeking to further human evolution.

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DISCUSSION

FLORENCE MIALE: I find myself haunted by your and Dr. Wolf's stray cat. This is not frivolous. I wonder whether the alternative is to let it starve. (CRAMPTON: Don't take it too literally. Any metaphor is good just so far.) I am thinking of the demanding, starving, animal who is a damned nuisance to the higher self but who is demanding and is needing, but who gets turned down because otherwise it may become too demanding.

CRAMPTON: Better yet to transform this energy. I don't favor destroying any part of ourselves. This is energy which is potentially useful. The idea is to bring it into line so that it can help in our growth and not get in the way.

FLORENCE MIALE: We had maybe better feed the stray cat and then wonder about transforming it.

COOPER: It's an alchemical or evolutionary thing, transposing it into other energies.

HARONIAN: May I reply to that in the metaphor, perhaps. Maybe this will answer your question. We feed the cat cat food and not filet mignon. (Laughter)

WOLF: We don't want to belabor the cat story too much - but the point simply is to recognize that whatever you feed grows and it also becomes attached to you, inevitably. Therefore, if it is a cat that you do not want to have growing in your home and also don't want to have attached to you, you permit that cat to move to another home, not let it starve. The idea was that most of us feed wrong cats - that is, cats that we do not want actually to have growing and becoming attached to us.

MRS. NANDOR FODOR: If we could activate the superconscious mind, wouldn't everything be easier? When we are in trouble with all kinds of selves, demand the superconscious to guide or help us? But I mean a positive demand. (CRAMPTON: Definitely.) But how could we activate it?

CRAMPTON: This is where the will comes in. It's just turning a switch - as simple as that. The point is to know the switch is there, and then find it within yourself. It depends on your personality type also, I think. We need to learn more about this.

LIVINGSTON: I recently took a commercial course called Silva Mind Control - and you were talking about a switch - well, they seem to feel the switch is the alpha awareness. And I have been reading some articles that say that natural sensitives or psychics do go into this alpha state, and I think the whole concept is very interesting. I do feel that it has to be done not only with methodology but in other aspects too - integration. It was very interesting.

CRAMPTON: Alpha is more linked with relaxation, it seems. Concentration tends to be more linked with the theta pattern.

BORNQUEST: In the process of going from thought to action, where do you see blocks coming in? As I see it, there are tremendous numbers of people with lots of beautiful thoughts that don't get translated into action. (CRAMPTON: This is the defective will.) I feel very much that that's an easy way of saying it. What do you mean by that?

CRAMPTON: There are many stages in the will which Assagioli analyzed, and different people seem to have problems at different stages in the process of an act of volition, and this is one of the stages. Some people can't plan and figure out what they want to do. Others are very good at thinking what they want to do but they can't actually translate it into action; there is an obstacle at the conative level of execution. So, this is one aspect of the training of the will that has to be paid attention to.

PARKS: I was most happy to hear some of your statements about the understanding of aggression in a group, because I think this is an issue which we ought to look at very closely. I appreciate your comments on it. (CRAMPTON: What is your own experience with this?) My feeling is that if you run groups so as to alternate between inward experiences - perhaps meditation - and then outward expression, and if you emphasize positive experiences, the inward experiences may come to grips with emotions and these emotions may be dealt with objectively. You then see them as in yourself rather than acting them out on somebody else.

CRAMPTON: Swinging back and forth from the two types of experience, inner and outer. I think is very important.

PARKS: And with dreams, I think you can see them as part of yourself rather than as impulses to be acted out on somebody else. Of course, others might say that this approach does not produce enough group interaction, but I tend to agree with your way of looking at it.

CRAMPTON: There's interaction on a deeper level, really. It may not be so apparent. (PARKS: Yes.)

ZIEMAN: I liked most of the things you said, particularly that different people may need different ways of working with them. I have worked a lot with groups, and I think my way of working is different from what I heard in your paper. And yet I find that when I have encouraged people who have strong emotions to express them in groups and they did it, there is very often in my groups a sort of climate that seems similar to what you described as the climate in psychosynthesis groups. So, I wonder maybe if it is possible to also get this kind of climate with expression of strong emotions allowed in the group.

CRAMPTON: It depends on the spirit in which it is done, I think. Could you say anything about this in your own experience - how you managed to do this in such a way that it's integrative?

ZIEMAN: I think the principle is that each person is entitled to his or her own feelings and that they are also entitled to express their feelings in the groups. The principle of "acceptance of each individual wherever the individual is at" seems to create a certain climate of acceptance and communion.

CRAMPTON: It's probably because of your own sensitivity that it doesn't happen in a way which is destructive. I have been in many groups where emotions and impulses are acted out in a way which, it seems to me, has been quite destructive for all parties involved. It doesn't always work out as you describe. I think it can. I don't know what this mysterious ingredient is that makes the difference. It's hard to define.

COOPER: It is Love.

CRAMPTON: It is possible to express anger in a loving way in a real effort to communicate.

BORNQUEST: You made a distinction between feeling and emotion and I wish you would elaborate on that.

CRAMPTON: These were the words used by Bloom. "Feeling" he used to refer to the quality of affectivity in the higher centers - a more refined type of feeling, of a more transpersonal nature; and "emotion" lumped together all of the crude emotions and primitive impulses. This is just his particular vocabulary. It's not defined like this in psychological language generally.

BORNQUEST: What about encounter groups where the focus is always on getting someone to express their feelings? Using this vocabulary, would you consider it just feelings or emotions?

CRAMPTON: Emotion, I would call it, using his distinction.

BORNQUEST: I have one other question. You said that "what we think, we are." The idea would be then to change what you think. Out of my own experience, one of the most difficult things that I find to do is to change what's going on in my own head. I can watch it go by, you know, but to actually change what it is is incredibly difficult.

CRAMPTON: Because it's difficult, it helps you to grow. This is the whole idea of growth through overcoming obstacles, through overcoming resistance. If it were easy, there would be no gain in it. But by sincere and persistent effort one can do it.

HARONIAN: One should have some other content that you would like to use to displace whatever it is that is bothering you.

FLORENCE MIALE: I am concerned with your emphasis - a very understandable one - on the primacy of higher manifestations of emotion. Suddenly I was reminded of an Adlerian principle from way, way back. It has been a long, long time since I thought of it: that in terms of subjective experience, at least, the main purpose of a principle is to trot it out when we have violated it and say, "But I have the principle!" but in terms of subjective experience, appropriateness, immediate appropriateness is more sound a guide to call upon than principle.

CRAMPTON: There is certainly a razor's edge path here. It's easy to misuse principles as well as to use them. I tried to emphasize that one's principles also should be constantly revised; but nevertheless one should have them.

FLORENCE MIALE: Isn't it a good idea to get through them and not need them because of what is experienced as appropriate?

CRAMPTON: Eventually - this is what I was trying to say. Confucius said it took him 50 years, and for most of us it may take longer. This is an advanced state, and before we get there it's useful to have external principles. We are divided at this stage of our evolution. There seems to be a higher self and a lower self, and what the Sufis call an "inner Holy War" going on between them. What is true at our present level of evolution may perhaps be at all levels and in different forms as well.

COOPER: Visualize it as a spiral, so that there is no end state. You're continuing to grow and expand in an infinite range, upward or outward, whichever way you want to look at it. This is a conception that I like to use. So I don't worry about ends. I'm only thinking of means and working in relationship to means.

LEVINBERG: You have been very critical of encounter groups and for the most part, rightly so. But I would just like to say that in some of my experiences, in the hands of a sensitive group leader - and I'd like to emphasize that - one does not always express feelings but only when they are appropriate. A synthesis is possible so that feelings can be reached in conjunction with emotions.

CRAMPTON: I didn't mean to condemn encounter groups; I was making a kind of caricature of the worst that goes on in encounter groups for the purpose of drawing some sort of contrast. I certainly didn't mean to imply that everything that goes on in encounter groups is bad.

LEVINBERG: My impression was that where you would like to go with psychosynthesis can sometimes be aided by where one has been in an encounter group.

COOPER: Yes. Sometimes a self-realization experience will occur in an encounter group and if the leader doesn't recognize it, sometimes a patient is stranded. We have picked up a number of them, because they were left high and dry somewhere, and the leader had no knowledge or understanding of what was going on. Neither does the person.

RUSH: In a book I was reading on Aurobindo by Pandit, he makes the point that at a certain stage, man is somewhat like a chamber, that the opening that comes at the top presupposes or is concomitant with an opening at the bottom. In other words:

as things happen this way (upwards), very bizarre things also happen below. Is there any reference to this in psychosynthesis literature? (CRAMPTON: Would you give an example of what you mean by "bizarre things happen below"?) In other words, dark, foreboding emotions arise, negative feelings can also be inter-mixed with very unusual, superconscious states.

HARONIAN: I think it's something that I may have alluded to in my talk in October. I think you're saying that as a person develops greater strength, greater movement into the superconscious or the higher unconscious, the fluctuations of the direction of consciousness, the contents of consciousness, become greater. As a result, there are times when there is a spontaneous diving into the lower unconscious again to dredge up old problems, old issues, that have never been resolved. As one gains more strength from the higher unconscious one is ready to go down deeper. And instead of traveling in a relatively shallow cycle, mostly in the middle unconscious, avoiding either the higher or lower, there is a greater oscillation of attention. If this is what Aurobindo said, I think it's something we find in psychosynthesis, too.

COOPER: Progoff alluded to it by stating that he goes into the depths and then he goes up on the mountaintop, and then he comes back into the depths, and then up to the mountain again. There are many ways to express it.

HARONIAN: I think that Grof's findings in his report on LSD therapy are a perfect example of this, namely the dropping from the Freudian level down to the Rankian death-rebirth sequence.

COOPER: Yes, and then continuing on.

FODOR: When the sky gets very dark, the stars appear. And I have found that when I fall back into an awful desperation, help comes enormously. I was wondering what is the chemical factor or bodily state which occurs in the case of desperation, which helps you to rise easier?

CRAMPTON: The old saying, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity," sums it up very nicely.

WOLF: This thought, I think, brings up the basic principle that every event contains within itself its opposite, and it is caused by its opposite and it is followed by its opposite, and no event can exist other than in that way. Therefore, it is always this oscillation which makes any event possible. And the question is simply, what do we see or look at at the moment? Do we see the obvious or that which produced it and that which follows it, which is its opposite?

CRAMPTON: This is one of the fundamental principles of the transformation of energy--(WOLF: Right)--changing something into its opposite, and this is a wonderful technique. (WOLF: And they both exist all the time at the same time, and it's just a question as to which one you pay attention to at the moment.)

COOPER: You can idly watch one aspect, and then choose to devote attention to the other side. (CRAMPTON: You can actually flip the coin over.)

WOLF: Somewhere the opposite should be in the subconscious background, as it were; to know that it exists and that one could just as easily go into that.

CRAMPTON: This may be one of the main things I think psychology in the next decade will begin to understand.

COOPER: The ease with which you can go from one extreme to the other without getting tied up or getting hung up, shall we say? (WOLF: Because it's the same thing.) Right; because it's the same thing - once you understand it.

ZIEMAN: I have heard two different notions here in the discussion about the correct attitudes toward the lower un-conscious. I heard something about fighting the lower parts of the personality, and I heard Dr. Miale, who is my former teacher, saying something about feeding the stray cat which I translate into feeding the lower part of the personality. Now, I have seen - in all my experiences with myself and with patients, that feeding the lower parts of the personality contributes to growth. I have not seen that fighting the lower parts of the personality contributes to growth. If fighting does contribute to growth, if anybody has experiences like this, I would like to hear them.

FLORENCE MIALE: I think you need to feed the lower part in order that it not take over.

CRAMPTON: What do you mean by feeding here? ZIEMAN: I mean gratify.

FLORENCE MIALE: I mean that part of man is legitimately and truly animal, and the basic needs of the animal, whether they are purely physical or whether they are needs for a degree of comfort and security and pleasure, are very much part of the animal organism, that this is onerequisite.

CRAMPTON: I agree. The idea is not to deny expression to these impulses but to help them express progressively higher levels. The so-called lower impulses and emotions are not to be condemned or denied or cut off; the point is that they can express on higher levels which are more integrative to the total growth of the person.

APPELBAUM: I did feel that you primarily thought about the integration of feelings, with the exclusion of thoughts, rather than the integrative process--this is what we often see in encounter groups - the abandonment of one (thoughts) to the other (feelings). And to express volition, I feel that unless all these parts are being integrated, volition stops, will stops. Volition comes in when we are integrating thoughts and feelings. Then volition is choice.

COOPER: You are no longer repressing either; you are working with both. So you have a choice.

APPELBAUM: Yes. You establish a sort of connection.

SWIRNOW: I'd like to ask a simple question about exerting the will and making it to grow; how do you do it? In forcing the will and in fighting, let's say, a depression or whatever, I can't see how you're accepting the experience and growing from it if you're exerting your will not to get into it.

CRAMPTON: Dr. Wolf makes a distinction between willingness and will. Many people associate will with a kind of hammering, fighting oneself. But if it's a question of willingness, it is something very different.

SWIRNOW: I hear what you say and I understand it, but I still can't see how I could do it.

COOPER: Before you're familiar with the parameters of your personality and get unhung or get untied from these various tie-down things, (for instance, the feeding of the cat), you may take two days to worry about feeding it! But when you free the energies, then the will becomes free. Then you can feed the cat in two minutes rather than become real wrapped up and concerned about it! This is the release of the will which Martha Crampton is talking about.

CRAMPTON: The main thing to know is that you do have this power. The power is within - the switch is within, and there are innumerable techniques. You'll invent your own techniques.

NORDIC: I was lecturing one time and will power came into it, and I asked a little boy who was sitting in front what was his will. So, he thought a moment, and he said, "My will is what I use when I don't want." (Laughter)

FODOR: You said we have to free the energy. Isn't it really the mind we have to free, not the energy? Dr. Fodor took the position that the mind is outside the body. I am not talking about the brain, of course.

COOPER: The brain is just the channel through which mind operates.

CRAMPTON: Mind expresses through the body.

FODOR: I am asking, is it the mind or is it the energy which we have to free?

CRAMPTON: The higher energies. One wants to be directed from the highest source; that which coordinates and directs the other energies. There are many levels of manifestation of energy. But rather than being led from the lowest point, you can be led from above; this is the point.

COOPER: This is the basis of psychosynthesis.

WOLF: Martha, in your groups, how active are you as a group leader? Are you a group leader or are you just a member of the group, or which?

CRAMPTON: It depends on what I feel like (FLORENCE MIALE: Feel?) Yes. Now I'm contradicting everything I said. (Laughter)

COOPER: She's free to feel and express. (F. MIALE: I was underlining it, not criticizing it.)

BORNQUEST: You talked about muscular discharge and negative affect. What did you mean by that?

CRAMPTON: Assagioli's example I referred to illustrates this well - where he had a person tear up old telephone books to get rid of his aggression instead of smashing all the furniture in the room. He did something of a harmless nature, and he got rid of his tensions. Some people go out and saw wood or run around or punch a punching bag.

BORNQUEST: If a member of your group were involved in a very angry state, what would you do? Would you give him a telephone book?

CRAMPTON: The group would help. The group gets ideas; and the person can think for himself. I don't tell him what to do. I like it to emerge from the group and preferably from the individual. (BORNQUEST: Do you have someone in the group actually do something?) Sure.

ZIEMAN: Do you use a pillow for punching?

COOPER: We use everything! This week my group at the Penitentiary (these are black militants) are playing a scene from Joan of Arc; and one of the fellows even got a higher perception during this play. And these are militants who are ready to fight any minute!

(End of Discussion)

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