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A study, using personal accounts and participant
observation, of two 'growth' movements as social-
psychological phenomena, with a discussion of the
possibility of a humanistic science of persons.

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Preface

This thesis began with the intention to study processes of personal 'growth' or 'change'. The idea of change in personality is one which has received surprisingly little attention despite its centrality as both a theoretical and practical problem. Psychotherapy and the rehabilitation of prisoners, as well as more personal issues of identity and existence, hinge on this problem of personality change. And, indeed, there are many examples of people changing as a result of having a baby, growing old, taking drugs, getting married, experiencing religious conversion, surviving in extreme situations, getting an abortion, having a surgical operation, starting a new job, becoming unemployed.....the list is endless.

The decision to choose Transcendental Meditation and encounter groups as techniques of change to be studied was taken for three reasons. Firstly, many of those who have been involved in these activities claim to have changed or 'grown' as a result. Secondly, both are popular and widespread. Therefore it seemed reasonable to expect that research would reveal wider social implications. Finally, the bias of TM to explain meditation effects in terms of physiology and that of encounter group theory to talk about individuals offered an opportunity to make certain comparisons between them.

On setting out on this project, however, it very quickly became clear that the efficacy of many widely-used research

methods could not be taken for granted. When the object of study is change, moreover, additional problems are introduced. For example, most research on personality change involves administering the same test before and after the change - inducing event. But is the testing situation ever really the same the second time? Not only does the individual become wise to the test, but he or she is also likely to have his or her own ideas about what has happened, and try to express this point of view in replying to test items. When people have undergone 'growth' experiences, they are often very enthusiastic and eager to convince others of the value of what they have done, they are highly motivated to 'do well' on the re-test.

But there are other difficulties. The changes in people may be too subtle or idiosyncratic to be picked up in group tests. Change may even be qualitative rather than quantitative. For example, when someone gets divorced after an encounter group, will this show up on psychometric tests?

So much of the work of this thesis has gone into developing an adequate methodology. The methodological and philosophical framework of the research is set out in some detail in Part I. Part II constitutes the substantive research itself and the conclusions drawn from it.

There are a few Notes in Appendix A. Although these are matters about which something needed to be said, to have included them

in the body of the text would have resulted in too long an excursion from the main track of the thesis. The Notes seem to point toward emergent problems and issues.

Finally, the work which is reported here is on-going. It will be clear to the reader that many of the ideas introduced could be thought through more fully and much of the material gathered might be analysed in more detail. Yet this is not the only sense in which the work continues. The form of this kind of research is dialogue, and the actual contact and 'negotiation of accounts' with those who were informants has not been halted by the submission of a Ph.D. thesis. Indeed, the articulation of ideas and gathering together of sources necessitated by the demands of the thesis will allow a further round of negotiation and development of the material presented here.

ABSTRACT

The thesis is in two parts. Part I examines the possibility of a humanistic science of persons. The failure of the psychometric approach to personality research is described. It is argued that psychometrics denies the common-sense, everyday-life basis of its procedures. Then, with the aim of constructing a true science of persons, some of the concepts of a philosophy of the person are introduced. Finally, it is suggested that a science of persons would be a science of interpretation. A methodology for such a science is set out, along with the examples of research which has exploited these methods.

In Part II, a programme of substantive research is presented. The aim is to investigate those experiences which individuals claim lead to their personal 'growth'. Two 'growth' movements - Transcendental Meditation and encounter groups - are studied as social-psychological phenomena. The methods used are personal accounts and participant observation. These activities are described as constituting unique identifiable 'regions of social reality'. It is concluded that they resemble forms of art such as novels or films more than forms of therapy or education. The implications of this conclusion are explored in a final Chapter.

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CHAPTER 1

THE FAILURE OF THE PSYCHOMETRIC
APPROACH TO PERSONALITY RESEARCH

Introduction

Despite much criticism (Fiske, 1974; Mischel, 1968, 1974) the psychometric approach to personality research remains the single most widely used method of research in this area. In the Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook, Buros (1972) has collected 1897 references for the MMPI, 754 for the EPPS, 620 for the CPI, 544 for the 16PF, and 173 for the EPI. In addition, Howarth (1976) reports a further 356 references to the EPI between 1970 and 1973. Such a volume of research using familiar psychometric tests indicates no waning of popularity for this approach

Indeed, the extent of the psychometric research programme is symptomatic of a deep interest in, and need for, sure knowledge about human nature and personality. But, as we shall see, the psychometric approach is unable to deliver such knowledge. It will be shown that the psychometric strategy is no more than a formalisation of common-sense, pre-theoretical ways of making sense of behaviour. And, moreover, in denying that it functions in this way, the psychometric approach must relinquish its claim to scientific status. This theme will be traced through three sources of evidence: the experience of doing a test, some research on what it is tests 'measure', and, finally, the history of the psychometric movement.

The experience of doing a personality test

By the 'psychometric approach to personality research' is here meant research which employs rating scales, questionnaires or inventories to measure hypothesised "underlying sources of observed behaviour" (Cattell,1965) or "permanent possibilities for action" (Allport,1966). Trait theorists and psychometricians in general believe that their tests allow them to identify stable patterns of behaviour in individuals, patterns which could have parallels in neural organisation or have been laid down in early experience. It is important to emphasise this belief in the 'objectivity' of personality traits. As Allport(1937) puts it : "traits are not creations in the mind of the observer, nor are they verbal fictions; they are here accepted as physical facts, actual psychophysical systems related - though no one yet knows how - to persistent neural systems of stress and determination". More recently, the large body of work which has attempted to give the individual difference conception of personality a basis in biology (eg Eysenck,1967) reveals a continuing belief in the 'objectivity' of personality dimensions.

The 'doctrine of objectivity' implies that the strength of personality traits, and the relationship between them, may be found through observation, since certain behaviour is taken to indicate the expression of certain underlying predispositions or traits. Mischel(1968,1972) has called

this the "indirect sign paradigm". The purpose of psychometric tests is to assess the frequency or saliency of a particular behaviour, or 'sign' for the person being tested. The demand made upon the person actually doing the rating, or answering the questions, is to estimate as accurately as possible the 'strength' of the relevant behaviours. It is an implicit assumption of the psychometric approach, then, that the person taking the test should be an accurate and impartial observer of his own or of another's behaviour. This assumption is implied by the 'doctrine of objectivity', which states the psychometrician's intention to describe patterns of behaviour that exist in the external world - "physical facts" as Allport would have it - and is given substance in the procedures and practices of testing itself. For example, while test instructions may emphasise that too much time should not be spent thinking about 'items', the testing situation is nevertheless defined as 'serious'. It is work rather than play, the testee is often invited to give up his time in the interests of scientific advance, and of course no collusion is allowed between those taking the test. Also, there may be 'lie' or 'faking' items included in the test. Finally, tests are designed in the light of research on the 'social desirability' of answers and 'response bias'. In all, although it is seldom stated explicitly, it seems to be a fundamental principle of psychometric testing that the person taking the test should be as honest and objective an observer as possible.

Yet when we examine the task the testee is being asked to perform, we find that it is very difficult for him or her to be accurate, impartial, honest or objective. Firstly, there is a limited choice open to the testee. Often he or she will be faced with a question and two or three possible answers, none of which seem relevant or seem to 'fit' his or her experience. Thus the testee may have no option but to endorse a meaningless, inaccurate or even false statement or category. Secondly, the person can hardly reply to at least some of the questions without consciously or unconsciously comparing him or herself with others (Murray, 1938). For example, asked to rate self or other on a 'dull-lively' continuum, the person can only have recourse to his or her idea of what constitutes 'liveliness' or 'dullness'. And of course behaviour that would be considered 'dull' in one social milieu might well be thought rather 'lively' in another. As Poulton (1976) has pointed out, to the extent that a person has access to a limited social group, his or her reply to a test question will lie within a truncated or arbitrary range.

A third, related, source of difficulty for the testee is the use of qualifiers like 'often' or 'sometimes' as in 'Are you usually carefree?' Clearly, not everyone will have the same idea of how frequently something would have to happen to make it 'usual'. Fourthly, the structure of psychometric tests embody an assumption of cross-situational consistency of behaviour. For example, the

test item - 'Do you enjoy lively parties? Yes/No' - does not give the person the opportunity to reply 'it depends on the party'. Similarly, the demands of rating one's self or another person on a 'lively' - 'dull' continuum disallow the possibility of being 'lively' on one occasion and 'dull' on another. The idea of cross-situational consistency of behaviour is a central postulate of trait or dimension theories of personality (despite evidence which supports the opposite stance: eg Argyle and Little, 1972). This postulate has been designed - in to tests so that that person doing the test must interpret self or other's behaviour in terms of "stable patterns of behaviour" rather than situational influences. It would be impossible to complete a rating scale or questionnaire in any other way.

What we find, then, in even a brief examination of the experience of doing a psychometric test, is that there are great difficulties facing the testee. He or she may be highly motivated to report honestly and objectively on his or her own, or another's behaviour, but the degree of accuracy which can be achieved is restricted by the test itself. The questions may not be appropriate to the testee's experience of life. The testee must call upon his or her notions of self in relation to others, and of the meaning of vague and undefined terms such as 'usually' or 'sometimes'. Finally, the structure of tests imposes a particular point of view on the testee. The test asks the testee to view behaviour in terms of consistencies.

These comments are directed to all psychometric test procedures. The problems of the testee are an inevitable consequence of the psychometric strategy - they cannot be alleviated through improved test construction. As Fiske (1974) has noted, they are problems arising from the nature of language and the psychometric attempt to quantify statements in a precise manner. For, if the meaning of words depends to a large extent on the context in which they are used and to some extent also on the individual people who are using them then it will only be possible to achieve precision, or a semblance of precision, as the result of a process of negotiation.

The conclusion that personal experience can only be converted to 'data' or test 'scores' at the end of a process of negotiation or interpretation is substantiated by some research conducted within the 'ethnomethodology' school of sociology (see Garfinkel, 1967; Turner, 1974). This work shows very clearly that 'facts' such as police or hospital statistics are in no simple sense 'descriptions of reality' but instead are more adequately thought of as 'accomplishments'. For example, Garfinkel (1967:ch6) has examined hospital record keeping procedures. He found that even in the relatively enclosed 'behavioural world' of the hospital, it was impossible to devise categories for use in rating scales or data sheets that would be inclusive of all possible contingencies. Garfinkel found that hospital personnel used common-sense strategies to fit their experience or 'reading'

of the situation on to the alternatives offered by the measuring device or report sheet. They were guided by what they understood the data would be used for and by prior agreements or understandings which had been reached regarding the relevance or authority of different sources of information. This is to say : when we study in great detail the processes which intervene between individual experience and the codification of that experience as a 'social fact' such as a hospital statistic, we discover that the 'facts' have as much to do with the practical concerns of the fact-gatherer, his 'practical reasoning', his 'logic-in-use' and the rules of the organisation concerned, as they do with 'objective reality'. These conclusions have also been reached through studies of police records (Cicourel,1968), a welfare agency (Zimmerman, 1969) and a coroner's office (Garfinkel,1967).

These ethnomethodological studies offer evidence which reinforces the conclusions drawn from our brief analysis of the experience of doing a psychometric test - it is impossible to complete such a test without drawing heavily upon one's understanding of what the test is for, what the tester wants, and, at a deeper level, upon one's implicit theory or ideas concerning the way people are. Thus, far from giving us a reflection of "patterns of behaviour" in the external world, the result of a psychometric test gives us a reflection of how the testee goes about making sense of the external world. As Fiske(1974) puts it: "the behavioural

unit being studied is actually the observer's process in making his judgement and the observer's response recording his judgement provides the datum".

Psychometric measuring devices rely on what words mean to people, and these meanings are in turn bound up with the common-sense routines, theories and 'typifications' through which people make sense of their own and others' behaviour. In claiming to measure "physical facts", which have their basis in biology, the psychometricians have failed to give enough attention to the experience of those participating in their work. When the experience of the testee is considered, it becomes clear that the common-sense basis of their judgements is also an important factor.

What do tests 'measure'?

In analysing the experience of doing a personality test, we argued that people doing tests must call upon their common-sense knowledge of human behaviour to be able to answer items. However, this type of analysis cannot tell us how prevalent these strategies are. It may be true that the dominant patterns of behaviour in the external world are so clear and so powerful that they will be reflected in test data in spite of the weaknesses of observers and testees. Or it may be that statistical and test construction techniques are adequate to combat any distortions due to 'common-sense'.

The question which must be faced, then, is this one: what do personality tests measure? Do they reflect patterns of behaviour, or the observer's judgement processes and common-sense rationality, or some interaction or combination of these? At this time, there is not enough evidence to be absolutely certain one way or the other, but there does appear to be agreement within what: ever evidence is available that not only does the "structure of personality" derived from factor analysis of rating scale or questionnaire answers reflect the person's "implicit personality theory", pre-existing conceptual scheme or construct system more than it does any pattern or organisation of behaviour, but also that there is little relationship between the two. That is, it does not seem plausible for the defenders of psychometrics to

argue that, even though test scores do reflect implicit personality theories, these theories in turn are a reflection of patterns of behaviour.

The evidence has unfolded in this way. First of all, it was shown that the "personality factors" extracted from factor analysis of ratings or questionnaires are similar, in both structure and content, for different groups of raters and ratees (Cattell,1965; Fiske,1949; Norman,1963) and also using different tests. The conclusion drawn was that the technique of factor analysis enables the researcher to identify source traits of great generality and descriptive power. As Cattell himself says, "such findings suggest that we are dealing with basic traits of general human importance, not just artefacts of a particular culture".

Unfortunately for Cattell this optimistic note was soon to be muted. Mulaik(1964) and D'Andrade(1965) demonstrated that when people were asked to rate words rather than other people, the same factors emerged. Then Passini and Norman (1966) found that ratings of total strangers produced the same factor structure as did ratings of people well known to the raters. Clearly, if people do not need to observe behaviour in order to produce these "personality factors", it is obvious that they cannot be in any simple or direct way reflections of "stable patterns of behaviour". But where did the factors come from? The search turned to the meaning of the words used in rating scales and

questionnaires.

Osgood had shown that word meanings could be depicted using a three-dimensional "semantic space". Hallworth (1966) and Peterson (1965) demonstrated that factors derived from personality tests were in fact similar to these 'meaning' factors. This research is reviewed by Mischel (1968;1974) but in itself it is not conclusive - it leaves open the possibility that, although ratings reflect word meanings, these meanings may in themselves be accurate descriptions of what happens in the world. Mischel(1974 p264) suggests that the individual generates "diverse behaviours in response to diverse conditions; the emitted behaviours are observed and subsequently integrated cognitively by the performer and are encoded on semantic dimensions in trait terms".

This is to say that, even though factors derived from rating scales and questionnaires rely on pre-existing conceptual schemes (eg Osgood's "semantic space"), these schemes are themselves derived from regularities in behaviour. As D'Andrade puts it : "it is possible that so-called psychological traits exist both as components in the terms used to describe the external world and in the external world as well" (D'Andrade, 1965 - emphasis added). This theory suggests that trait words "encode" or organise a multitude of different

experiences and observations of behaviour into "implicit personality theories", which can be seen as being the "relative frequencies of joint occurrences of various personality attributes and behavioural dispositions in other persons" (Passini and Norman, 1966).

Here we have the return of the 'doctrine of objectivity'. It has been established that people possess conceptual schemes or "implicit personality theories" and that it is to these that they make reference when they are faced with the task of completing personality tests. But now the 'doctrine of objectivity', and all that goes with it, must be saved through the argument that the pre-existing schemes etc reflect 'objective reality'. Indeed, this is an appealing view. We would be unhappy to have pre-existing schemes etc which did not reflect objective reality. We can imagine that these schemes are necessary generalisations within which we compute more complex and subtle schemes for ourselves and those we know well.

However, this view is testable, and has been tested. The necessary conditions for a test are to compare direct, ethological observation of behaviour with ratings of that same behaviour. From the direct observation of behaviour we can be sure of what goes with what in the external world - we can have a clear idea of the patterns of 'actual' behaviour. From our ratings we can discover what we think goes with what - our implicit personality scheme. By comparing the two patterns we can test the 'doctrine of

objectivity'.

The first study which attempted to do this was one carried out by Willems and Willems (1965). The Willems were interested in the extent to which adolescents favoured different places or "behaviour settings". They had, in the first place, information on all the behaviour settings their research informants had participated in over a period of time. This information had been obtained by direct, ethological-type recording of behaviour as it happened. Then they attempted to measure the strength of their informants' "forces towards participation". They reasoned that "there would probably be a positive relationship between the number of forces and the subjects' actual participation in behaviour settings" and therefore used the number of settings actually participated in as "a criterion of validity for the data on forces" (Willems and Willems, 1965 p67).

Three methods of measuring forces towards participation were used. Forty adolescents were asked, in individual interviews, to think of behaviour settings and to report on what were their reasons for taking part in the activity there. Then the same group were given a set of 16 cards which had printed on them typical reasons for participation - for example, "I was required to go" or "I like that activity". They were asked to choose the cards which represented their reasons for going.

The third method was used with a separate group of 54 adolescents. For this group the 16 statements which had been printed on the cards were printed as a check-list on a questionnaire. They were asked to write 'yes' or 'no' to indicate whether each item had been a reason for participation.

Thus there were three sources of information about the informants' experienced "forces towards participation". The first was coded interview data, the second card-sort data and the third check-list data. This data on "forces towards participation" was correlated with the actual participation of informants in five settings. For interview data the correlation between expressed forces and actual participation was .87; for card-sort data .54; for check-list data .32. As Willems and Willems (1965 p69) noted - "there emerged a strong negative relationship between the ease of getting the data and the validity of the data".

What can we conclude from this study? By comparing different methods of collecting the same type of information, the Willems study made it possible to observe that the more typically 'psychometric' the information-gathering situation became, the less valid the information gathered. We might suppose that at one extreme the very time consuming and difficult procedure of ethological description gives us our nearest approximation to 'actual' behaviour, while as we make the relationship between tester and testee more remote

and constrain the choices open to the informant more and more we gradually move away from that ideal.

However, the Willems study was a direct comparison of ratings with actual behaviour, and did not consider the dimension of meaning of test items. A similar study by Shweder(1976) included this factor.

Shweder(1976) compared direct observation of actual behaviour, ratings of that behaviour, and an analysis of the conceptual similarity of items. The data consisted primarily of direct observation of the occurrence of 26 items of behaviour in a group of 51 boys at a summer camp. The occurrence of each behaviour was noted by a camp counsellor as soon as possible after its performance. At the end of the 24-day camp, the counsellor and five other observers rated the boy on a five-point scale for each of the 26 items. Examples of the behaviour being rated or observed are :

Gets up before rising hour

Engages in group misdemeanour

Spends more than an hour of the day alone

On the basis of these observations and ratings it was possible to estimate the relationships between actual behaviours. However, Shweder also obtained judgements on "what conceptually goes with what". That is, he

attempted to discover the relationships between the semantic meanings of test items. Thus, a separate group of judges rated each pair of items for conceptual similarity on a 7-point scale (1=very similar conceptually 7=very dissimilar conceptually). This gave Shweder three patterns of inter-correlations :

Actual behaviour: 'what goes with what in actual behaviour, as observed at the time.

Rated behaviour : 'what goes with what' in ratings carried out at the end of the camp.

Pre-existing conceptual scheme:
'what conceptually goes with what'.
The structure of meaning of items.

The similarity or otherwise of the three patterns could be estimated by correlating across them. This procedure gave the following results :

	Preexisting conceptual scheme	
	.74	.51
Rated behaviour	.35	Actual behaviour

Figure 1 Comparison of organisation of items when actual behaviour overlaps with pre-existing conceptual scheme.

Preexisting conceptual scheme

	.84		-.36
Rated behaviour		-.27	Actual behaviour

Figure 2 Comparison of organisation of items when actual behaviour conflicts with pre-existing scheme. (from Shweder, 1976 pp405-6).

Thus we see that, for all items, rated behaviour is much more like the pre-existing conceptual scheme than it is the actual behaviour. However, we cannot be sure whether the correlation of .35 between rated and actual behaviour is due to some accuracy in the rating method or whether it is due to the domination of ratings by a pre-existing scheme which to some extent reflects actual behaviour. (Figure 1). To clarify this problem, the following operation was carried out: for approximately one third of items, it was found that actual behaviour relationships were in conflict with the pre-existing conceptual scheme. That is, for these item pairs the independent judges' estimations of conceptual similarity were at odds with what actually happened. In these cases, ratings of behaviour followed the pre-existing conceptual scheme rather than the actual behaviour (Figure 2). Shweder(1976 p465) concludes that "it is clear that recall-based judgements on rating forms merely reproduce pre-existing conceptual associations with little sensitivity to the relationships among items in actual behaviour".

It has been necessary to describe the Willems and Shweder studies in some detail because, unlike the other studies quoted, they have yet to be assimilated into the reviewed literature, and also because they are the only available studies which compare direct observation of behaviour with ratings of that same behaviour. Both studies show clearly that ratings of behaviour do not reflect with any adequacy actual patterns in that behaviour. Shweder, both in the study mentioned and in three other studies reported in the same paper, shows that ratings produce factors which are similar to those produced from pre-existing conceptual schemes or "implicit personality theories", thus adding to the evidence reported above on this issue (eg Mulaik,1964; D'Andrade,1965; Passini and Norman,1966). Shweder also offers us a little information relevant to the question of the relationship between actual behaviour and pre-existing schemes or constructs. It seems as though there might be some overlap between these factors. However, much work remains to be done in this area. Shweder(1976 pp479-481) discusses some of the problems involved in this undertaking.

The question of 'what tests measure' can be approached from another direction: there has been some research which shows that people answering questions on psychometric tests are trying to express themselves through the medium of the test. Payne and Wiggins(1972) and Koss and Butcher(1973) looked at the MMPI protocols of psychiatric patients. In both studies they compared the meaning of items endorsed - ie what the

patient was saying about him or herself - with what clinical staff saw the patients as saying about themselves. They found that the patients were tending to report on the tests what they were also saying to staff. As Payne and Wiggins (1972 p7) put it:

"it may come as no surprise to many clinicians that patients who describe themselves in a certain way in interviews, and who are described in a similar fashion by others (friends, relatives, social workers or clinicians), often say the same things about themselves on the MMPI".

This research confirms once again the theme being pursued here - that psychometric tests have their origin in the common-sense of people taking the tests. These studies show that people doing tests are making statements about their personalities, they are describing themselves in tests as they would to friends, family or strangers. There is nothing special about the information that goes in to tests. It is no more than this common-sense way of talking about oneself that we all do.

It is important to bear in mind that there is no reason why this common-sense way of talking about oneself should be true. In everyday social interaction, we are given situational cues and all kinds of opportunity to alter or exchange our way of 'labelling' someone, so it is not necessary for our personality theories to be correct. It is likely that we

have, at this level of describing people, alternative theories which may be brought into play as the need arises. After all, we are rarely totally surprised by someone's behaviour. On reflection, we can usually find them a motive or a reason for having acted as they did. Also, as Shweder(1976) points out, we may avoid or ignore instances of disconfirmation of our personality theories or systems of classification: "the intellectual tendency to confirm what is 'sensible' and dismiss (forget, reinterpret, explain away or fail to retrieve) what 'lacks sense' must be overwhelming in everyday affairs" (p480).

So, while our common-sense theories are fine for 'making out' in everyday life, especially when combined with other strategies, it is not to be expected that they will provide anything like an adequate theory on which to predict specific behaviour. A recent study by Mirels (1976) helps to bring this problem into focus.

Mirels(1976) tried to find out if people could accurately predict how others would reply to personality questionnaire items. He took pairs of items, of known "coendorsement probability" (that is, he knew, for a large sample, how likely it was that a person would answer 'Yes' to both items). The task of participants in Mirels' study was to predict this coendorsement probability. They were confronted with the following type of problem:

"A - My greatest desire is to be independent and free.

B - If I have a problem, I like to work it out alone.

If a man answers True to Item A, what is the probability that he will also answer True to Item B?

Estimate : _____% (Mirels, 1976 p472)

Mirels then compared the estimates of coendorsement with the actual coendorsement rates. He found that there was little relationship between the two, and concluded that there must exist "inferential illusions" - "certain biases in the interpretation of trait-relevant data are widely shared, and their accuracy confidently assumed" (Mirels, 1976 p480). What is happening here is that testees' implicit personality theories have been shown to^{be} inadequate to predict specific behaviour (a similar conclusion to that arrived at by Shweder, 1976).

But what is of particular interest is to set Mirels' study alongside others which compared estimates of coendorsement, not with actual coendorsement rates, but with the correlation between the trait scales represented by the items (Lay and Jackson, 1969; Stricker, Jacobs and Kogan, 1974., Shweder, 1976). In these three studies in which estimates of coendorsement or 'what goes with what conceptually' were compared with personality factors, it was found that there was a good fit between the implicit personality theory and the factor. For example, Stricker et al(1974) found that a

cluster analysis of high school girls' classification of items from the MMPI Psychopathic Deviate Scale agreed substantially with factors obtained in factor analyses of self-reports to these items. And Shweder (1976 Experiments II and III) showed that Bales's three factors for describing small-group behaviour could be derived from factor analysis of students' judgements concerning the similarity in meaning of Bales's items, and that the personality factors resulting from the Sears study of maternal behaviour could be generated in similar fashion.

This type of research has been taken to imply that implicit personality theories are veridical reflection of actual behaviour. Lay and Jackson (1969 p19) write:

"the high similarity between the inferential structure and the empirical structure indicates that judges can, on the average, accurately perceive variations in trait relationships.....This accuracy implies that the judge bases his inferential judgements to a great extent upon the relationships of personality traits as he observed them in others".

But, on the basis of Mirels' data, at least, it becomes clear that the "accuracy" of implicit personality theories discovered by Lay and Jackson is more apparent than real - it is, to use Mirels' term, a systematic illusion. An illusion because people are unable to make specific predictions. A systematic illusion because there is a wide measure of agreement in the errors made. How can this happen?

Mirels (1976 pp481-483) describes some ways in which psychometric test procedure and factor analysis can inflate small relationships between conceptually similar items into full-blown 'personality dimensions'. Firstly, "a .30 item loading - the criterion used for characterising an item as belonging to a factor - can be generated by minimal interitem correlations" (Mirels, 1976 p482). Secondly, in both the free-sorting and coendorsement techniques allow the informant to classify items which are obviously similar as members of a cluster or as likely to be answered in the same direction, and to be non-committal with respect to less obvious items. And it is just such obviously similar items which emerge as the ones most likely to covary in questionnaire data (see Mischel, 1968). Thus the correspondence between implicit theories and factors may rest on the similarity of a few items. What is being said here is that the technique of factor analysis is one which may be uniquely suited to making the most of conceptual similarity among questionnaire items.

But there is another means by which the psychometric model makes it likely that research participants will look towards their implicit theories rather than towards actual behaviour. Typically, questionnaire and rating scales give people very little information to work on. As Mirels (1976 p483) puts it :

".....judgements are based on severely restricted informational inputs.....The absence of background,

contextual or other types of aggregate information.....
undoubtedly serves to heighten subjects' dependence
on the kinds of interitem associative relationships
noted earlier....."

Here Mirels refers back to an earlier statement that, in his study, an examination of the item pairs which were most often coendorsed showed that "semantic and/or metaphorical associative relationship between items heavily influenced the covariation judgements" (Mirels, 1976 p483).

The argument that the test situation is one that encourages, indeed necessitates the use of common-sense and implicit theory, is well stated by Shweder (1976 p477) :

"they are a kind of situation that encourages a 'rush to judgement' even when, as is typical, the respondent does not have access to relevant information or the relevant information is unavailable, ie the respondent either knows too much or too little about the person judged. Random guessing under conditions of ignorance would, of course, reduce the size of correlations among items and not alter the pattern of interitem relationships, but guesses are never random when the judge has a pre-existing understanding of 'what is like what'. Random error becomes systematic error by consistently erring in the direction of the pre-existing conceptual scheme, the result of which is to increase the size of interitem correlations while organising it into an

erroneous but coherent pattern".

So, although people doing psychometric tests are trying to express their way of seeing the world through the medium of scales and answers (Payne and Wiggins, 1972 ; Koss and Butcher, 1973), the framework of the test is one which distorts this vision. In replying to the demands of the test, they are forced to stretch their common-sense and implicit theories about personality to cover a wide and ill-defined range of possibilities. But common-sense and implicit theory does not usually have to cope with this demand for precision and generalisation. The everyday-life use of common-sense theorising about people is complex and subtle. The test demands unrealistic oversimplification. What we are left with, as the product of the psychometric process, is a set of popular illusions.

So, the results of all this research confirm the conclusions drawn from our examination of the experience of doing a psychometric test. These conclusions were that psychometric tests rely on testees' common-sense strategies for understanding everyday behaviour, and do not present the tester with a straightforward reflection of patterns of behaviour. The research on 'what tests measure' reinforces the view that test scores are the outcome of a process of interpretation and negotiation.

But if, as D'Andrade (1965) argues, raters and psychologists

have logically confused "propositions about the world with propositions about language", how can it be that the psychometric approach to personality research has been so 'successful', with hundreds of published papers documenting the existence of statistically significant relationships between test scores and other behaviour? The psychometrician might reasonably assert that, after all, this method does 'work', so why not use it and allow a finer understanding of its complexities emerge in due course? This argument has been around for more than 50 years : "In all probability, as has been the case with the study of intelligence, we shall be able to give precise quantitative results before we understand the precise nature of that with which we are dealing" (Allport, 1921).

The question being asked can be put in this form : if it is true that psychometric personality tests reflect common-sense strategies rather than patterns of behaviour, then how have they managed to get away with it for so long? Where have all the correlations between test scores and other variables come from? Several answers can be offered :

1) It is unlikely that "implicit personality theories" are totally inaccurate. They must have some points of contact with the lived world; it would be noticeable if they did not. But, as Shweder (1976 p479) suggests, these principles of classification may have less to do with the maintenance of ongoing social interaction than with the maintenance of the necessary belief in the existence of a stable, predictable

social world. This introduces the distinction between personal construct systems (Kelly, 1955) and the kind of group or cultural construct systems which emerge from factor analysis of test data. Kelly (1955) and others would have us believe that personal constructs are powerful predictors of personal behaviour. To some extent, personal constructs will also be shared cultural or group constructs. Therefore 'factors' from tests will be important or salient personal constructs for some of the testees, and thus will be highly relevant to their behaviour.

2) Many of the reported studies are of correlations between different tests. Tests may contain the same items (see Mischel, 1968, p86), which will inflate the level of association. For example, the CPI shares 178 virtually identical items (out of a total of 480) with the MMPI (Magargee, 1972).

3) Correlations between test scores and 'objective' indices may have little to do with generalised traits or personality dimensions, being rather the result of the influence of extreme groups. For example Eysenck (1971) reports 35 studies which demonstrate statistically significant relationships between the EPI or MPI and 'objective' indices, of which 27 employed a 'trait' or 'type' model, while only 8 used the theoretically (for Eysenck) more appropriate 'dimension' model. This is to argue that while the common notion that there exist extreme groups of people whom we can label 'extraversion' or 'intelligence' may be correct, this does not imply that 'extraversion' or 'intelligence' is a factor or dimension relevant to the whole population. We might

surmise that these extreme groups generate many of the correlations reported in studies of this nature, since they are more likely to see themselves, be seen by others, and indeed perform, in terms of cultural stereotypes. Of course this can be only a suggestion at present - further study and experiment is necessary to establish more clearly its validity.

4) Correlations between psychometric test scores and other measurements can be an artefact caused by the use of very large samples. Bakan (1967) has demonstrated that if tests are administered to large enough numbers of people, illusory statistically significant correlations will be produced.

5) Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and Orne (1962) have drawn attention to the effects of experimenter expectancies and the demand characteristics of the experimental situation as perceived by the 'subject'. Orne (1962 p778) has noted that "as far as the subject is able, he will behave in an experimental context in a manner designed to play the role of a 'good subject' or, in other words, to validate the experimental hypothesis". It is conceivable, then, that some, as yet unknown extent, the achievements of the psychometric research programme may rest on this kind of artefact.

6) Despite the occasional foray into cross-cultural research, most studies restrict themselves to limited demographic groups - usually college students or psychiatric patients. It is therefore difficult to agree with Cattell when he claims that such studies produce "basic traits of general human importance,

not just artefacts of a particular culture" (Cattell, 1965)
In fact, Loevinger (1972) comments : "we suspect that a fair test would show that most factors in other studies would not be replicable in new samples which differ demographically in ways which, according to reasonable assumptions, should not change the trait structure under study".

But there are problems inherent in constructing such a "fair test". Different demographic groups are likely to constitute different language communities. Yet, as we have seen, psychometric tests embody assumptions and ways of talking about the world which are peculiar to our Western industrial language community - assumptions about terms such as 'usually', an implicit agreement to view the world for test purposes as if behaviour was consistent across situations, and so on. Although these assumptions are perhaps also shared by the groups on whom cross-cultural research has been carried out, typically students or other highly educated 'westernised' groups living in urban environments, it may be impossible for members of language communities very different from our own to comprehend these questions in anything like the same way as we do. Thus it is suggested that the generality of traits across cultures, an important 'sales feature' for the psychometricians, has been made possible by the selective use of particular demographic groups.

7) The current policy of journal editors is one of giving priority to research reports which report 'positive' rather than 'negative' results. Researchers are less

likely, in such a climate, to offer for publication studies which do not include statistically significant results. Thus it may be that many cases of failure of psychometric personality tests to correlate with 'objective' indices have been concealed.

8) Finally, the question - how have they managed to get away with it for so long? - deserves the answer that they had a duty to continue trying to perfect psychometric methodology. As Kuhn (1962) points out, it is in the very nature of scientific enquiry to persist with a theory or 'paradigm', in spite of its weaknesses and errors, until something better comes along. The supporters of the psychometric research strategy have had to live with the criticisms levelled by Mischel (1968) and others until they could discover a better way of doing research.

These are some of the reasons why the psychometric approach to personality research has survived in spite of a growing body of evidence which strongly suggests that its basic tenets are mistaken. None of these reasons is in itself sufficient to account for the apparent 'success' of psychometrics - the hundreds of published studies which document relationships between test scores and other measures of behaviour. Taken together, however, they begin to allow the possibility of doubt, they make it seem plausible that perhaps the research work reviewed above is correct. Perhaps psychometric tests do have more in

common with our common-sense ways of making sense of the world than with precision measuring devices. A final source of evidence - an examination of the history of the psychometric movement - will allow us to confirm these suspicions.

The history of the psychometric movement

The origins of the movement to quantify aspects of human psychological functioning announce its basis in common-sense practicality. Enthusiastic historians have detected precursors of psychometrics in China during the Han and Ming dynasties (Wiggins, 1973 ch 11), in the phrenologists and in the work of the sixteenth century Basque physician Juan Huarte (McReynolds, 1975). More recently, Robert Owen used simple rating scales in evaluating the performance of workers in New Harmony Colony (Ellson and Ellson, 1953). And Galton exploited his knowledge of meteorology by importing scales similar to those used to estimate weather conditions into his study of the vividness of images (Guilford, 1936, p264).

However, the modern-day psychometric movement dates properly from the development of tests of mental abilities in the French schools service at the end of the nineteenth century and in the use of questionnaires as part of the psychiatric screening of military recruits by the US Army in the First World War (see Anastasi, 1961; Watson, 1959; Goldberg, 1971). The psychometric approach to research in personality can truly be said to begin with the use of the Woodworth Personal data sheet as a screening instrument for military recruits (Guilford, 1936). Woodworth developed the data sheet in response to a request for an instrument which would speed

up psychiatric interviewing. His innovation was first of all to reduce the interview questions to a series of 116 questions which could be answered yes or no, and to devise a "technique for combining the responses to questionnaire items so as to end up with a single score" (Goldberg, 1971 p295). After the war, similar instruments began to be used in other settings - education, industry and psychiatry. The success of intelligence and ability testing had created a market for psychological selection techniques, so there were "societal pressures on psychologists to forecast significant personal outcomes" (Goldberg, 1971, p320), and they set about constructing measures of psychopathology, vocational interests, scholastic potential and the like.

So it is hardly surprising that these early tests embody common-sense notions - they were developed for practical purposes of selection and admission, not as research tools. Although there was basic research into personality being conducted at that time, using experimentally-controlled situations (eg Hartshorne and May, 1928), those working on questionnaires and rating scales were "much concerned with the application of their science to practical problems of life, particularly to problems of vocation and conduct" (Allport, 1921 p441). For example, Flugel and Radclyffe (1928), in spite of constructing a test of admittedly meagre reliability, nevertheless state that "some such questionnaire as we have here used might very

profitably be employed in the case of all entrants into training colleges or other large educational or industrial institutions" (p127).

Yet, why did the psychometric testing movement and research programme emerge at that time, what were the motives of those who developed it, and by what ideas were they influenced? If we can answer these questions, we will be a lot closer to an understanding of the present-day use of psychometric tests.

The emergence of the psychometric programme at the beginning of the century can be seen as resulting from three historical trends. The first is the increasing differentiation of social structure in modern society; the second is the adoption of bureaucratic procedures for dealing with differentiation; the third is the espousal of logical positivism and 'scientific method' by psychology.

To begin with differentiation: in archaic societies there exist only a limited number of roles open to members, and those that existed would often be filled automatically, or ascribed. For example, when a boy reached a certain age, he would become a hunter, since all adult males were hunters. In modern societies the situation is of course quite different. There are a multiplicity of roles open to members, each with its special requirements as opposed to the very general requirements found in pre-industrial

societies. As a result, modern societies have found it necessary to restrict or regulate entry into roles or social groups through the use of tests of various kinds. These tests are not always psychological - entry requirements can be framed in terms of political beliefs, family background, health and so on.

But modern society is also mass society. As a result, recruitment and assessment for social roles could not be conducted on a personal basis. It became necessary to introduce bureaucratic procedures to deal with the large number of anonymous applicants for particular roles. We can see that this theory certainly accounts for the uses to which the early psychometric tests were put - screening entrants into special schools, army recruitment and psychiatric admission. It is clearly true that these entry routines cannot be considered as examples of psychological assessment proper, most of which would at that time have been carried out in person by psychiatrists. They are more correctly seen as examples of bureaucratic procedure masquerading as psychology. For, as we shall see, they owe more to bureaucracy than they do to psychological science.

Berger, Berger and Kellner (1974) outline the procedures commonly adopted by bureaucratic institutions to deal with 'referrals'. They have coined the phrase "bureaucratic consciousness" to describe the system of thought and action

characteristic of such institutions. Psychometric testing appears to be an institution heavily saturated in "bureaucratic consciousness".

The first feature of "bureaucratic consciousness" identified by Berger et al is the notion of "limited competence". Each agency is only competent to deal with its assigned sphere of life and set of problems. Similarly, psychometric tests are designed to measure specific variables, and individual testers are only qualified to use certain tests. Then, bureaucracy works within a laid-down set of rules and procedures. Similarly, the competent tester must follow a pre-ordained sequence of instructions and commands. The person is of less concern to the bureaucrat than his 'file' - the set of information relevant to the needs of the official. Likewise, the psychometrician is frequently interested only in his 'subject's' test score.

Other features of "bureaucratic consciousness" are the passive involvement of the client in the information-gathering process, the assumption that the world can be categorised and the assumption that the world is predictable. It should be clear that these features also have their parallels in psychometric test procedures. In all, it seems reasonable to conclude that psychometric testing is a particular manifestation of "bureaucratic consciousness", a system of processing "referrals" into "disposal categories". And perhaps this is as it should be - after all, bureaucracy is the way modern society deals with problems. But psycho:

psychometric measurement is not only a practical method by which institutions regulate their intake. It also claims to be a method by which research into "basic traits of general human importance" may be pursued.

This brings us to the third historical force underlying the modern-day psychometric movement - the espousal of logical positivism and 'scientific method'. For, although the common-sense, practical and bureaucratic procedures remained - for instance in the development of the Pressey Cross-out technique as a research tool which carried over the methods of practical testing into pure research work - the adoption of a positivist philosophy of science gradually became a more important factor. This doctrine proposed that advance in knowledge could only come about through emulation of what were believed to be the methods of the physical sciences - quantification, operational definition of concepts, experimentation and, above all, the use of statistical techniques (see Mackenzie, 1974; Heather, 1976). Thus, whatever statistical tools available were pressed into action. Only recently has it been possible to step back from this fascination with statistics and suggest that "the whole branch of mathematics on which we so trustingly perch may turn out to be the wrong branch" (Hudson, 1975) or that complex statistical operations may be "camouflaging" (Andreski, 1972) the common-sense, pragmatic nature of research.

The means by which statistical operations may be "camouflaging" the common-sense nature of research can be revealed through analysis of the methods used to construct psychometric tests. For example, Eysenck (1944;1947) came to the conclusion that individual differences in personality could be largely accounted for in terms of two general factors of extraversion and neuroticism in the following way :

".....a large scale factorial study was carried out on a variety of personality traits whose presence or absence in 700 male neurotic soldiers was recorded by the psychiatrist in charge of the case. This study resulted in the discovery of two main factors, both of which bore a close relation to similar factors previously discovered in normal subjects by numerous investigators" (Eysenck, 1947 p244).

Eysenck's research illustrates two ways in which judges' or raters' pre-existing conceptual schemes, implicit personality theories or common-sense can determine psychometric test construction. Firstly, it is hardly surprising that Eysenck should extract as his largest factor the dimension of "neuroticism" - these men all shared the psychiatric diagnosis of being neurotic. As Eysenck (1947 p257) observes, "'Psychiatric diagnosis-neurotic' has the highest saturation for this factor".

Secondly, the other main factor found by Eysenck - extraversion - shows how pre-existing concepts or biases can

have an effect on the interpretation of factor analyses. Eysenck's extraversion factor was loaded most highly with, for example, ratings of anxiety, depression and apathy at one pole and "hysterical conversion and "sex anomalies" at the other. There is no immediately obvious way to interpret this factor. In coming to a final interpretation, Eysenck draws upon theories of extraversion and psychopathology, and on the results of other research. Clearly the burden of inference is carried by Eysenck's pre-existing understanding of behaviour, not the statistical operations performed.

We can further argue that Eysenck's factors originate more in the minds and decision processes of raters and test constructors than in the behaviour patterns of soldiers when we take into consideration the fact that his 700 patients were only seen in one situation - the hospital - by psychiatrists. The brevity of psychiatric interviews has been well documented by Scheff(1966).

The research strategy and test construction methods of Cattell also teach us how factors derived from psychometric tests are born in common-sense ideas of "what goes with what". Cattell(1957) created rating scales based on Allport and Odbert's (1936) collection of English-language trait names. Cattell's factor analysis of these ratings

did no more than establish "what went with what", which words had similar meanings in the minds of raters. The content of these scales remained as it always had been - the meanings of these particular words, the common-sense notions of members of a culture regarding the way people are and the way they might be expected to act.

Finally, the "camouflaging" function of statistical methods and complex processes of test construction is neatly revealed by a recent study by Ashton and Goldberg (1973). These researchers attempted to discover whether laymen or novice psychology students could construct personality questionnaires which were as valid as those constructed by experts. Their research participants were 15 psychology students and 15 individuals with no formal psychological training. They were paid to construct 20 - item scales to measure Sociability, Achievement of Dominance:

"each scale developer was given a description of the trait to be measured, along with examples of items from a scale constructed to measure a different trait and some suggestions as to what helps make a 'good' item (eg short, concise statements) and a 'good' scale (eg an equal number of True and False items"

(Ashton and Goldberg, 1973 p3).

There was a time limit of two hours. The scales derived from this procedure and similar scales from the CPI (a

questionnaire constructed using the most sophisticated methods available - see Gough, 1968) were administered to 168 students. The validity of the scales was estimated by comparing scores with peer rankings. The results were that the validity of scales constructed by the average psychology student and by the best of the laymen were equal to the validity of the CPI scales; the best of the psychology students' scales were more valid than the CPI scales.

What have we learned from this excursion into the history of the psychometric movement in personality research? First of all, we have seen that the earliest tests were produced in reply to practical demands of selection and assessment, and were no more than a systematic version of common-sense routines used for dealing with the same problems. Then we recognised the extent to which psychometrics shares the assumptions and practices of bureaucracy, another set of common-sense routines designed to deal with practical matters. Further, a brief examination of the methods used in constructing two of the most widely used psychometric personality questionnaires - Eysenck's MPI and Cattell's 16PF - suggested that sophisticated statistical operations did no more than "camouflage" the common-sense basis of raters' decisions. Finally, it was seen that adequate questionnaire measures of personality variables can be constructed by naive or novice volunteers with no help from statistics.

What is being said here? In the experience of doing a personality test, in the results of recent research which attempts to discover what it is such tests measure, and finally in an analysis of the historical development of psychometrics, there has emerged the theme that psychometric test scores cannot be taken as 'objective' indicators of patterns of behaviour, but are inextricably bound up in the decision making processes, assumptions and common-sense of test constructors and test takers. The psychometric test score is not a fact, it is an accomplishment, it is the outcome of a process of interpretation and negotiation.

But this is not to say that a scientific approach to the problems of personality should not be interested in common-sense and the everyday-life use of concepts. It is essential that such a science should be interested in these processes. Douglas' (1970 p3) suggestion for sociology applies equally well to the study of personality:

"all of sociology necessarily begins with the understanding of everyday-life, and all of sociology is directed either to increasing our understanding of everyday-life, or, more practically, to improving our everyday-lives".

It has been the failure of the psychometric approach to research in personality to have denied its origins in

everyday life and common-sense. It has failed to follow its 'data' back to its source - the stock of common-sense knowledge of persons available to members of a culture. In denying its grounds in this way, the psychometric approach forfeits its claim to be a scientific approach to knowledge. The extent of the psychometric denial of everyday life is explored in subsequent sections.

Psychometrics as an exercise in denial

1) The denial of relationship.

The style of bureaucracy is to create a special kind of relationship between officer and client. The client is objectified, is treated only as the bearer of certain types of messages to the officer, and this relation strictly limits the knowledge one can have of the other. Similarly, in psychometric testing the relationship between tester and testee is of importance. But, while the situational or relationship aspects of assessment have been acknowledged with respect to projective techniques (see Masling, 1960; Schachtel, 1967; Dana and Leech, 1974) it is less often admitted that they also play a part in psychometric test administration.

For example, Jourard and Kormann (1968) gave the EPPS to a group of people who did not know the experimenter. Half of the group were left as a control while the other half were given the chance of getting to know the experimenter through one of Jourard's mutual disclosure games. After two weeks there were more changes in the experimental EPPS profiles than in the control. Jourard suggests that in some way the 'authenticity' of the relationship between tester and testee can effect performance on a psychometric personality test.

The study by Willems and Willems (1965), reported above, also offers some evidence on this point. It will be

remembered that of the three methods used by the Willems, the most valid proved to be the interview, then the card-sort, with the check-list as the least valid. The Willems suggest that one factor in the relative validities of the three methods may have been the relationship between researcher and informant. They speculate that :

"perhaps the face-to-face confrontation in a personal interview (coded interview and card-sort methods) provides constraints which make the subject more careful in responding. It may be that the face-to-face presence of the investigator provides a constant reminder to the subject to respond as honestly and carefully as possible in terms of his own experience". (pp 69-70).

Another source of evidence for the proposition that the tester-testee relationship is important even in highly-structured psychometric test settings is the research on the effect of race of the interviewer/tester. For example, firstly Canady(1936) and then Ledvinka(1971) have shown that Negro performance on intellectual or linguistic tasks is negatively influenced by the presence of a Caucasian rather than Negro tester. Much of the work in this area has been reviewed by Katz(1964), while Labov(1969) gives a fascinating descriptive account of the differences between Negro children's language performance when being interviewed by black and white adults. All this research

points to the conclusion that the psychometric tester is certainly not the 'neutral' scientist that psychometric theory requires him to be.

It has been suggested that psychometric tests do not give us knowledge of the 'unconscious' level of personality. Psychoanalytic writers comment that unconscious material is only made available through symbolic, fantasy or dream expression, none of which are considered part of the world of psychometrics. However, it may be useful to draw a parallel between conscious-unconscious and public-private. The kind of material or 'facts about the self' defined as belonging to the 'unconscious' is also material which we choose to divulge only in the most private or intimate relationship. Unconscious or pre-conscious material may be information the individual wishes to keep private - "the set of facts about himself to which an individual expects to control access while in the presence of others" (Goffman, 1959 p38).

In this context, it is of interest that some people complain of 'invasion of privacy' with respect to certain items of the MMPI (Butcher and Tellegen, 1966). Presumably this test demands that they disclose information to which they feel they should "control access", at least in the test situation. It is also of interest that most psychometric tests avoid the areas of life considered to be most private - topics such as sexual adequacy, feelings about the body, financial

status, guilt and disgust are seldom dealt with in psychometric devices.

In various ways, then, the denial of the relationship between tester and testee seriously diminishes the quality of information which can be collected using this method. A truly scientific approach to research into human beings would be one which acknowledged and indeed exploited this basic feature of human nature, the power of people to be in relationship.

2) The denial of meaning.

Not only does psychometric dogma attempt to abolish the relationship between tester and testee, it also tries to deny that test items and the test situation in general have any meaning for the research participant. The most extreme advocate of this point of view is Berg(1959). Berg argues that it does not matter what a test item means. Concern with the meaning, or content of test items is old-fashioned:

"the content ofolder tests sampled a wide range of what was regarded as significant behaviour and accordingly had a heavy interlarding of items that dealt with symptoms of maladjustment. Then, it was usually assumed that the subject would give honest answers when taking the test" (Berg,1959 p83).

Berg goes on to explain that this kind of 'face validity' was probably a heritage from achievement testing procedures.

Face validity, or meaningfulness of items, is of no consequence, since :

"it is not important whether the meaning (of the test items) is the same or different for all subjects, nor does it matter whether the subject is being truthful or even a good judge of his own behaviour the important thing is that behavioural correlates can be empirically identified with such a response"
(Berg,1959 p85).

It is difficult to know where to begin with these statements by Berg. For a start, however, it should be clear that, even if his views correctly express the official psychometric 'party line', they are given the lie by actual psychometric test procedures. It is very much an implicit rule of the testing situation that the testee should attempt to be accurate and honest, as discussed above. Could Berg be advocating that testees reply to test questions at random? Surely not. Further, the vast majority of tests in use at this time have a degree of 'face validity'. That is, their items have some meaning, and this meaning has some relationship to the purpose of the test. Berg claims that behaviours such as swaying in response to suggestion, or having aversions to certain foods, are signs of underlying traits of suggestibility and neuroticism. Is it not also possible that swaying or having food fads are part of what we mean by 'suggestible' or 'neurotic'?

Finally, our knowledge of personality is not increased by information on the correlation between enigmatic samples of behaviour. At some point, the "indicator" must make contact with whatever it is that is being "indicated". It is extremely doubtful if mere knowledge of what behaviour goes with what would ever be usable in everyday life. However, this is to stray from the point. It should be apparent that the psychometric strategy of denying meaning just is not realistic - it does not even do justice to their own methods, never mind our everyday experience of life.

Another aspect of the denial of meaning is the denial of the testee's intentions. That is, the test may often have a part to play in the life of the testee, in the projects he or she is pursuing at that time. The psychometric procedure denies that this is so. The test is only a meaningful, intentional act for the tester - the testee is expected to be passive. Or, at best, the informant's intentions are discounted through the inclusion of 'lie' or 'faking' scales.

Nevertheless, test-takers are often capable of using tests for 'impression management'. For example, Cohen and Taylor (1972), writing about long-term prisoners, noted that :

"the standard tests were known to the men who frequently told stories about fiddling this or that test in order to achieve particular concessions in the prison. One of them described in detail how to fill in one person: ality test in such a way as to ensure that he was

given outside work during the summer"(p35).

Two studies are also relevant here. In the first, Braginsky, Braginsky and Ring (1969) demonstrated how mental hospital patients can control information about themselves to gain access to desired wards. The second study, by Braginsky and Braginsky (1972) showed that mental retardates can manipulate their performance on intelligence tests to serve their own needs.

It is impossible to abolish meaning from psychometrics. People taking tests work on the basis of what items mean to them; behind this is the background meaning of the test situation itself and the person's intentions in that situation. Thus the denial of meaning is another element in the failure of psychometrics to provide knowledge about people which is in any way adequate to the conditions under which people live - conditions which include the ability to act in terms of meaning.

3) The denial of logical difficulties.

There are certain logical difficulties inherent in the psychometric approach. Psychometric personality research gathers information from individuals, and its findings are supposed to refer to individuals. However, that information elicited from individuals is then treated as group data, and there are severe logical difficulties involved in inferring statements about individuals from group data (see Hudson, 1975).

What appears to happen is that personality becomes confused with 'personality'. When we talk or report about our own or someone else's personality, we are making reference to the common-sense constructs and typifications we use to make sense of everyday life. This is personality. The psychometric test process, however, takes this information and extracts 'factors' - second-order schemes or principles of organisation. This is 'personality'. Thus when someone claims to be an 'extravert', he is talking about personality. When Eysenck talks about the dimension of 'extraversion', he is referring to 'personality'.

'Personality' statements, although derived from personality statements, are not used in the same way, and do not have the same meaning. It seems as though generalisations about 'personality' are in fact statements about the culture as a whole, whereas personality, of course, refers to individuals.

As we discovered earlier, 'personality' factors, the products of the peculiar filtering of everyday reality caused by replying to psychometric test demands, may be thought of as being "popular illusions" (Mirels, 1976), or cultural stereotypes. 'Personality' constructs such as "extraversion", "neuroticism", "psychoticism" or "intelligence" seem to tell us more about the way a particular culture is organised than they do about the behaviour of individual members of that culture. Perhaps 'personality' constructs are more a problem for the sociology of knowledge than for the psychology of personality.



yet the psychometric approach to research ignores this distinction between individual and group. The prevalent attitude is to assume that the individual can be located somewhere in the network of group data produced by psychometric techniques with little trouble. This is to deny the logical difficulties involved in this kind of inference. As we have seen, there is good reason to suppose that 'personality' is much different from personality. The failure of the psychometric programme to tackle this problem is part of its overall failure to recognise the complexity of its subject matter, a complexity which does not survive translation into the oversimplified language of the test.

4) The denial of experience.

There is no way to avoid the fact that psychometric test procedures and research results are saturated with everyday life theorising about personality. The answers people give to test questions are based on their experience of life. But the test attempts to deny the reality of that experience, it says to people that life is not as they see it. Here are some examples.

The psychometric approach denies the "emergent character" of everyday life. Cicourel(1964) puts it thus :

"questionnaire items.....tend to ignore the emergent, innovational and problematic character of everyday life by imposing a deterministic 'grid' on it"
(p 113).

It does not seem too far-fetched to suppose that many, if not most, people experience life in terms of possibilities, of "becoming", to use Allport's word. The idea of change, of progress, is certainly part of the way many people experience the world. All this is ignored by the psychometric method.

Secondly, people experience themselves as effective causes of action - as agents. The whole epistemology of the psychometric approach is, however, that people are passive "respondents". Traits appear in the minds of people as a result of frequent observation of the co-occurrence of sequences of behaviour. This doctrine has been thoroughly demolished by Popper (1963).

Popper begins with Hume's belief that knowledge is based on repetition. For Hume, "our habit of believing in laws is the product of frequent repetition - of the repeated observation that things of a certain kind are constantly conjoined with things of another kind" (Popper, 1963 p43). But as Popper (1963 p44) points out: "the kind of repetition envisaged by Hume can never be perfect; the cases he has in mind can never be cases of perfect sameness". The similarity of events, then, must be similarity-for-us, and the repetition must be repetition-for-us. That is, repetitions must be from a certain point of view. And this implies that there must be a point of view before there can be any repetitions.

In the context of trait theory, therefore, it does not make sense to argue that somehow regularities in behaviour impress themselves on our construct systems. As Popper and an increasing number of philosophers and psychologists now admit, knowledge is the product of action. Our minds are not buckets waiting to be filled with knowledge; we earn our knowledge through testing hypotheses, experimenting with alternatives and so forth. But the psychometric approach denies all this. In the world of psychometrics people are passive recipients of knowledge and passive respondents to test stimuli.

A third denial of experience comes in the denial of language. The psychometric use of language is at odds with everyday usage. Garfinkel (1967) has commented on the "indexical" nature of language - the extent to which meanings of words are dependent on context. It is clear that in everyday life the meaning of words depends to a large degree on the situation, on who is speaking, to whom and for what purpose. The psychometric strategy is to ignore all this. The language of the psychometric personality test assumes that meaningful statements can be made without any but the most minimal of contexts. So this is a third way in which psychometrics denies everyday-life experience - it takes language out of life.

Of course the psychometrician might protest that it is no bad thing to have a scientific theory which goes against

people's everyday assumptions, which is "counter-intuitive" to use a phrase coined by philosophers of science. He might suggest that the notions that the earth is round, or that it revolves around the sun were in their time equally counter-intuitive. This is correct. But these examples of counter-intuitive theorising were in their time accompanied by cogent explanations of why everyday experience was in error. Science characteristically replaces a discredited theory with another which offers a more adequate account of the same phenomena (Kuhn,1962). The psychometric programme fails to do this. It has no alternative way of explaining our experience of relationship, of meaning, of the "emergent" quality of life, agency or language - it can do no more than deny or ignore these problems. They are defined out of existence. And this is the failure of psychometrics. It has created what appears to be an island of reason and fact concerning a topic of great importance - human nature and personality. Yet this island has been created at the cost of banishing any aspects of everyday experience which do not fit the psychometric pattern. And these are just the problems that are most important. If any issues to do with personality have claim to be central to a science of personality, these are the ones - relationship, meaning, language and agency.

Conclusion: the psychometric approach to research
 in personality as an exercise in
 systematic denial.

This has been a hard look at the psychometric approach to research in personality. We have examined the experience of doing a test, some of the research on what it is tests measure, the history of the psychometric movement and some of the ideas implicit in psychometric theory and practice. Through all of this has emerged the theme of the everyday-life basis of psychometrics. When we are doing psychometric research, we are really finding out about the common-sense routines and implicit theories of personality that people use in making sense of their everyday-life social interactions. But this is denied. The fundamental tenet of the psychometric approach is that it has succeeded in identifying "patterns of behaviour" - regularities in the world, not in our way of making sense of the world.

And there lies the great appeal of psychometrics. By claiming to seek 'objective' knowledge, truth which can be traced back to biological and physiological systems, it appeals to our hope for certainty. By constructing what appears to be a growing island of knowledge in a sea of uncertainty, it is able to attract new converts and defy critics. That is why it is necessary to take a hard look at the psychometric programme - it is an attractive illusion and we would all be happier if it were true, no doubt.

The hard look reveals its transparency. The fine illusion is maintained at the expense of systematic denial of the most crucial elements of a true science of personality.

The psychometric approach is not an easy one to argue against. There is no simple counter-argument to the psychometric doctrine. It has been necessary, therefore, to work relentlessly through at least some of its claims and show them to be false. Having done that, no matter now imperfectly, it is now necessary to describe the alternative to the psychometric approach, a research strategy which will pick up the problems discarded by psychometrics and weave them into a science of personality that is more human, more appropriate, and more useful.

CHAPTER 2

TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF THE PERSON

Introduction

Shotter (1975) has described in some detail how the 'image of man' developed by Descartes has been adopted by the human sciences. Partly this has come about through the efforts of the human sciences to imitate what they understood as being the methods of the physical sciences (see Mackenzie, 1974 ; Heather, 1976) and thereby achieve the success and acclaim accorded to Newton, Pasteur and Boyle. The methods they adopted placed a premium on the detachment of the experimenter, 'operational' definition of constructs, and the use of mathematics. But partly the espousal of Descartes' image of man by the human sciences was also a consequence of the degree to which the mind-body, subject-object split has pervaded all of Western thought. Yet, we must ask, is this 'image of man' an appropriate metaphor for our ultimate purpose - the construction of a science of persons rather than a science of objects.

Descartes' great contribution was to make science possible by constructing a philosophical system within which scientific thought and research could be pursued free from the dead hand of religious dogma. The results of this liberation of thought are apparent in the enormous advances in technology over the last three hundred years. Nevertheless, no matter how successful Descartes' system of thought might be in the area of natural science, it contains basic

assumptions which prevent it from ever becoming an adequate philosophy of the person.

Some of these assumptions are explored in a paper by Dreyfus(1967) which bears the unlikely-sounding title : "Why computers must have bodies in order to be intelligent". In this paper, Dreyfus examines the philosophical basis of work in artificial intelligence, the programme of research which has, over the last two decades, attempted to exploit advances in computer capabilities in the quest to develop a machine which will be "capable of doing any work man can do". This research is of interest to the philosopher because of the fact that the assumptions of reductionism and dualism implicit in this work are the same as those first stated by Hume and Descartes as providing the necessary conditions for all rational thought. Dreyfus(1967 p14) argues that the artificial intelligence research programme can be seen as 'testing' the following assumptions :

"1. An epistemological assumption that all intelligent behaviour can be simulated by a device whose only mode of information processing is that of a detached, disembodied, objective observer.

2. The ontological assumption, related to logical atomism, that everything essential to intelligent behaviour can in principle be understood in terms of a determinate set of independent elements".

Dreyfus claims that "we are now witnessing the last act wherein the conception of man as essentially rational, and rationality as essentially calculation, will either triumph or else reveal its inherent inadequacies" (p15). And it is Dreyfus' contention that the failure of the artificial intelligence programme to solve basic problems in areas such as pattern recognition strongly suggests that the philosophical assumptions underlying the research must be inappropriate to its task. As an aside, it should be noted that Mackenzie (1974) argues that the failure of the behaviourist research programme to offer an adequate account of complex human behaviour is due to its espousal of the same conceptual model. The failure of the psychometric approach to research in personality has also been discussed above.

The common failure of these research programmes appears to lie in their inability to recognise that it is impossible to reconstruct human performance and human abilities using an image, or model, of man as a detached, passive observer who builds his picture of the world from discrete bits of information. That is, the image of man proposed by Descartes and Hume is not appropriate for a truly human science. We can begin to make some progress towards an adequate conceptualisation when we examine Dreyfus' analysis of what is missing from the AI manifesto, what needs to be added to it in order that it might have some hope of succeeding in its aim of mimicking human powers.

Dreyfus identifies the primary difficulty facing artificial intelligence workers as that of reproducing the human ability of functioning in a wholistic manner. Machines designed to recognise patterns must use the strategy of searching for discrete features. Problem-solving programmes must work through all the various alternative solutions. For machines and programmes such as these, the only 'short-cuts' or heuristic strategies available to them are those that have been programmed in by their makers. Their behaviour is not, then, what we understand by 'intelligent', but is more properly thought of as being stupid, if very fast.

However, as Dreyfus points out, people go about recognising patterns or solving problems in a very different manner. People recognise patterns by projecting an indeterminate whole (in the case of word recognition, the meaning of a word) which is filled in later if necessary, if it is found to be a poor match with the input pattern. People solve problems by using their needs and interests as a guide through the infinitude of possible solutions. We talk about testing out 'hunches', 'guesses' or 'intuitions', which are already partially-formed solutions. We do not, unless we are unintelligent or in difficulty, proceed in the step-by-step manner of the machine.

It is through action that we respond wholistically to the demands of the environment, and through our sense of bodily gratification, or 'feel', that we can organise tasks in terms of relevance and significance. Thus

Dreyfus suggests that the kind of peculiarly organismic abilities which cannot be reproduced by machines, for example pattern recognition and problem solving, can only be made intelligible if we introduce the concept of an embodied agent. This is to propose that pattern recognition and problem solving should be seen as skills, which can only be reduced to component operations and rules after the event. As Dreyfus (1967 p29) puts it : "although science requires that the skilled performance be described according to rules, these rules need in no way be involved in producing the performance". The only principle involved in the repeat performance of skills is the willingness to "do that again".

Dreyfus is saying, then, that the artificial intelligence research programme has failed in its attempt to mimic human powers because these powers are skills, they are pieces of "personal knowledge" and thus not translatable into the discrete formalised operations of an isolated, disembodied observer. He concludes that "the human world with its recognisable objects is organised by human beings using their embodied capacities, to satisfy their embodied needs" (p32). Thus computers must have bodies in order to be intelligent. This is a curious thought. The great project to create a machine which could think fails because ".....it is the sort of intelligence we share with animals, such as pattern recognition, that has resisted machine simulation". (p15).

Dreyfus is making a very important point - that traditional philosophical systems, upon which we have built our entire science of behaviour, are just not capable of accounting for even the most basic human activities. It is not that they deny us the outer reaches of the spirit, although they may do that as well, but that they deny us the ability to read and write. Yet, what would a philosophy which took as its task the aim of clarifying what we are saying when we talk about human beings as persons rather than machines or organisms look like? Is it possible to construct such a philosophy? In the following sections are examined some of the ideas and problems intrinsic to a philosophy which attempts to ^{be a} philosophy of the person. However, what follows is not offered as a complete exposition of such a philosophy, an undertaking which would both be beyond the scope of the present work and the competence of its author. It is intended instead as an introduction to and justification of certain concepts whose familiarity and legitimacy in psychological research cannot yet be taken for granted.

Being-in-the world

One basic assumption of any true philosophy of the person is summed up in the phrase "being-in-the-world". To admit that a person is a being in a world is to acknowledge that a person without a world is unthinkable. It does not make any sense to talk about a person without acknowledging the existence of a world in which he participates. As we saw earlier, the denial of context, of the person's world, by the psychometric approach, was a source of many of its difficulties. Similarly, Dreyfus has argued that problem-solving, for example, is only possible given the wholistic involvement in a world, the being-in-the-world at many levels simultaneously, that is characteristic of a person and absent from the machine.

To talk about being-in-the-world is also to talk about relationship. Our world is a world of other people. May (1959 p59) writes that "world is the structure of meaningful relationships in which a person exists and in the design of which he participates". And Macmurray (1961 p24) adds that "the idea of an isolated agent is self-contradictory. Any agent is necessarily in relation to the Other Persons are constituted by their mutual relation to one another". These writers are making the point that we become persons only through participation in a culture. Human nature is an achievement, formed through thousands of years of social life and now re-discovered by every child.

Another dimension of being-in-the-world and relationship is the aspect of intersubjectivity, the primitive ability to be aware of the other. Martin Buber has called this experience the "I and Thou". There now seems good reason to believe that this intersubjectivity, or basic awareness of the other, constitutes our first awareness of the world. The infant, Macmurray suggests, begins by being in a personal relationship with all the objects he encounters. In practical terms, this is the mother or caretaker. Only in the phase of withdrawing from the mother, by not being satisfied by the mother, does the infant begin to discover that there is another realm. Some evidence on this question has been presented by Newson and Newson (1975) and by Trevarthen (1977) who, in observational studies of mother-infant interaction, discovered that during the first three months of life the infant is primarily interested in other people, and spends whatever non-feeding waking time there is available being in relationship. However, at about five months the infant seems to start on a new pattern of behaviour - now catching the mother's eye and looking away at the environment. It is as if the infant, having established a satisfactory relationship, can now move on to other things, and is inviting the mother to begin exploring the material world.

The primacy of relationship in psychological development has been noted by other workers. For example, Winnicott (1971) talks about the child using "transition objects",

toys, or objects which are endowed with human qualities, to facilitate the switch from a personal to an objective world. Erikson (1950) places the learning of basic interpersonal attitudes such as trust and autonomy in the first years of life, seeing later life crises as centring around problems of initiative or identity. Finally, White (1959) depicts the later years of childhood as being the time when the young person masters cognitive and physical skills and acquires "competence".

Even in adult life, however, intersubjectivity remains a backdrop for our conscious activities. For example, recent work in kinesics - the analysis of human movements - has shown that the ability to participate in relationship is apparently innate. Condon and Sander (1974 p99) write that: "as early as the first day of life, the human neonate moves in precise and sustained segments of movement that are synchronous with the articulate structure of adult speech". Further, when this "interactional synchrony" is absent in early life (Trevarthen, 1977) or later (Birdwhistel, 1970); Condon and Ogston, 1966) we become distressed and liable to feel 'depersonalised' and think of the other person in the relationship as strange or crazy. This programme of research has exploited technical advances in the ability to take fast films of social interactions. By playing these films back at slow speed, it is possible to analyse in great detail sequence of movements, and

demonstrate very clearly that we are in constant exchange or communication with each other. As Birdwhistel(1970) puts it, we do not so much communicate as "participate in communication".

A further source of evidence concerning the importance of relationship lies in the research undertaken by Rogers and his colleagues (Rogers and Dymond, 1954; Rogers, 1971) into the conditions for successful counselling and psychotherapy. They found that the most powerful predictors of therapeutic success were relationship variables - the degree of empathy exhibited by the therapist, the congruence of the therapist as perceived by the client, and the warm positive feelings, or "unconditional positive regard" transmitted from therapist to client.

It seems, then, that Descartes' bid to separate the person from the world and set him, as thinker, against the world leads to great difficulties when our interest is in persons rather than in material objects and laws of nature. It would seem more fruitful to have a philosophy of the person which is more in harmony with our experience and observation, one which admits that "existence is fundamentally communal in character, and without the others I cannot exist" (Macquarrie, 1972 p102). That is, it seems to be necessary to accept the idea of being-in-the-world as a fundamental tenet of such a philosophy.

Meaning, intentionality and agency

Moreover, the person is engaged in an active search to make sense of this world into which he is thrown. This 'search for meaning' points towards an important aspect of the relationship between person and world. That is, the world has meaning for the person, while, at the same time, the person attributes meaning to that world. Both person and world contribute to meaning. The contribution of the person is through his or her sense of agency. The person's sense of intentionality, the possible range of actions which might be undertaken with an object, are one side of that object's meaning. As for the object, it has its own contribution to make in resisting or evading our intentions. This is the other side of meaning.

Thus meaning is between person and object. This can be seen most clearly in the case of talk. When one person talks to another, there is the meaning he or she 'intended', and there is also the way the statement is 'taken' by the other. The full meaning of the statement is not in either of these 'readings', but is somehow between them - it is the interaction which is meaningful.

This example may also help to make clearer the use of the concept of intentionality. Intentionality is the reaching out towards an object. May (1969 p223) defines

intentionality as "the structure which gives meaning to experience. It is not to be identified with intentions, but is the dimension which underlies them; it is man's capacity to have intentions". May equates this dimension of intentionality with the nature of consciousness :

"....consciousness is defined by the fact that it intends something, points towards something outside itself - specifically that it intends the object. Thus, intentionality gives meaningful contents to consciousness" (p226)

He adds that "each act of consciousness tends towards something, is a turning of the person toward something, and has within it, no matter how latent, some push toward a direction for action" (p230). Or : "every meaning has within it a commitment".

By intentionality, then, is meant the experience of connectedness with the world, the feeling of "imaginative participation", the possibility of action. And this brings us towards the idea of agency. To consider the person as an agent is to affirm the primacy of action. Macmurray (1961 p15) states this position very powerfully when he writes that "the Self has its being only in its agencyits reflective activities are but negative aspects of this agency." Macmurray argues that the traditional philosophical standpoint made action impossible. According to that analysis, self could only be equated with mind.

Macmurray seeks to remind us how unrealistic that position is : we are active, The doctrine of the "active organism" is now returning to psychology (see, for example, Gibson 1966).

To consider the person as an agent, as active, is to assert that events may happen because a person is willing to participate in them rather than happening as a result of a string of cause-and-effect relationships. In a philosophy of the person, the notion of cause and effect in physical systems is of little relevance. Instead, it is necessary to look at the interplay of meanings, or 'symbolic interaction' which occurs as a person pursues his projects in the world.

However, to talk of 'willingness to participate' is not to promote the idea of "free will". Being willing is part of being in the world, it is part of having intentions. All this is well stated by Matza :

"to recognise and appreciate the meaning of being willing is by no means to assert the existence of a free will. Indeed, it is the very opposite. The logic of one's past, the human agencies in one's situation are certainly real. They are the grounding for the conduct of will. Free will, as the phrase itself implies, takes will out of context, converting it inexorably into an abstraction of as little use as any other. Will is the conscious foreshadowing of specific intention capable of being acted on or not.

It is a sense of option that must be rendered in context. But to put will in its place is not to imprison it. Will need not be untrammelled, abstracted or 'free', nor need behaviour be determined, preordained or predictable. Thus viewed, being willing is the human leap that allows an open process to continue. Will exists in the world....."(Matza,1969, p 116)

Time

Another way of approaching a philosophy of the person is to start with the idea of time. The traditional philosophical framework relied entirely on spatial metaphors. For Descartes all knowledge was ultimately reducible to the laws of extension, or geometry. Thus we tend to conceptualise problems in the image of the billiard table - there is a certain force in this direction, a certain degree of resistance here, and so on. Throughout all this time continues as a steady progression a taken-for-granted background constant. Indeed, the most usual way of understanding time in our culture is to use the image of the clock, wherein time is converted into spatial relationships.

Nevertheless, the idea of time has a unique part to play in human existence. The centrality of time is discounted by the traditional philosophical attitude which reduces time to a constant. Yet for people, as opposed to machines, the future, not the past, is the dominant dimension of time. As May (1958 p69) has put it - "the deterministic events of the past take their significance from the present and the future". Human beings continually re-assess the past in terms of current and future possibilities :

".....instead of the past determining the character of the present, the present significantly reshapes the past as we reconstruct our biographies in an effort to bring them into greater congruence with our current

identities, roles, situations and available vocabularies" (Gagnon and Simon, 1973 p13)

We must recognise that action is often towards some end, some future state of affairs. Thus a philosophy or a science of the person is concerned with the ongoing process of being or becoming rather than with the description of static states or the discovery of one-and-for-all criteria. A philosophy of the person must allow the possibility that people are able, to some extent, to construct their lives, their identities.

The importance of time and process is being acknowledged by certain areas of psychology (see Blatt and Buchwald, 1974) A notable example is the recent interest in the life-span (see Baltes and Schaie, 1973; Datan and Ginsberg, 1975). There is a growing body of evidence concerning the cyclical nature of psychological functioning (see Luce, 1972) However, perhaps the most compelling demonstration of the significance of time has come from certain technological advances which have begun to disclose a few of the secrets of time, just as the telescope and the microscope disclosed some of the secrets of space.

In a sense, psychoanalysis made possible an examination of the meaning of time, of the current meaning of past events. More recent developments have attempted to reveal the psychological and interpersonal processes which are

hidden because they happen so quickly. A first example refers to a field which has been mentioned already - kinesics, the study of human movements. The development of filming equipment has made it possible to witness some of the sequences of behaviour which in everyday life would occur too quickly to allow them to be consciously perceived. Important discoveries made possible by these techniques include Trevarthen's (1974) finding that in mother-infant interaction it is often the mother who imitates the child.

A second avenue of research into psychological processes which are not usually available for inspection due to their brief duration has exploited the use of hypnosis. In a series of experiments, Cooper and Erickson (1952) induced time distortion through hypnotic techniques. Participants were put into a hypnotic state, and their experience of time was distorted in the following manner : a metronome was started and the hypnotised subject was told that it was ticking at a rate of one stroke every second. The suggestion was made that the metronome was gradually being slowed down to one stroke per minute. At the end of this procedure, the person would be experiencing every second, every beat of the metronome, as lasting a minute. While in this state, he or she would be given a task to perform - typically an open-ended problem. After coming out of the trance state, the person would report on their solution and on how they had arrived at it.

The results of this series of experiments were to demonstrate that the experience of time can be drastically distorted. Participants reported thought processes which could not possibly have been completed in the actual length of time at their disposal, but which corresponded to their subjective idea of how much time they had taken. The reader is referred to the original text for a fuller description of this intriguing work. Suffice to say that it implies that much of our psychological functioning may well happen far too quickly for us to be aware of it, and that it may be worth exploring further this means of uncovering otherwise hidden processes.

The possibility that these methods of doing research on short time periods, and perhaps other methods, such as life-span studies, which could look at long time periods, will prove to be as important for psychology as optical magnifying devices were for the natural sciences is an exciting thought. Nevertheless, it should not distract us from what is already certain - the dimension of time is of special interest to any adequate philosophy of the person. The concepts of being, of becoming, of process, must be central to any such system of thought.

A person is a being who exists over time in relationship with other persons. To say this is to say very little. It sounds like common-sense. Of course, Kenneth Burke's

definition is grander :

"Man is the symbol using (symbol-making,
symbol-misusing) animal
inventor of the negative (or moralised by the
negative)
separated from his natural condition by
instruments of his own making
goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved
by the sense of order)
and rotten with perfection" (Burke, 1966 p16).

Shotter(1975 p27) has argued that it is vital to construct a system of thought, a philosophical tradition, which will "clarify and help in the practical realisation of our already 'given' but admittedly rather vague notion of our: selves as persons". He believes that there is a crisis in our image of ourselves - our "admittedly vague" notion of ourselves as agents, as planners, as creators, as "rotten with perfection", is being replaced with an allegedly 'scientific' image of man the mechanism or man the organism. This section on the philosophy of the person has been an attempt to establish, in a condensed and somewhat summary form, the elements of such a system (for fuller treatments of the themes around which this chapter has been written, see Harre and Secord, 1972; Shotter, 1975; May, 1958, 1969; Heather, 1976; Giorgi, 1970; van Kaam, 1966; Armistead, 1974).

So, this chapter is intended to provide a background for

later discussions concerning what a true science of persons would look like. Before moving on to that topic, however, it will be necessary to fill in the background a little by further introducing two more specifically psychological ideas which are nevertheless closely related to the philosophical matters pursued above. These are the concepts of self and of structure.

Self

We have been suggesting that an adequate philosophy of the person must be in harmony with certain global features of our personal experience. One such aspect of experience is the sense of self, or personal identity. This problem has caused much difficulty for traditional philosophical approaches. The separation of consciousness from its physical embodiment proposed by Descartes' dualism left the dilemma of what to do with an entity which appeared to be at the same time embodied and conscious. Similarly, Hume's empiricism was in trouble with any such wholistic concept as that of the sense of self.

However, there were brave attempts to make personal identity intelligible within these frameworks. It was argued that personal identity could be derived from the existence over time of a particular body. But, if we have separated mind and body, how can we be sure that this continuing body has been the vehicle for these continuing experiences? Perhaps, then, we can account for the experience of identity through an appeal to memory - I may construct my sense of self from the memories I have of experiences and the memories I have of this body. But to remember an experience as having been mine or to remember that it was my body which had that experience is to assume an identity from the start. So the argument from memory appears to be circular.

Thus, while it may appear to be intuitively reasonable to argue that memory and bodily continuity are criteria for personal identity or self-hood, and, indeed, may well be the criteria we use in everyday life, we find that there are logical difficulties facing any such analysis within the traditional philosophical perspective.

For example, Hume's struggle with this problem led him to reject the validity of the concept of self altogether. His search for the impression from which the idea of self might be derived resulted in his famous statement that "the Mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearancethere is properly no simplicity in it at one time, nor identity in different". Therefore for Hume there were no adequate criteria for personal identity. He concluded that "the identity which we attribute to the mind of man is entirely fictitious". The idea of an enduring self was no more than a "fiction or imaginary principle of union" which provided a solace for those unwilling to confront the implications of thorough-going skepticism.

More recently, however, a solution to the problem of personal identity has been offered by the linguistic philosopher Strawson (1958,1959). Strawson reasons that the difficulties Hume and Descartes encountered with the idea of personal identity arose from their strategy of

analytic reduction, their wish to break down experience into elements. He suggests instead that we must recognise the concept of the person as being a primitive concept. In his analysis of the way people use language, Strawson discovered that there are a whole series of predicates (eg 'depressed', 'tired') which refer at one and the same time to internal (subjective) and external (objective) events or states. What does this mean? Strawson (1959 p99) writes:

"it is a necessary condition of one's ascribing states of consciousness, experience, to oneself, in the way one does, that one should also ascribe them or be prepared to ascribe them, to others who are not oneselfthe ascribing phrases are used in just the same sense when the subject is another as when the subject is oneself.....The dictionaries do not give two sets of meanings for every expression which describes a state of consciousness : a first person meaning and a second and third person meaning".

By assigning the concept of the person this primitive status, Strawson makes it unnecessary to continue the attempt to reconstruct the idea of self which was lost in the empiricist and Cartesian programmes. What is now needed is an elaboration of the idea of self, an examination of what this idea means - in other words, a phenomenology of self.

Within the framework of a philosophy of the person, we can begin our analysis of the concept of self from the

standpoint of self as agent. That is, we begin with the assumption that as a person one is being-in-the-world, one is engaged in physical and social exchange with the world, one invests oneself in projects and purposes. This is one sense of self-the self as agent, as existent, as 'I'.

A second sense of self is that which George Herbert Mead has called the 'Me'. The 'Me' is created, Mead argues, from the infant's ability to take the role of the other, to take the point of view of the other, to accept that he is object for the other. Cooley uses the phrase "Looking-Glass self" to convey the idea that the child sees his or her own actions reflected in the way others react to them. For example, he may begin to see himself as 'bad' if others treat him as if he were 'bad' or labels him as 'bad'.

It is through this aspect of self - the 'Me' - that a person's sense of self, his personal identity or self-concept, becomes moulded by society. It is through social interaction, the responses of others to his actions, that the child gradually comes to realise what his roles are to be, what kind of a person he is. As Becker (1971, p36) has put it: "we learn the full significance of our acts from those around us".

The 'Me' part of the self, then, can be understood as our way of making sense of what we are. It consists of our selection from the stock of knowledge in our culture and in our language which is used for this purpose. Thus

Thus the 'Me', the self-concept or sense of identity that the person can refer to and talk about - his name his accomplishments, his goals, interests and so on - is a reflection, either by the person himself or by others, upon the activities of the 'I'. This distinction is found in the way we talk - 'I' is subject while 'Me' is object. Sartre sums up this relationship between the active and passive aspects of self in his slogan "existence precedes essence". That is, we act, we are, before we define or understand what it is we have done.

However, although in this sense the 'I' is prior to the 'Me', at another level the power of responsible action and agency emerges from the 'Me' :

"the child begins to establish himself as an object of others before he becomes an executive subject.

He becomes a point of reference in relation to others before he becomes an agent of action for himself"

(Becker, 1971 p33).

This is the process Shotter (1973b,1974) has termed the "transformation of natural into personal powers". He writes that if the child "is ever to act responsibly he must learn to use different forms of behaviour in ways which make sense to other people" (Shotter, 1974 p141). The child must learn to monitor the meaning and significance of his actions - they are no longer merely things that just happen to him,

they must become events that he takes responsibility for. This is part of what we mean by the idea of a person. In becoming a person, the child must learn to view his actions within the social context of meaning and significance.

So what seems to happen is that there is a dialectical process through which our intentional, active self, the 'I' continually refers back to the passive, social self, or 'Me' as the person undertakes social action. Through reference to the 'Me, he or she is able to monitor his or her activities in the light of the needs and intentions of others. And in reflecting on the results of action, the 'me' may be either confirmed or denied. Through this confirmation or denial, a new area of personal control may be established, setting the stage for further action. And the process begins again. This, briefly, appears to characterise the way we move from action to reflection and back again - the process Macmurray has called the "rhythm of withdrawal and return" - and the kind of effect this process has on our sense of self. We can say that the self exists in neither the 'I' nor the 'Me' alone, but in the dynamic interaction between them.

To summarise what has been said so far, our analysis of the experience or sense of self which we possess has revealed that it may be useful to think of the self as constituted from an 'I' and a 'Me', which are in dynamic, dialectical relationship. The 'I' is defined as :

"the unique, active, idiosyncratic, subjective and essentially indeterminate aspect of an individual personality, the source of our sense of freedom, initiative and puzzlement as to the extent of ourselves" (Shotter, 1975 p120)

"the force which moves action at any given time.....the present moment which either may call some aspect of the past into question or ignore it" (Natanson, 1970 p17)

"the 'I' is the impulsive tendency of the individual. It is the initial, spontaneous, unorganised aspect of human experience. Thus, it represents the indirected tendencies of the individual" (Meltzer, 1967 p11)

"a being which is not what it is and is what it is not" (Sartre, 1969 p79)

The 'Me' is defined as :

"the passive, objective, relatively stable aspect of ourselves existing for others" (Shotter, 1975 p120)

"continuous, memorially directed, and indexed with clues and keys to past actionthe organised accumulation of what happened to the individual" (Natanson, 1970 p17)

"the incorporated other within the individual....the organised set of attitudes and definitions, understandings and expectations - or simply meanings - common to the group" (Meltzer, 1967 p11)

The dynamic relationship between 'I' and 'Me' has been described as:

"a perpetual series of initiations of acts by the 'I' and acting-back-upon the act (that is, guidance of the act) by the 'Me'. The act is a resultant of this interplay" (Meltzer, 1967 p12).

"a complex development in which each 'I' of a present becomes incorporated into the 'Me' of a later state of the self" (Natanson, 1970 p18)

This is a description of the experience of self. It is the outcome of phenomenological 'suspension' of what we know about the practical manifestations of self in the world in order to uncover what it is that self means. The phenomenological analysis offered here owes much to the pioneers in phenomenological description of the experience of self - Husserl, Mead and Sartre. Their writings have provided the basis for the description of self as, on the one hand, constituting the knower, the agent, the ego, and on the other the 'Me', the being-for-others. But a complete analysis of the sense of self can go further. We now turn to an examination of what might be called the domain of self.

This domain of the self has been termed by William James the "empirical self". He tells us that :

"in its widest possible sense.... a man's Self is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and

friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank account. All these things give him the same emotions. If they wax and prosper, he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die away, he feels cast down - not necessarily in the same degree for each thing, but in much the same way for all" (James,1901, pp291-2).

James goes on to discriminate between the material self - a person's body, clothes, home and possessions - the social self - his recognition by various individuals and groups - and the spiritual self - the inner life of the person, his thoughts, will, conscience and ability to argue. This scheme is similar to a more recent one proposed by Waterbor(1972) who suggests that our sense of self is derived from three sources of experience, which are the continuities we experience in our bodily awareness, our social roles, and our value systems.

Are there degrees of salience or self-relevance in these sources of self or personal identity? James suggests that there are. He designates the "spiritual self" as the "self of selves" :

"We take a purer self-satisfaction when we think of our ability to argue and discriminate, of our moral sensibility and conscience, of our indomitable will, than when we survey any of our other possessions.

Only when these are altered is a man said to be alienatus a se" (James, 1901 p296).

Yet to assume that for all people in all cultures there is but one ordering of the sources of self is clearly mistaken. Individuals and groups differ in the degree of importance they attach to particular aspects of the self. Riesman's 'other-directed' person, for example, would identify himself most, one might think, with his social roles and others' perceptions of him. Similarly, when Fromm talks of the 'marketing personality' he implies that this type of person values the world of possessions and material wealth. In much of the writing of Rogers and Maslow there is an emphasis on 'organismic' or 'instinctoid' needs. Thus they nominate bodily feelings and awareness as the primary source of self. Finally, in many societies the concept of 'honour' is used to indicate the overwhelming identification of the person with his values. So it appears as though the various sources of self-inner life, bodily awareness, social roles, possessions, values and so on - are not arranged on a dimension of self-relevance, but are more properly thought of as being simultaneously available to the person.

This is the point of view taken by existential writers.

May (1958 p61) has written that there are :

"three simultaneous aspects of world which characterise the existence of each one of us as being-in-the-world.

First, there is Umwelt, literally meaning 'world around'; this is the biological world, generally called the environment. There is, second, the Mitwelt, literally, the 'with-world', the world of beings of one's own kind, the world of one's fellow men. The third is Eigenwelt, the 'own-world', the mode of relationship to one's self".

May's system of analysis is clearly similar to that constructed by William James. The Umwelt stretches from the body to the furthest reaches of the "world around" - our possessions and personal spaces. The Mitwelt corresponds to the "social self". The Eigenwelt, the world of personal meaning, is equivalent to the "spiritual self" of James. But, for the existentialist, "the human being lives in the Umwelt, Mitwelt and Eigenwelt simultaneously. They are by no means three different worlds but three simultaneous modes of being-in-the-world". (May, 1958 p63).

Our analysis of the experience of self has isolated these three broadly distinguishable areas of experience - the experience of physical embodiment, of social relationship, and of personal meaning and value. Having made this analysis however, it is necessary to emphasise the integration of these aspects in life as a whole, to avoid the temptation to reify these aspects by supposing that they can exist in isolation.

An example : the connection between the experience of having a body - body awareness, feeling and emotion- and social relationship has been noted. Bakan (1968 pp6-8) writes:

"somatic diseases resulting from traumatic disruption of social relations have been demonstrated to occur as quickly as within twenty-four hours. Separation and estrangement from significant persons - actual, anticipated and symbolic - have been implicated as factors in numerous diseases : asthma, cancer, congestive heart failure, diabetes mellitus, disseminated lupus erythematosus, functional uterine bleeding, Raynaud's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, thyrotoxicosis, tuberculosis and ulcerative colitis".

Schilder(1950) reports that sometimes people who lose their interest in the external world and social relationships may also display a loss of interest in their own bodies - "the individual does not dare to place his libido either in the outside world or in his own body" (Schilder,1950 p140).

The resulting syndrome of 'depersonalisation' is described by Schilder in this way :

"the patient sees his face in the mirror changed, rigid and distorted. His own voice seems strange and unfamiliar to him and he shudders at the sound as if it were not himself speaking Gottfried feels that his movements are interrupted. His body feels as if it were

dead and he has the sensation that a dynamo is hissing in his head. The body feels too light, as if it could fly. A patient of Loewy's says, 'I feel the body not for me but for itself'. The patients look for their limbs in the bed. A patient of Pick's complains that his eyes are like two holes through which he looks. Patients complain that they do not feel the urge for urination and defecation. They feel as if they were dead, without life, like shadows. All the patients complain about hypochondriac sensations, noises in their ears, choking sensations, bubbles in the head, and sensations in the heart" (Schilder, 1950 p139).

These excerpts from Bakan and Schilder are merely to demonstrate the inter-connectedness between social relationship and bodily experience, to demonstrate just how much our understanding of ourselves is diminished by regarding any single avenue of analysis as being complete in itself. Although we can analytically identify different modes of being-in-the-world, our ongoing experience of the world, our consciousness, is a totalisation of all these varieties of experience.

structure

We have already introduced the concepts of meaning, intentionality and time as core concepts in a philosophy of the person. These concepts have been justified by their congruence with everyday experience. They seem to be necessary elements in any scheme designed to help us understand and gain control over our everyday lives. Now another concept, that of structure, must be confronted. An adequate philosophy, or psychology, which attempts to do justice to experience must come to terms with the existence of levels, or a structure, of experience.

To talk of experience being structured is to talk of meaning and to talk of time. It seems that the meaning that things have for us may become (overlaid) through time as we learn new meanings for these same objects. For example, we made reference much earlier to some research into mother-infant interaction (Trevarthen, 1977). In that research, it was shown that the mother often imitates the child. One of the experiments, however, involved the mother ceasing to imitate the child, while continuing to look at the child and continuing to make the right kind of facial movements. (The mother was in fact suddenly presented with another baby's face where her's had been). What happened was that the baby invariably became upset and withdrew from the social interaction.

Let us call this an experience of someone losing interest in what one is doing. And let us imagine that a child often has this experience - his mother often appears to lose interest in him, and he is often, as is natural for babies, upset by this. Now, let us imagine that person as an adult. He is talking to someone else. That other person loses interest, perhaps because they do not understand very well what is being said. Our protagonist understands this, that when someone does not follow what is being said, they may lose interest. But at another level, he is upset and withdraws.

This kind of experience is common enough. At one level the situation or event has a certain meaning, often fairly well understood by all parties in the interaction. At another level, however, things are not so clear. The event is accompanied by echoes and resonances. It has been the genius of Freud to have discovered that these echoes and resonances are meaningful, and that, when their meaning has been brought to light, they signify repressed or 'forgotten' events.

This is to suggest that the meaning of events and objects may be structured or layered. That is, when we begin to reflect on what something means to us, we may begin to uncover layers of meaning. Berger and Luckmann (1966) use the term "sedimentation" to describe this kind of phenomenon.

Let us go further and look at the structure of language itself. It will be useful to start with this statement by Ricoeur (1970 p7): "language itself is from the outset and for the most part distorted: it means something other than what it says, it has a double meaning, it is equivocal." Ricoeur is here talking about the symbolic dimension of language - the possibility that a statement can signify more than is immediately apparent, the possibility that a text can have a meaning that is not immediately clear. And this metaphoric usage gives language much of its flexibility and expressiveness (see Billow,1977).

It seems, then, that the very way we describe the world, through language, is structured in this sense, through symbolisation. The use of symbols appears to be a necessary component of the way we think. Piaget(1971), for example, claims to have traced the growth of symbolic thought from its biological origins. Langer(1951) talks of a "need of symbolisation". For her, "the symbol-making function is one of man's primary activities, like eating, looking, or moving about" (Langer,1951 p41).

Cassirer talks about man no longer living in a 'physical' universe. The universe of man is now a 'symbolic' one, with the result that:

"no longer can man confront reality immediately;
he cannot see it, as it were, face to face.

Physical reality seems to recede in proportion as man's symbolic activity advances. Instead of dealing with the things themselves man is in a sense constantly conversing with himself. He has so enveloped himself in linguistic forms, in artistic images, in mythical symbols and religious rites that he cannot see or know anything except by the interposition of this artificial medium.....man does not live in a world of hard facts, or according to his immediate needs or desires. He lives rather in the midst of imaginary emotions, in hopes and fears, in illusions and disillusions, in his fantasies and dreams. 'What disturbs and alarms man,' said Epictetus, 'are not the things, but his opinions and fantasies about the things' (Cassirer, 1944 p25).

But not only is language structured through symbol and metaphor, speech is structured by the multiplicity of gestures, speech inflections, postures and facial expressions which accompany verbal communication. Such communication - face-to-face talk - is conducted at several levels. Key (1975 p9) has written that "whatever language, or whatever the purpose in communication, informational or expressive, emotions and attitudes always project themselves in an overlay of superimposed patterns".

Furthermore, such talk is also characterised by the background expectancies and taken-for-granted assumptions held by conversants. It is the existence of such rules which makes interaction possible, the shared sense of a 'moral order' which makes people members of a culture, and able to understand the meaning of each other's actions, As Garfinkel (1967 pp36) has put it:

"the member of the society uses background expectancies as a scheme of interpretation. With their use actual appearances are for him recognisable and intelligible as the appearances - of - familiar - events. Demonstrably he is familiar to this background, while at the same time he is at a loss to tell us specifically of what the expectancies consist".

Here is another means through which experience can be seen to be structured - the degree of 'taken-for-grantedness' of knowledge :

"one experiences that which is taken for granted as a kernel of determinate and straightforward content to which is cogiven a horizon which is indeterminate"(Schutz and Luckmann,1973 p9).

It seems, then, that our stock of social knowledge is structured or layered by its accessibility, its taken-for-grantedness, its 'obviousness'.

Another structuring of experience comes about through the

existence of 'provinces of reality'. By this phrase is meant the various worlds which we live in - the everyday-life world, the world of science, the world of dreams, the world of art, of fantasy, of a novel we are reading, the world of childhood and so on. Each of these worlds constitutes, to use Schutz's phrase, a "finite province of meaning", each has its own consistent cognitive style or system of logic and we allow each of them its own brand of reality (while reserving the label of "paramount reality" for the everyday-life world). Lewin uses the term "irreality" to refer to these alternative realities.

To review what has been said in this section: We have looked at such phenomena as the persistence of "the basic intolerances, fears and resulting anxieties which arise from the mere fact that human life begins with a long, slow childhood....."(Erikson, 1950 p401), the saturation of language and thought with symbol and metaphor, the existence of paralinguistic levels of face-to-face communication, the dimension of taken-for-grantedness in social knowledge, and the existence of provinces of meaning, or alternative realities. We have seen in all these phenomena a structuring or layering of experience. It seems necessary, therefore, to include this concept in any adequate philosophical or psychological approach to the person.

The importance of this idea of structure cannot be

overemphasised. It would not be exaggerating to say that the credibility or possibility of a psychology of the person depends on it. Put very crudely, if it were not for the existence of such levels of meaning, if we could not talk about 'depth' or unconscious processes, there would be no need for a psychology. All the knowledge we might have, or ever wish to have, about persons could be provided by either sociological or philosophical analysis. That is, we would exist as members of a society and our biographies and personal projects could be known either through reference to our membership or through the philosophical techniques of reflection and conceptual analysis. It is only through the working of this aspect of structure, of symbolisation, that we exist as truly enigmatic creatures who need a psychology, whether common-sense or otherwise, in order to begin to understand ourselves.

Summary

This chapter has taken a few faltering steps towards a philosophy of the person. No doubt the ideas expressed here have been expressed much better elsewhere. Nevertheless, the reason for exploring such ideas has been to prepare the ground for other work, in particular the following chapter on the methodology of a science of persons, and then later some substantive research. Therefore it has been necessary to take this diversion into philosophy, so that later writing will not be overburdened with the task of justifying and legitimating from first principles the use of certain concepts introduced here.

The concepts introduced were those of : being-in-the-world, agency, intentionality, meaning, time, self and structure. It has been argued that these ideas are central to any system of thought which attempts to do justice to personal experience. Some of the ways in which traditional philosophical approaches do violence to experience were also examined.

CHAPTER 3

A SCIENCE OF PERSONS

Part 1 : Issues and problems

Up to this point we have discussed some of the issues involved in the philosophy of the person. We have constructed a framework within which we can think about man as an active, purposeful being in relation with others. Is this as far as we can go? Are we limited to philosophising about persons, or is there some way we can conduct systematic scientific research into the actual use that individuals find for these personal powers we have described? Or, on the other hand, is it an essential feature of what we know as scientific research that it should necessarily reduce the person to his or her mechanical or organic aspects? One philosopher who has written widely about the philosophy of the person - Macmurray - would agree with this pessimistic conclusion. Macmurray(1961 p27) states:

"the theory of the personal is philosophical and not scientific. In other words, when we consider the self in its actuality as a personal being we do not initiate an anthropological enquiry. Anthropology is a science, and a scientific enquiry is merely objective; and an objective account is necessarily impersonal. From the traditional standpoint, with its polar opposition of subject and object, we look to science for an account of man, but to philosophy for a theory of the self. When we substitute for this the standpoint of the Agent, we still look to science for an objective account of man. But it is to philosophy we must look for a

theory of the personal. The change of standpoint makes no difference to science.....".

In this passage Macmurray states his belief that there is a fundamental opposition between the relationship of a scientist with his object of enquiry and the relationship between individuals engaged in a personal relationship - "I can know another person as a person only by entering into a personal relationship with him." (p28)

Further, not only does the kind of relationship between individuals ensure that the scientific relationship cannot be at the same a personal one, it also changes the type of knowledge we have of each other. If we meet as persons, we are both engaged in action, in fulfilling intentions. A personal relation is an inter-action, an acting together. To reflect upon this action is to withdraw from the personal relation and substitute an impersonal one instead: "action cannot be object for a subject; for a purely objective attitude reduces action to behaviour and represents it as matter of fact, not as matter of intention". (p28)

It should be clear that Macmurray's objection to a science of persons lies in his assumption that the 'scientific attitude' is essentially one of objective, detached observation - the exact antithesis of the personal relationship. Yet Macmurray does not mean that we have no knowledge of people as people, for he writes that we possess a "personal

understanding of others which is the result of reflection upon our personal dealings with men and women of various sorts under varied conditions, and which we sometimes call 'a knowledge of the world'." (p30) But he insists that this differs from scientific knowledge:

"The one assumes, and implies, that men are free agents, responsible for their behaviour, choosing their mode of action in the light of a distinction between right and wrong; the other that all human behaviour follows determined patterns, and that the laws that they obey are, like those which govern all natural objects, discoverable by objective scientific methods of investigation. This duality of knowledge, personal and impersonal, is the concrete statement of the antimony of freedom and determinism". (pp30-31).

Is Macmurray correct in his assertion that the scientific attitude must be accompanied by an impersonal relationship with the 'object' of study? If he is in fact correct then there is no hope that we will, in Shotter's terms, 'regain ourselves'. For surely the best rejoinder to the multiplicity of reductionist theories of man with which we mislead ourselves is a humanistic science of man with which we can come to terms with the many real problems that confront us all. But to say this is to do no more than state an article of faith. What are the prospects that such a science might be possible?

To begin with, Macmurray's pessimism would appear to be unjustified. By 'science', Macmurray refers to the positivist, verificationist approach, which insists on strict operational definition of constructs and the anonymity of the researcher. And when he talks about anthropology, he is referring to the attempts of the human sciences to modify this approach and rationale in their own areas. Yet it now seems as though this model does not provide an adequate description of what we know as 'science'. Kuhn (1962), for example, has established that science is a product of social processes as much as of individual genius, a particular method, or a particular philosophy. There could be no science without a scientific community, is Kuhn's message. Polanyi(1958) argues that the knowledge scientists possess, or which science creates, is not an impersonal, objective knowledge, a set of theories or propositions which exists in a book or a library, but is instead a personal knowledge, a set of skills and abilities which enable the scientist to make statements about the world with confidence.

Kuhn and Polanyi are making the point that the personal aspect of science is a necessary part of the whole scientific process. Habermas goes further when he argues that the denial of the personal in the kind of positivist science envisaged by Macmurray will in itself lead to error. Habermas(1970) notes that the attempt by positivist science to deny the existence of personal interests or choice on the part of the scientist had its own effect:

"the purpose of freeing knowledge from interest was not to rid theory of the blurrings of subjectivity, as it were, but on the contrary, to submit the subject himself to an ecstatic expurgation from the passions".

perhaps Habermas does not intend us to take this remark too seriously. He goes on to describe what happens when science denies its origins in personal interest : "it is precisely pure theory, with its claim to be self-contained, that surrenders itself to the interests it suppresses and becomes ideological". Habermas is emphasising that, if indeed the scientific pursuit of knowledge is bound up in personal interest, then to deny that interest or motivation is to be trapped by it. It is to be fundamentally unscientific in so far as the very basis of the science remains a set of unexamined beliefs. For Habermas, then, true science not only sets out to explore the external world, but also and at the same time engages in analysis and discussion of its own assumptions. Such a science cannot be value free, since the choice of basic assumptions must remain a free one, and, as Habermas himself puts it - "the truth of statements is ultimately bound up with the intention to live the true life".

Now we arrive at a conception of science very different from that envisaged by Macmurray. It is a conception of science as a collective, systematic search for true

knowledge. As such, it need make no concessions to a priori notions concerning the desirability of an 'object attitude' or a metaphysics of determinism. This idea of a science makes a modest claim - it is the way we organise knowledge in our culture, within our world view. Horton(1967) has examined the similarities and differences between traditional African religious thought and Western science. Mainly, there are similarities - both attempt to place events in a causal context wider than that provided by common sense, both use analogy, both postulate a unity underlying apparent diversity and so on. The main difference between these systems of thought, in Horton's view, lies in the fact that in traditional cultures there is no developed awareness of alternatives to the established body of traditional tenets. And even in this respect, it is of interest to note that Polanyi(1958 ch9 sections 9 and 10) discusses at some length the identical procedures used by the Azande and by Western science to deal with alternative hypotheses and unwelcome facts. So, within this more permissive conception of science, how can we construct a science of persons?

If there is to be such a thing as a science of persons, it must be a science which at all levels reflects the aims and concepts of the philosophy of the person. For example, it is no use claiming to be doing research into man's sense of agency and then conduct this research using laboratory methods and measurement tools which deny this very aspect of the person.

Nor is it appropriate to undertake research on a personal basis which is then exploited at an impersonal level.

Thus, a science of persons must be conducted with people and for these same people.

We can get closer to what a science of persons might look like when we discover that such a science must be concerned with everyday life. Traditional forms of science, as we have seen, attempt to stand back from everyday life by denying the personal involvement of the scientist. Another aspect of this objectification of, or abstraction from the everyday world, is the method of 'operational definition' of constructs. That is, the constructs, or concepts with which the scientist hopes to explain the events he is observing are identified with the outcomes of measuring operations - they become 'variables'. But as Douglas (1970 p6) has put it - "once we follow these 'disembodied numbers' back to their sources and see how they were arrived at, and what, therefore, they actually represent, we find that they are based on the most subjective of all possible forms of activity". All measurement in social science research must ultimately rely on the meaning that some social act or piece of behaviour has for some person. This may seem obvious when the measuring operation is a person answering a questionnaire - clearly he or she will respond according to what the item means to him or her. Douglas shows, however, that even objective-seeming social

'facts' as coroners' statistics, police figures or divorce rates are the outcome of many people's interpretations of the events in question.

For Douglas, then, any denial of the everyday life basis of scientific knowledge is mistaken:

"Any scientific understanding of human action, at whatever level of ordering or generality, must begin with and be built upon an understanding of the everyday lives of the members performing those actions". (Douglas, 1970 p11)

Not only would a science of persons "begin with and be built upon" the understandings that people engaged in everyday purposive activity have of their actions, it would also aim to increase our understanding of everyday life as well as, more practically, improving everyday life.

By 'everyday life' is meant the world of shared understandings which enable people to communicate and work together. This body of shared understandings is often referred to as 'common sense' and is typically 'taken-for-granted' or self-evident. It is a shared knowledge implicit in social action or personal interaction. This is the area of life which a science of persons is to investigate. As Schutz and Luckmann(1973 p3) put it - "the world of everyday life is.. man's fundamental and paramount reality".

How can this world of everyday life be brought under investigation? Surely, the critic would argue, any scientific attempt to 'capture' the spontaneous action which we understand as being central to the 'naive attitude' within which we take for granted so much, would necessarily destroy what we are trying to study? This is another way of stating Macmurray's objection that "a purely objective attitude reduces action to behaviour" and thus science must reduce the personal to the organic or mechanical. But the answer to this objection also comes from Macmurray. He states that we possess "a personal understanding of others which is the result of reflection upon our personal dealings with men and women of various sorts under various conditions." "It is this "personal understanding" that forms the source material of a science of persons.

It is part of what we mean when we talk about persons that a person is capable of conscious reflection on his or her ongoing action. It is this reflection Macmurray calls "personal understanding" and it consists of the meaning of the action for the actor. The world of everyday life, we have said, is made up of these shared meanings. When someone winks at us, we know what it means. We have a "personal understanding" of the wink, an understanding which is at the same time largely a shared understanding - a wink has a certain meaning in our culture, in certain contexts. But how to gain access to these meanings and shared understandings for scientific purposes?

First of all, we can ask people what their actions mean :

"At the heart of the explanation of social behaviour is the identification of the meanings that underlie it. Part of the approach to discovering them involves the obtaining of accounts - the actor's own statements about why he performed the acts in question, what social meanings he gave to the actions of himself and others". (Harre and Secord(1972 p9).

However the account does not exhaust the meaning implicit in an action. In the first place, if we are in relation, at least part of the meaning of an act will lie in how the other person understands it, and this may not always be clear to the actor. This is to say that in a true relationship, the meaning of an act, a statement, a gesture, is in some sense between the two persons. But also, as Macmurray puts it, the self-as-knower is a fiction of the 'egocentric', 'purely theoretical' standpoint of traditional philosophy; persons are agents, the self is a self in action, engaged in projects not in reflection. Thus not all of the shared meaning which makes interaction possible is recoverable by conscious reflection, not least of all because it is just the taken-for-grantedness or obviousness of this kind of knowledge that makes it so basic. It is a knowing how, not a knowing that.

So, while we must certainly use the person's account as a way of gaining access to meanings, we must also use observation.

For example, through detailed observation of interaction we may well decide that his account - the reasons he gives for that action sequence - may be incomplete or implausible. In passing, it should be said that the actor himself might well be unconvinced of the plausibility of his account if he were able to see himself 'from the outside' - see for example the research on behaviour change following videotape playback of performance (Neilsen, 1962. ^{see}). Some of the complex issues involved in comparing and evaluating the various methods of self-report and observation are discussed below. Suffice to say that both observation and account gathering are necessary if we are to reconstruct the self-in-action of the personal relation. Often these two modes of research converge in the technique known as participant observation, in which the observer endeavours to share in the activities and meanings of his informants.

The end-product of observation, account-gathering and whatever other methods we might devise to gain access to meanings is a description of an episode, or series of episodes of social life. This description, according to circumstances, may be in terms of who did what and who said what (the observer strategy) or in terms of the actors' own reasons and explanations (the account-gathering strategy), or, preferably, both. This description constitutes a text. It is the work of the investigator first of all ^{to} make sure that the text is complete, and then to interpret the text. Thus,

a science of persons is a science of interpretation. It is suggested that the only way of constructing a science of persons which does not violate the existence of the phenomena it sets out to study, which neither objectifies persons nor denies the everyday life basis of personal knowledge, is to proceed by the method of description and interpretation.

The basic aim of interpretation is the elucidation of meaning. When we interpret, we ask the question - 'what did he mean by that act or statement?'. When we interpret, we assume that the text before us is a product of purposive activity. The task is to uncover the purposes, intentions and meanings embedded in it. As Jones (1975) puts it - "interpretation is the business of making sense of the text, rendering it coherent." (p182). Or Taylor(1971 p5) - "a successful interpretation is one which makes clear the meaning originally present in a confused, fragmentary, cloudy form".

Yet it might be argued that a science of interpretation can make at best only a hollow claim to the title 'science'. For what assurance have we than an interpretation is in any sense 'correct' or 'valid'? If our only method is that of interpretation, surely there is the danger that we will engage in endless re-working of the same material. How do we know when to stop? Further, how are we to decide between rival interpretations? The answers to these questions direct us towards important features of the science of persons.

In the first place, as Jones (1975) has noted, all interpretation is "aspectival" - it is taken from a certain point of view. This is to confirm Habermas' recommendation that the scientist should not deny his interest. This is to answer the first question - 'how do we know when to stop' - with the rejoinder - 'it depends on what we want'. As Polanyi (1958 p265) has written - "we must accredit our own judgement as the paramount arbiter of all our intellectual performances". The second question - 'how do we decide between rival interpretations?' is more difficult.

The difficulty which arises is that there will always be rival interpretations. In part, this comment is a direct implication of what has been said above - interpretations are always from some point of view. Yet what is implicit in all this is the suggestion that there will never be a single point of view from which everyone will want to construct interpretations. To make this suggestion is to make assumptions about the desirability of democracy and the existence of conflicting world-views within one society. It is to accept the primacy of an 'open society', to use Popper's term. For, as Taylor (1974 p48) states - "a study of the science of man is inseparable from an examination of the options between which men must choose". If we insist on a plurality of fundamental options, it seems as though we must put up with a plurality of interpretive schemes.

This leads to another question - 'can interpretations be wrong?'. Even if we accept that there will always be competing interpretations, do we have any way of making sure that an interpretation within one particular scheme is correct? There are three answers to this question. First of all there are factual criteria by which we can judge an interpretation. Does it ignore important parts of the text? Is the text an accurate description of the events as they happened? Is the critic's line of argument a logical one? So the first answer is yes, there are matters of fact which can lead us to reject an interpretation.

However, if these criteria are met, it becomes difficult to decide on the correctness of an interpretation. As Jones (1975 p191) puts it:

"because there are no formal limits to the ways in which texts may be taken, or the uses to which they may be put, it is reference to convention or tradition and practical inefficacy in the context which lead to the properly reasoned dismissal of some interpretations as 'implausible', 'pointless' or 'far-fetched'."

Jones adds, "in this domain there is no timeless truth, and public accord determines what is accepted". We find, then, that just as in physical science, the acceptability of an interpretation, or theory, is contingent upon its acceptability to the scientific community (see Kuhn, 1962).

The third and last, criterion for the accuracy of an interpretation is through usage. Geertz(1975) has this to say:

"Theoretical ideas are not created wholly anew in each study; as I have said, they are adapted from other, related studies, and refined in the process, applied to new interpretive problems. If they cease being useful with respect to such problems, they tend to stop being used and are more or less abandoned. If they continue being useful, throwing up new understandings, they are further elaborated and go on being used".(p27).

An example might be given of the psychoanalyst Bettelheim, who found that what he observed in a concentration camp could not be assimilated into the interpretive scheme of psychoanalysis - "my efforts to understand the concentration camp experience through classical psychoanalysis had broken down, and only then was I willing to accept the need for revising that frame of reference". (Bettelheim, 1960 p31).

So, even though there may not exist statistical or predictive criteria with which to evaluate interpretation, there certainly seems to be sufficient reason for us to agree that it fulfils most of the conditions necessary for it to be accepted as a systematic, verifiable approach to knowledge - a science. Moreover, it is a phenomenological approach. The procedures we have been discussing - detailed description of everyday-

life experience, treatment of this description as a text with interpretation as its key, and testing of the usefulness or validity of interpretation through further experience - these are the procedures of phenomenology.

As Spiegelberg (1960 p656) has put it, "the first objective of the phenomenological approach is the enlarging and deepening of the range of our immediate experience". This is to say that phenomenology attempts to go beyond the 'natural attitude', the pre-scientific life-world, the world of everyday-life, in order to examine that world:

"as phenomenologists we should become disinterested bystanders watching our own conscious life. It is only in this manner that it can become a pure theme in our experience. Instead of living in the world, instead of investing it with our worldly interests, we must actually observe our life.....as somehow being interested in itself" (Kockelmans, 1967 p243)

Through such 'suspension of belief', or 'bracketing of existence' it becomes possible to examine the meaning of phenomena :

"when we 'bracket the existence' of the content of any immediate experience we forego all factual questions about the experience and focus attention exclusively on what it means, what is required for any immediate experience to have the content which our description

ascribes to it. When we ask this question we encounter 'phenomena'. The 'phenomena' to be described are meanings". (Schmitt, 1961 p463).

So, the methods of a science of interpretation are phenomenological, their aim is to make explicit meanings which are implicit or 'anonymous' in our experiencing of phenomena. But is such a science useful? Can we do anything with such post hoc interpretive knowledge of persons? Or, like the peasant in the old story, are we merely shooting holes in a fence and then painting the bullseyes around them?

Traditionally, usefulness in the human sciences has been equated with the twin aims of prediction and control. It should be clear that a science of interpretation has as its goal neither of these two aims. Given the political implications of effective control, and the impossibility of significant prediction (could one predict something like, for example, the Theory of Relativity?), maybe there are more appropriate aims. In the first place, there is the more modest and more personal goal of anticipation. Bakan (1967) stresses the usefulness of being able to speculate, from a theoretical scheme, the possible dynamics of behaviour :

"In the matter of prediction and control of human behaviour, a knowledge of what an individual might possibly do, or possibly feel, or possibly think, places us well on the way towards the achievement of

our objective. Given a detailed knowledge concerning possibilities, we can discourage some from becoming actualities. The pragmatic usefulness of knowledge of possibilities extends from the clinical situation to world affairs". (Bakan, 1967 p112)

However, as has been discussed at some length above, a science of persons is only possible within the 'form of the personal' to use Macmurray's phrase. That is, the 'scientist' and the 'object' of his science must be engaged in a co-operative enterprise, one in which neither denies the agency of the other. And this realisation makes possible a new role for the scientist. No longer is he a detached 'expert' - he must become a co-participant. As George Miller has said :

"I can imagine nothing more relevant to human welfare, and nothing that could pose a greater challenge to the next generation of psychologists, than to discover how to give psychology away". (Miller, 1969 p1074)

Shotter (1975) argues that the human sciences have always worked to refine or transform our 'images of man', our ideas of what sort of a being we are. These sciences provide metaphors which can extend such images and ideas (see Turbayne, 1970). So, one way of 'giving away' a science of persons is to make available for general use whatever metaphors or images of man we can invent. Moore and Anderson(1961) have put it thus :

"one of the principal activities of social scientists will be, or should be, to continue the work done (for our civilisation) by Homer and Hesiod; ie to continue the job of constructing folk-models for the instruction and diversion of our fellow-creatures". (p431).

To the skeptic this programme for a science of persons may appear impractical and idealistic when compared to the concerns of traditional social science. Yet the image of positivist social science as practical and 'tough-minded' is a dangerous illusion. Is it practical to conduct research in the laboratory and expect one's results to generalise to the outside world? Is it 'tough-minded' to ignore important human abilities - the ability to choose, to decide, to find meaning - because these do not fit easily into the experimental paradigm? Surely nothing could be more practical than everyday life, and nothing more 'tough-minded' than looking at the whole problem, attempting to take into account the person's

"awesome capacity to transcend himself and his immediate situation, to bring a vast realm of previous experience to bear in constructing meanings and actions for his immediate situation, to co-ordinate (order) his immediate situations with those of many others beyond his immediate grasp, and to project himself into an as yet unrealised future". (Douglas, 1970 p42).

This has been an examination of some of the issues involved in the idea of a science of persons. Some of the methods which might be exploited by such a science, and some examples of work done using these methods, are discussed below. Finally, in the spirit of such a science, some mention should be made of, to use Habermas' term, the 'interests' which lie behind such an endeavour. Briefly, for a full treatment of this topic would take us into a new set of problems, the sentiment which motivates a science of persons can be taken to be 'conviviality'. A true science of persons might be a 'tool for conviviality'. To say this is merely to affirm Illich's marvellous slogan, but at a deeper level it is a demand for us to examine the uses to which we put scientific knowledge and to examine the means by which we gain this knowledge. Ultimately, a science of persons makes this claim: we cannot understand men without knowing them.

Introduction

Some of the issues and problems which have to be faced by a science of persons have been discussed. We are now ready to take up the question of how such a scientific programme could be carried out. How might a psychology of the person, a truly humanistic psychology, be possible? What would be its aims and methods?

It is necessary to clarify the use of the term 'humanistic psychology'. This is the correct term to describe a psychology which takes as its goal the elucidation of human experience. Yet it is unfortunate that it should have become identified with the activities of a particular group - the 'human potential' or 'growth' movement. This movement has been widely misrepresented and misunderstood, and it would be a pity to associate all of humanistic psychology with this relatively minor part of it. Moreover, this group has devoted itself to therapeutic endeavours, and a complete humanistic psychology must be more than a therapeutic tool. Giorgi (1970 p287) sums up this point of view when he states that :

"many objections to psychology as a natural science come from clinical psychologists and therapists who find the natural scientific model of man irrelevant for their concerns and problems. We can agree to their objections but we feel that to substitute 'therapy

models' for 'mechanical models' is another opposite, but equal, error"

Humanistic psychology is, then, much more than therapy. It is also, at least, a programme of research and a continuing examination of its assumptions and biases - a programme of 'conceptual analysis' (see Shotter, 1975 pp35-39). Its task is to study the ways that people use and misuse, invent and deny what Peter Berger has called the 'symbolic canopy', the system of personal constructs, typifications, beliefs, attitudes, meanings, emblems, myths, and theories through which we define ourselves, guide our actions and in terms of which we receive our satisfactions. Humanistic psychology thus takes as its goal the clarification of meaning.

The fundamental question it puts to the world is - what does it mean to be a person, a member of a group, to perform some action? This is to say that to understand human action we need to know about what has been called the 'phenomenal field' - the protagonist's plans, expectations, theories and so on, and also how he or she makes sense of the setting and the particular situational rules which prevail within it.

The problem for the humanistic psychologist, then, is to get access to the meanings that a person, or group, is using. The most obvious method of doing this is often also the most appropriate - just ask them. But sometimes there are occasions

when people are unable to account for their actions - for example infants are clearly unable to do this - or are unwilling to do so. In these cases the researcher can employ other techniques, such as observation, role playing, special situations and so on, which are described below. As Winthrop (1963 p136) has put it :

"the phenomenological outlook must be bolstered by the painstaking work characteristic of other schools of thought; namely a willingness to undertake tedious experiments, gather case histories and employ various methods of free association".

As will be seen, the fact that the humanistic researcher has different methods at his disposal also makes it possible to check the authenticity of material being gathered, by comparing what is gleaned from different sources.

The aim with all humanistic research methods is to obtain a description of some experience or performance in terms of the meanings, reasons, theories and so on of those involved. It is essential, then, that research procedures are designed so that they do not import, suggest or impose meaning on whatever activities are being investigated. At the level of description, the humanistic researcher is engaged in 'naturalistic research' (Barker,1963; Willems,1969). This is to say that he or she is attempting, ideally, to observe and record the experiences and activities of people without

either manipulating antecedent conditions or imposing units of measurement or categorisation. (Willems,1969). The goal is to discover what happens in the world independently of the operations of the researcher. Again, it will be seen that this is not always possible. While all research methods, all methods of gaining information about the world, impose their own limitations and systematic distortions on that world, some methods clearly do so more than others, and some phenomena of interest may need more digging out than others.

The description obtained through naturalistic research can be of interest for its own sake, as a piece of reporting, or it can be used as the basis for interpretation and theorising. The value of the former function of research - reporting - is often belittled by experimental scientists. Yet it goes hand-in-hand with an interest in everyday life and actual lived experience. Lofland(1971) talks about the difference between 'knowing about' and 'knowing'!

"it happens that humans in complex, urban, industrial societies need to understand more people than they personally can encounter face-to-face. It is in large scale societies that people know about more people than they have met face-to-face. But the desire and need to understand and know persist, and, indeed, perhaps become more acute. People known about but not known may still be encountered at some future time. Public decisions

must be made about, and stances taken toward, people known about but not known"(p2).

It is in the gap between knowing about and knowing that social science can make a contribution in constructing full, accurate, portraits of social settings, groups or individual ways of life.

The diagram on the next page displays in simplified form the stages involved in doing humanistic research. The first stage is the discovery of some problematic aspect of everyday life by the researcher. It is necessary to acknowledge this as part of the research process in the light of Habermas' arguments concerning the importance of the researcher's interests. Secondly, an effort must be made to clear the ground for empirical research by looking at just what the concepts being used in the research actually mean. Shotter (1975 p37) has written that, "as a preliminary to any scientific inquiry, we must try to state clearly and agree upon what it is that we are investigating, such that we may co-ordinate our inquiries into it in a disciplined manner". The necessity for this kind of 'conceptual analysis' has been emphasised by Winch(1958), who argues that many issues in the social sciences are problems in philosophy, to be solved by looking at use to which we put concepts, rather than being problems resolvable by empirical research. As Heather (1976 pp20-21) has put it - "the conceptual scheme of ordinary language is not without ambiguities and

contradictions but it is precisely the task of conceptual analysis.....to analyse ordinary language and make it fit for scientific purposes".

A Model for Humanistic Research

DISCOVERY OF
PROBLEM
BY RESEARCHER



CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS



SELECTION
OF
INFORMANTS



DESCRIPTION OF
THEIR
EXPERIENCE/
PERFORMANCE



ANALYSIS,
INTERPRETATION
and THEORISING

Checks

Representativeness
Their reasons for
participating
Their competence as
informants

Relationship between
researcher and
informant
Internal consistency
of accounts
External corroboration
of facts
Concordance of accounts
Concordance between
different methods
Negotiation of accounts
Recognising an
authentic world

Subjective feeling of
increased understanding
Logical adequacy of
arguments
Adversary method
Feedback from informants

Methods:

Observation
Interviews/Accounts
Personal documents
Public documents
Active role playing
Metaphor
Problem and
conflict situations
Natural experiments
Introspection
Action research

Overall check : Researcher's
account of how research
was carried out

The next stage in research, the selection or enlistment of informants, is not without problems. The researcher must make contact with appropriate individuals and groups, and build and maintain a relationship of trust and mutual co-operation with them. The difficulties of this kind of work have been well documented in the sociological literature (see, for example, Adams and Preiss, 1960; Hammond, 1964; and Lofland, 1971). A productive relationship with research participants and informants is best viewed as a skill, a type of 'personal knowledge', to use Polanyi's phrase, and although the texts mentioned above are full of suggestions concerning the best way to approach informants, what to tell them, and so on, there seems little substitute for experience. The criteria which might be used in selecting informants are discussed in a later section.

The general principles of gaining an account of a description of some experience or activity have already been touched upon. It was suggested that the aim should be to discover the meaning of such events. We now turn to an enumeration of the various methods available for this kind of research. After these methods have been identified, the strategies for checking the authenticity or accuracy of information gathered using them will be examined. Both these sections owe much to the recent examination of the same topics by Brown and Sime (1977).

Methods

Observation : The use of observation as a research method in psychology has become more readily accepted following the achievements of ethologists such as Tinbergen and Lorenz. However, many observational studies now use recording techniques such as video (see Birdwhistell, 1971) or tape recording (for example the work of Rogers and his colleagues with tapes of therapy sessions) so that the transience of observed episodes is no great disadvantage. Much of the recent progress in research on mother-infant interaction (Trevarthen 1974, 1977) is surely due to the ready availability of unobtrusive video equipment. Moreover, such equipment is now portable and simple enough to permit true field rather than laboratory studies.

Participant observation is a research technique which has been widely used in sociology. We might point to the work of Erving Goffman on the role of the mental patient, or on the management of stigma, as examples of research which demonstrates the significant contribution participant observation techniques can make in social psychology. Becker and Greer (1960) note some of the advantages of participant observation methods - they maximise the possibility of making discoveries or discovering unexpected data and give direct knowledge of matters otherwise known about only through hearsay. Lofland (1971 p93) asserts that participant observation is "the most close and telling mode of gathering information".

Account gathering/Interviewing : As has already been suggested, account gathering - asking people to describe how and why some event happened as it did, and what it meant - is the basic methodological tool in humanistic research. Account gathering normally takes place through interview, which can range from the structured 'conversation' of the repertory grid technique (Mair, 1970), through semi-structured interviews which allow the informant to answer freely in reply to specified questions (see Lofland, 1971 ch4; Cicourel, 1964 ch3), to the almost totally unstructured question-and-answer sessions which may take place in participant observation field studies. The purpose of all these kinds of interviews is the same - to uncover the ways the informant makes sense of some event or state of affairs, to gain an entry into their 'phenomenal world'.

Many of the finest examples of interviewing and account gathering in recent times are to be found in the work of journalists such as Tony Parker (1969,1970) and Studs Terkel (1968). However, there are also many social scientists who combine sensitive interviewing with the theoretical and methodological sophistication necessary for scientific work - for example the People and Places Research Group at the University of Surrey (see Canter,1977; Brown and Sime, 1977). Their various projects in environmental psychology involve recording informants' reports of their experiences in domestic fires, in buying a house, in being a patient in a hospital. Other examples of research which has used account gathering

and interviewing are : Laing and Esterson's (1964) research on the families of scizophrenics, Lemert's (1962) study of the process of becoming paranoid, Toch's (1969) investigation of the circumstances of violent crime, Cohen and Taylor's (1972) study of the effects of long-term imprisonment, and Stevenson's (1961) description of the various types of 'spontaneous recovery' from mental illness.

Problem and conflict situations : This category of research method refers to the strategy of putting the person in a special situation or setting a problem whose solution or resolution yields valuable information about that person's way of coping with problems and general 'working assumptions' or 'taken-for-granted background expectancies'. This approach has recently been advocated by DeWaele and Harre(1976), although it is similar in many ways to the 'situational testing' used by Henry Murray and later by the War Office Selection Boards (see Semeonoff,1970, ch6), and also resembles some of the experimental situations created by Kurt Lewin and his associates. In a different area of psychology, we can see the same principle being used by Eleanor Gibson in her famous 'visual cliff' demonstration and by Tom Bower with his 'virtual object' study. In both these demonstrations the infant's solution of the puzzle he is set informs us about otherwise unknowable aspects of his competence. The situation is one which makes explicit an otherwise hidden or taken-for-granted ability.

such problem and conflict situations are, however, not to be seen as experiments in the usual sense. Experiments typically require measurement and control of variables. These puzzles, on the other hand, while giving the researcher control of the 'antecedents of behaviour', allow the person participating in the research to react in whatever way they like. As Garfinkel (1967 p38 , in a phrase borrowed from Herbert Spiegelberg) puts it, these demonstrations are best thought of as being, not experiments proper, but "aids to a sluggish imagination".

Some of the most intriguing and imaginative examples of this technique are in fact due to Garfinkel (1967). His "preference is to start with familiar scenes and ask what can be done to make trouble" (p37). In a now famous series of demonstrations, Garfinkel had his students disrupt conversations or imagine they were boarders in their homes, in order to display the 'seen but unnoticed' background of common-sense understandings which make everyday social interaction possible. This technique is now known as 'Garfinkelling'.

Personal documents: Allport (1942) has suggested that personal documents - autobiographies, diaries, open-ended questionnaires, letters and literary productions - are an important resource in psychological research. While there

has been some use made of this approach in psychiatry, in the sense of having patients write autobiographies (see Farber, 1953) or create artistic productions, little has been done on the research front in recent years. The interest shown in personal documents in the pre-war years, with valuable appraisals of the technique from Dollard (1935) and Blumer (1939) as well as from Allport himself, seems to have waned.

A model of the kind of research which can be done with this method is the study by Allport, Bruner and Jandorf (1941) into the effects on personality of the Nazi revolution of 1933. These researchers conducted a prize competition for essays on the topic "My Life in Germany Before and After January 30, 1933". They received over 200 entries, of which 90 were considered suitable for psychological and sociological analysis. These personal documents were written by fugitives of the Nazi regime. The reader is referred to the original source for demonstration of the fertility of this approach. The researchers themselves noted that "these documents haveyielded insights that no other method of investigation could have yielded" (Allport et al, 1964 p21).

More recent research with personal documents includes the study by Freedman (1974) of the experience of schizophrenia. This researcher examined more than 50 autobiographical books or articles written by schizophrenics during or after their psychotic episodes, and found a wide measure of agreement concerning subjectively experienced perceptual and cognitive disturbances.

personal documents have also been valuable in the study of suicide (see, for example, Farberow and Shneidman, 1961; Alvarez, 1971). Yet, as this passage from Shneidman (1973) testifies, such research is not simple :

".....on the face of it, suicide notes would seem to offer a special window, unparalleled among socio-psychological phenomena, into the thinking and feeling of the deed itself.... And yet, as one reads dozens and hundreds of suicide notes, one finds that many of them tell pretty much the same story. What is most disappointing is that most suicide notes, written at perhaps the most dramatic moment of a person's life, are surprisingly commonplace, banal, even sometimes poignantly pedestrian and dull. It is obviously difficult to write an original suicide note; it is almost impossible to write a note which is really informative or explanatory" (Shneidman, 1973 p380).

Shneidman's pessimism indicates the difficulties involved in using personal documents. They are often only one piece in a whole mosaic which must be decoded, especially, of course, in studies of suicide. And they call on the researcher to somehow struggle through the problems of style and convention in order to arrive at some approximation of the meaning intended by the writer - a meaning which may well be contingent upon the intended audience or other unknown factors. Some of these problems are discussed in Allport (1942). But for an example of the kind of work which can emerge from this source, the reader is advised to consult what remains the most impressive study to have used personal

documents - The Varieties of Religious Experience

by William James (1902).

Public documents: Public documents such as newspapers and magazines, court records and hospital case notes also embody assumptions about motivation, cognition and social life which can be invaluable to the social scientist trying to analyse these settings. Examples of this kind of work are Scheff's (1966) and Nunnally's (1961) studies of the image of mental patients presented by the media and Garfinkel's (1967) exploration of hospital record keeping as a form of social ordering of the reality of the hospital. The whole of Goffman's (1975) recent theoretical work - Frame Analysis - has relied on this kind of material. A thoughtful guide to the exploitation of public documents and library facilities for research purposes is given by Glaser and Strauss (1967 ch7).

Metaphor : Metaphor is similar to the other research techniques touched on so far in that it affords a vehicle through which the research informant can communicate his or her understanding of the world to the researcher. It is with this meaning that the techniques known as 'projective' (see Semeonoff, 1976) can be used in humanistic research. Colour, texture and shape in the Rorschach,

the story in the TAT and the figures in the Lowenfeld World offer the person a metaphor he or she can use to tell us about the world they have constructed for themselves. The proverbs test devised by Bailey and Edwards (1973) is a good example of the deliberate use of metaphor in projective work. Yet this is perhaps still an unorthodox perspective on projective tests. Nevertheless it has been anticipated to some extent by Arnold's (1962) phenomenological approach to the TAT, and by Schachtel's (1967) experiential treatment of the Rorschach. Both Arnold and Schachtel were concerned with the question - what is the person trying to tell us in what they say about the test stimuli? In a very different context, Cohen and Taylor (1972) asked long-term prisoners for their comments on various fictionalised accounts of prison life. This gave the prisoners an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings about prison through the words and images provided by perhaps more articulate writers.

However, metaphor as a research tool is not limited to such situations as these, in which the researcher is consciously supplying or attempting to elicit metaphors. People use metaphors in everyday conversation, and therefore the images and analogies used by individuals and groups can be collected just as readily in field or media research as in laboratory settings. It often turns out that a metaphor will crystallise the meaning of an event - as Cassirer (1946) has put it, in metaphor the range of concepts or experience to which we refer is "distilled into a single point".

Natural experiments : Problem and conflict situations such as those mentioned earlier suffer from being conducted in the special setting of the laboratory. Thus, however realistic they may appear to be, the participant is nevertheless aware that, ultimately, they are only games or tests. Nature, however, provides her own problem and conflict situations from time to time, and these may, within the bounds of ethics and taste, be of interest to the humanistic researcher. Out-of-the-ordinary circumstances such as disaster, war, illness and so on may bring to the surface meanings and assumptions which are submerged in everyday routine. While novelists and dramatists have always known that important issues are often thrown up by extraordinary happenings, social scientists are only beginning to recognise that these events can be useful sources. Examples of work which has been done with this approach are : Lifton's studies of victims of 'thought reform' (Lifton 1961), natural disaster (Lifton and Olson, 1976), and work with Vietnam War veterans (Lifton, 1973), Cohen and Taylor's (1972) look at long-term imprisonment as an experiment in 'psychological survival', Stoller's (1968) research into transsexuals and sexual identity and the work on naturally occurring instances of 'sensory deprivation' (see Lilly, 1956; Miller, 1962). It should be clear that the 'natural experiment' only provides a setting in which useful information can be gathered - other techniques, such as participant observation and interviewing, must be used as well.

Active role playing : The rules for social interaction which prevail within a particular setting are of interest (see Harre and Secord, 1972, especially ch9). It is through his or her perception of and understanding of these rules that a person can act in a way which seems appropriate to the situation and to the needs of others. One means of discovering the structure of such rules is through role playing. That is, it may be difficult, or hazardous, to directly enquire into the rule-structure of a particular setting, or the expectations which accompany a particular role. In these instances it may be useful to attempt to reconstruct the situation or role through active role playing. Even when the setting can be directly studied, this technique may prove to be a valuable source of supplementary information, or a means of checking models discovered through field research.

Mixon (1972), for example, has used role-play techniques to discover the situational cues which set the scene for a particular type of performance. Mixon's research involved reconstructing the Milgram obedience experiments in a non-realistic (ie, obviously role-playing - the shock machine was a drawing on a piece of paper) manner. In this setting, the cues and instructions given by the 'experimenter' were varied, and it was shown that the levels of 'shock' administered varied accordingly.

In a rather different kind of study, although one similarly using role playing, Garfinkel (1967) analysed the strategies

of a transsexual presenting himself as female. He writes :

"the experiences ofintersexed persons permits an appreciation ofbackground relevancies that are otherwise overlooked or difficult to grasp because of their routinised character and because they are so embedded in a background of relevances that are simply 'there' and taken for granted" (Garfinkel, 1967 p 118).

Thus role playing, the attempt to play the part of, or 'pass' as, someone else, can reveal much about what it is like to be that kind of a person. This has long been known by practitioners of 'psychodrama' and other therapies.

And, indeed, Mead has stressed the importance of taking the role of other in the development of the self-concept. A final example of the potency of active role playing as a research technique is the journalistic account of John Howard Griffin (1962) who, in his well-known book Black Like Me, describes how he travelled through the Deep South as a Negro

Introspection : Introspection is a research technique the very mention of which is enough to arouse experimental psychologists' hostilities and suspicions. Boring (1953 p174) expresses these feelings in a mild enough form when he states that - "introspection went out of style....because it had demonstrated no functional use and therefore seemed dull, and also because it was unreliable".

The reinstatement of introspection has been advocated, however, by Bakan (1954,1967). Bakan notes that the demise of introspection ^{was} said to have come about at a time when it was in difficulties - the controversy over 'imageless thoughts' - and Watson appeared with an alternative research programme which might produce less equivocal results. That, at least, is the 'official' version (Boring, 1953). However, Bakan (1954 p106) suggests that :

"in the light of what we have learned from psychoanalysis, a rather simple explanation suggests itself. These investigators were using themselves and each other as subjects. They had struck the unconscious, and particularly unconscious motivation, and had to probe it if they were to make any headway. However, as we know today, probing the unconscious tends to anxiety and resistance; and these investigators simply were not prepared to undergo the necessary personal trials involved".

Bakan is proposing that the methods of psychoanalysis might be allied with the objectives of classical introspection - the discovery of knowledge rather than therapy - to constitute a useful research tool. He argues that we can be aware of such error tendencies as repressing material or supplying socially acceptable material, and take suitable precautions against them. A truly scientific introspection would oscillate "between a free expressive mood ^{and} an analytic mood, with the free expression being the subject of the analysis". (Bakan, 1954 p110). He gives examples of how this might be accomplished.

Introspection appears to have two main uses. The first is in making it possible to do research into experiences which might be difficult to investigate in any other way :

"introspection has its maximum value on those very experiences for which there may be no conspicuous physical stimuli, such as grief, joy, anxiety, depression, exhilaration, etc" (Bakan, 1954 p107).

We might also add that introspection offers a way of looking at the meaning of such experiences. Secondly, introspection can at least yield hypotheses concerning the possible dynamics of such experiences - "the knowledge that a certain dynamic is possible enhances the sensitivity of the psychological observer" (Bakan, 1954 p116).

Action research : Finally, action research must be acknowledged as a useful approach in any science of persons. Many of the methods discussed above require the active co-operation of informants and research participants - they "treat the subject as expert and colleague" to use Mischel's (1977) phrase. Action research (see Clark, 1976) has traditionally attempted to combine research with a commitment to change or improve social conditions in line with the needs and wishes of those directly concerned. This perspective can be profitably assimilated into a wider variety of types of research so increasing the levels of co-operation and

sense of shared purpose between those involved and thereby indirectly increasing the effectiveness of whatever research methods are being used.

These are some of the research methods which might be used by a science of persons, a truly humanistic psychology. The aim of these methods is to construct a description of relevant portion of people's experience. Their acceptability as tools for a humanistic psychology lies in their congruence with the deeper philosophical assumptions of such a science. That is, these methods respect the agency of persons, their being-in-the-world, and attempt to record, not behaviour - which could be anything, the behaviour of organisms, the behaviour of molecules, the behaviour of sand in the wind - but the distinctly human attribute of meaning. Such methods are no guarantee of truth. Unlike the logical positivist, the humanist does not believe that true knowledge results from the blind application of the methods of science. So these methods are best seen as techniques whereby a search for knowledge can be facilitated. Ultimately, the results of research depend on the imagination and good faith of the researcher. The next section describes some of the ways these personal qualities can be augmented by systematic checks and controls.

Checks

One of the most important principles in humanistic research is that of attempting to capture as fully and as sensitively as possible the actual lived experience or actually held values and opinions of informants. This stance is of course very different from the one taken by experimental psychology, where the participant's freedom of action and ability to express his version of what is happening are severely curtailed in the hope of gaining experimental control, certainty and objectively verifiable, 'true' results. And this leads to the question - does humanistic psychology make the mistake of trading off certainty for sensitivity? To what extent can we say that our version of a science of persons will enable the accumulation of knowledge about the world which will be useful for decision making and social policy? Or is humanistic psychology inevitably subjective and unverifiable? To answer these questions we must consider the problem of checks and criteria in this type of research.

The first set of checks occurs at the stage of selection of research participants or informants. The credibility and competence of informants is clearly an important factor in determining the usefulness of accounts. A good informant must be knowledgeable, must have access to the information being sought after, and must be motivated to co-operate (Back, 1956). In humanistic research, these issues are of more concern than matters of sample size, control groups and matching; one full account of an event is worth more than a hundred partial versions.

The methodology of humanistic research, as outlined here, which includes description followed by interpretation, is ideally suited to studying both individual cases and large samples.

Today the vast bulk of research work in the social sciences uses large samples. Presumably the use of large samples and the implicit assumption that experiments be repeatable is an attempt to mimic the physical sciences. This passage from a researcher who has studied one of the most characteristically unrepeatable and individual areas of human experience - mysticism - should serve to put some of these assumptions into perspective :

"it is sometimes argued that a further obstacle to the study of mystical experience is that it is not only irrational and unique but also rare, not easily repeatable, and perhaps not within reach of everybody; hence, so the suggestion goes, such experience should be excluded from the realm of objective knowledge..... (but) In physics experiments like the Michelson-Morley were highly trained men and their experiment is not easily repeatable. True in principle many people could be trained that way, and some might succeed in doing the experiment again. But exactly the same might be said with regard to mystical experiences. Most people are able to learn certain techniques of concentration and in due course submit at least some of the claims of mystics to a test. Not everyone's effort would have the guarantee of a beautiful vision and not everyone would obtain Moksa or Nirvana - but

not everyone would be successful in the Michelson-Morley experiment, or be invited to join the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies" (Staal, 1975 pp57-8).

part of the process of selecting informants is the act of creating a relationship within which research can be carried out. At one time this would have been called 'establishing rapport', but in fact the relationship between researcher and informant or research participant in humanistic research goes far beyond mere questions of rapport. A contract must be entered into in which it is clear to both parties what it is they are contributing to, and getting from the research effort. Certainly an agreement about confidentiality must be part of any such contract, but it also seems necessary to clarify matters such as who the research is for. As Sanford (1970 p10) has put it :

".....we have contributed to the dehumanisation of our research subjects by reducing them to 'respondents' for the sake of enterprises that never yield any benefit to them".

But it is not only for reasons of ethics and dignity (see Cottle, 1975) that we should avoid "enterprises that never yield any benefit" to research informants. It^{is}/also the case that people are not disposed to reveal uncomfortable facts about themselves, or make observations with thoroughness and accuracy, for a project they feel they have no stake in.

DeWaele and Harre (1976) discuss the difference it makes to research participants when the researcher is not an anonymous, high-status 'expert' but is instead someone with whom they are engaged in a shared enterprise. Toch(1968), for example, has pioneered the 'co-researcher' study, and his book contains the most complete description of this technique, which involves employing and paying, as co-researchers, members of the community or social group to be studied. The advantages of co-research include the following - the participant is highly motivated to contribute, he or she is in a position to correct the researcher's gross errors, the researcher is in a good position to judge whether the informant is being honest. These three features are absent from most traditional experimental or psychometric research, and it is of interest to recall the statement made by Willems and Willems (1965 p69-70) in relation to the research described in Chapter 1 : "it may be that the face-to-face presence of the investigator provides a continual reminder to the subject to respond as honestly and carefully as possible".

Of course the existence of a good relationship between researcher and informant is no guarantee of honesty and accuracy. For example, Wax (1952), in an essay which is essential reading for anyone interested in the problem of researcher-informant relationships, writes :

"While it is true that some information will be given freely only to inquirers who are liked and trusted,

a great deal of communication between human beings, whether in field situations or in ordinary life, takes place on a neutral or even hostile level. Inexperienced field workers sometimes err in regarding the statements of friendly informants whom they like as more truthful or more valuable than those of offensive or less engaging individuals. In point of fact, the latter may give more significant information, since informants, like other humans, tend to conceal unpleasantness from those they like, and, conversely, delight in telling the bitter truth to those they dislike" (Wax, 1952 p35).

What the relationship between researcher and informant does make possible, however, is the opportunity for each to test out the other's integrity. As Wax has commented, an inexperienced researcher can be fooled; so can an informant. Humanistic methods at least make it possible for each to use their powers of judgement to settle this matter to their own satisfaction.

What has been said so far is, in a sense, preliminary. We have discussed the selection of informants and the establishing of a contract between them. Both these issues have their contribution to make to the accuracy and authenticity of a study. But the essential part of a study is its description of some part of life. How can we be sure that this description is accurate and authentic? To answer this question we

examine some of the checks used to monitor the content of accounts.

Internal consistency : it is unlikely that an informant will be able to maintain a deception throughout a lengthy report. Thus the internal consistency of an account is evidence for its authenticity.

External corroboration : the content of accounts may be checked against external sources. For example, the research on behaviour in fires carried out by the People and Places Research Group was able to call on forensic and Fire Officers' reports regarding the likely spread and intensity of fires.

Concordance of accounts: the degree of agreement between different reports of the same incident may be evidence for the authenticity of these reports. For example, Lemert's study of the process of becoming paranoid involved reconstruct: int the story of how a patient had come to be so labelled by using the accounts of others on the scene - family, friends, colleagues - to check and augment the patient's own version.

Concordance between different methods : many of the studies mentioned in this chapter have used more than one method. For example, Cohen and Taylor (1972) used accounts, personal and public documents, participant observation and metaphor.

Agreement across methods is strong evidence that the information being gathered is, in some sense, valid.

Negotiation of accounts : it is the task of the researcher to construct an adequate description of the informant's experience or performance. The informant remains at least one criterion of the accuracy of the description. The adequacy of description, therefore, can be checked through negotiation - in two ways. Firstly, while the account is being gathered, perhaps during an interview, the researcher may inquire whether such is the case, or whether the informant is actually saying thatIn this way the researcher can continually check out or negotiate his idea of what the other's experience might be. Secondly, once accounts have been gathered, the researcher can present informants with his overall description, and ask them to comment on it. It is of course necessary to include these comments in the final account or negotiate them further - negotiation is an ongoing process. This is to subscribe to Mair's (1970 p167) proposal to use a "model for enquiry patterned on some of the important features of the sort of activities which constitute conversations".

Recognising an authentic world: of course the actual informants need not be the only judges of the accuracy or

authenticity of a description. We are all capable to some extent of judging whether a description of some area of life is at least credible. Further, we can test the portrayal by using it as a guide to that area - will it serve to help us better understand some group or setting we have never encountered before?

psathas (1973 p12) describes this criterion of adequacy as being a matter of whether -

"the descriptions and accounts of the activities would allow others - not directly knowledgeable as to their occurrences but sharing the same cultural stock of knowledge - to recognise the activities if confronted with them in the life-world after having only read or seen the account presented by the social scientist analyst.....That is, armed with 'only' the knowledge gained by reading the account presented by the observer-scientist, would someone else be able to understand what he was seeing when confronted with the actual life-world reality of the events described?"

There are a further two important checks which should be employed in humanistic research. The first is the 'adversary method' proposed by Levine (1974). Levine suggests that social scientists might learn from the rules of cross-examination and evidence which have been developed in legal systems. This is really a plea to take seriously competing interpretations, versions or theories. Indeed, in research which depends

on accounts from informants, some way must be found to reconcile conflicting accounts. While concordance of accounts may be a criterion for accuracy, it is a rarely attained ideal - witnesses or informants have their own versions of reality, and their own languages for expressing them in.

Further, Taylor (1971) notes that in a science based on interpretation, the only rejoinder to a different interpretation of an incident is an interpretation of that interpretation. This is known as the 'hermeneutical circle'. Levine's 'adversary method' is a practical means by which humanistic researchers can incorporate counter-arguments and objections into their work.

Another crucial feature of humanistic research is the researcher's account of how the research was carried out. It is only through comprehensive knowledge of how a piece of research was carried out that we can decide on important aspects of its authenticity. The researcher must make explicit the controls and operations involved in each stage of the research.

This completes the list of checks and controls available to the humanistic social scientist. It should be clear that a true science of persons is a real possibility - adequate methods and a growing corpus of completed work suggest that there is an emergent alternative paradigm for research in social science. At the same time, however,

much work remains to be done. For example, few studies have made use of the range of checks available. Of course, there is a lack of specialised journals, teaching, or grant-aided projects in this area. But, these matters aside, the value of such methods remains unproven - only the future will tell if this hope of a science of persons will come to fruition.

Making sense of qualitative materials

There remains a stage of the research process about which little has been said - the stage of interpretation, analysis or theorising. As has already been discussed, much useful research can be done with minimal analysis - for example description can be valuable in its own right, and the 'naturalistic research' programme has concentrated on "atheoretical, phenomena centered data" (Barker, 1969, p39).

However, it seems that even for many practical purposes analysis and interpretation are desirable. A good description is one which selects the relevant features of a situation -a complete description of most events would swamp the reader in tedious detail. As Lofland has put it, description is usually analytic anyway :

"even if one explicitly intends not to analyse, in so far as one does not present 'everything' one is engaging in analysis by default. To select some things from a larger body of materials is to make analytic judgements. If that is the case, it is certainly more useful to go on to a conscious process of decision making about what one is doing than to obscure it under the mantle of inarticulate intuition" (Lofland, 1971 p6).

Further, the 'naturalists' notwithstanding, it seems to be the hallmark of science to develop conceptualisations and theories concerning its subject matter. Science typically

goes beyond the information immediately given, it postulates the existence of laws, rules or essences. After all, people do this anyway. Part of the subject matter of a science of persons must be their common-sense theories and conceptualisations. It is the job of the social scientist to provide "an explicit rendering of the structure, order and patterns" of life (Lofland, 1971 p7). While the people being studied may have an implicit or inarticulate understanding of this "structure, order and pattern", they are living it more than analysing it, and there is plenty of scope for the social scientist to clarify and make explicit the meanings involved in everyday action.

But, how is this to be done? How can the tangled mass of field notes, accounts, personal documents and so on that are the materials of qualitative research be moulded into a systematic treatment of a particular topic or problem? It is unnecessary to answer this question in great detail - full descriptions of this process are available in Glaser and Strauss (1967), Lofland (1971) and elsewhere. We will address, instead, some of the issues and general principles involved in this work, bearing in mind that the earlier discussion of interpretation is also relevant here.

One of the first tasks in constructing a description of a piece of social life, one that will be suitable for further analysis, is to discover the division of episodes within the

ongoing pattern of interaction (see Harre and Secord, 1972 p154). It seems to be quite simple for people to agree on what constitutes a particular episode. For example: a study by Dickman (1963) in which people were asked to identify episodes in a film of some social interaction. Not only did Dickman find a large measure of agreement among observers regarding beginning and end points of episodes, but it also seemed that the episodes identified were meaningful - the themes people attributed to episodes always implied a piece of goal-directed activity on the part of the actor.

So, this is the first task in analysis of qualitative information - the identification of meaningful episodes, which leads to a description of events in terms of sequences of acts, and allows initial discovery of any processes at work.

The next stage is categorisation or coding of this information. Some of the practical short-cuts applicable to this stage, for example writing instances on cards and shuffling them into some likely ordering, are described by Lofland (1971) and Glaser and Strauss (1967). What the researcher is basically trying to do is to categorise episodes either in terms abstracted from the language of informants or in terms constructed by the researcher himself. Episodes or incidents are coded in terms of as many categories as possible. By comparing episodes coded similarly, general theoretical properties may emerge. Glaser and Strauss (1967 ch 5) call this the "constant comparative method".

Finally, the researcher must tidy up all these categories into a theoretical model. Deviant categories or episodes must be accounted for, and higher order concepts may be called into play. The analyst must then write the theory - present descriptive material and theoretical analysis in a manner which will make it intelligible to those interested in it - including significant laymen.

Two comments need to be made with respect to this scheme of analysis. Firstly, it represents a use of qualitative material in which theoretical analysis is 'grounded' (Glaser and Strauss) in descriptions of everyday-life. As Glaser and Strauss (1967 p5) put it - "grounded theory is derived from data and then illustrated by characteristic examples of data". Thus it is a way of generating theory which has relevance in terms of actual experience, and which can be translated back into that experience or that situation. This compares with the kind of usage which has often been made of qualitative material - illustration or verification of theories which have been generated or thought up far from the real-life situation. Thus this kind of 'grounded' approach is truly phenomenological, it is a recipe for phenomenological science of persons as opposed to the verificationist treatment of qualitative information, which has all too often been merely a preliminary or supplement to traditional quantitative 'scientific' approaches.

A second comment is that this type of work makes call upon personal qualities of the researcher. Clearly, the

discovery of coding categories is no automatic process, but involves the creative imagination of the analyst. A sensitivity to the nuances of meaning in accounts is required. The researcher must attempt to enter the phenomenal world of informants, to figure out whatever it was they meant when they said or wrote something. And all the time he or she must be aware of his or her own biases and possible areas of blindness. Finally, this approach requires painstaking work. Typically accounts, field notes or films must be read or seen time and time again before their meaning becomes apparent.

Conclusion

A science of persons, a truly humanistic psychology, which is in harmony with the basic tenets of a philosophy of the person, has been described in this chapter.

While even a chapter is too short a space to devote to such an important topic, it is hoped that the reader will have some idea of what such a science would look like, and what it could achieve. Not the least of its achievements might be to give psychological research a measure of dignity and an impetus to find out about things that really matter to people.

To reach back to the end of the first part of this chapter, where it was said that we cannot understand men without knowing them, the conclusion which again presents itself is that the essential feature of a humanistic science, and this is what makes it distinct from a mechanistic or an organismic science, is its insistence on the centrality of the relationship between researcher and person being researched. For example, this passage from Cottle (1975 p25):

"it is a contract essentially of friendship, of mutuality, and not merely one of questioning and answering. It is a contract predicated on a request that persons share moments of their lives.....I go to people, and they give me real as well as symbolic moments of their time. I go, moreover, to speak to them, not strictly to

research a problem or gather material that might elucidate some greater issue of which the other person is merely a convenient example".

This sounds very idealistic. And it is - few researchers will ever achieve the level of sensitivity attained by Cottle. But, even if this is an ideal, it is the way a science of persons must be conducted. As Macmurray (1961 p28) said - "I can know another person as a person only by entering into a personal relation with him". I can know other people as people only by talking to them.

The humanistic researcher, then must remain balanced between the necessity of being in an authentic relationship and the desire to gather knowledge. It is this skill, not the lists of methods, checks and principles set out above, which makes humanistic research possible. The humanistic researcher's most important tool is himself or herself. It is here that humanistic work irreconcilably parts company with other approaches.

CHAPTER 4

THE PERSONAL MEANING OF TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

Introduction

Although meditation is a term that covers a wide variety of practices, from violent physical exercise to silent contemplation, there is some agreement that there exist fundamental processes common to them all (Naranjo, 1972; Naranjo and Ornstein, 1973). Also, it has been claimed that there are similarities between forms of meditation recently introduced from other cultures and religious or even everyday activities found in Western society (Weil, 1972; Berger, 1969; Benson, Beary and Caro, 1974). Thus, while this study is restricted to the experience of practitioners of one school of meditation, Transcendental Meditation, it is hoped that its conclusions and the material presented will be of value to those interested in other forms of meditation and religious experience.

But, more than this, Transcendental Meditation (TM) is a social-psychological phenomenon deserving of attention in its own right. At the social level, the TM movement has grown from nothing in 1958 to its present position, nearly twenty years later, of having perhaps a million supporters in the Western industrial nations, considerable financial holdings, and, not least, some kind of impact on the culture as a whole. At the individual level, many of the people who have become involved with the TM movement report that they are happier and more satisfied with life - they claim to have 'changed', 'developed' or 'grown' as a result of using

this meditation technique. So, the TM phenomenon might well repay study for what it can reveal about social movements or 'personal growth' in general. But, what is TM?

Briefly, TM is a meditation practice originally developed in the Vedic tradition of India and brought to the West by an Indian Guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. The practice basically consists of sitting with eyes closed in a comfortable upright posture for twenty minutes each morning and evening and allowing one's attention to favour a mantra, a Sanskrit word or sound. Initiates into TM undergo a standardised teaching procedure, beginning with an introductory talk, then a ceremony at which the technique is taught, and three follow-up meetings with the teacher. A fee approximately equivalent to three quarters of one week's income is charged. No alterations of life-style, dress or diet are demanded. Teachers of TM themselves undergo a lengthy training programme, and all are personally examined by the leader of the movement, Maharishi, himself. TM is certainly one of the most convenient forms of meditation to study, since it is taught under strictly controlled conditions and its adherents are enthusiastic about 'scientific validation' of their claims concerning its efficacy. At present there are something in the region of 50,000 TM initiates in Britain, while the number in the USA approaches the million mark.

It is of interest that a meditation technique, and indeed whole system of thought, which evolved in one culture could become so central to the lives of members of a very different culture. At least some of the success of TM in bridging this cultural gap must be due to the background of its leader. For not only does Maharishi embody the 'continuity of divine awareness' characteristic of the enlightened man, the guru (see Brent, 1972), but also claims for his own the rationality and objectivity of science. As one follower has written:

"the meditation has been made available in our time by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who in turn attributes his inspiration to his own master. For Maharishi was the closest disciple of a renowned Indian teacher, Swami Brahmananda Sarasvati (1869) - (1953). For most of his life Swami Brahmananda was a strict recluse, but for the last thirteen years or so he was prevailed upon to become Shankaracharya of Jyotir Math, in the Himalayas.....After his master's death Maharishi remained for two years in solitude and then began to teach. He inaugurated the Spiritual Regeneration Movement on a world-wide basis on 31st December 1957" (Campbell, 1973 p10).

Before this, however, Maharishi is alleged to have graduated from Allahabad University in 1942 with a degree in physics (see Robbins and Fisher, 1975), for details of Maharishi's early life). Legend has it that Maharishi was on the verge

of settling into conventional Hindu married life when he met his master and realised he would have to follow the path of devotion. So in Maharishi we have a man who seems to have assimilated both the ancient traditional knowledge of Eastern mysticism and the modern, 'scientific' world-view of Western society. Certainly, in recent years the TM movement has made great efforts to secure 'scientific validation' of its claims. The philosophical side of the TM system is now taught under the name 'Science of Creative Intelligence'. These are two of the ways in which TM attempts to present Vedic ideas in Western terms, and this whole development is made possible by Maharishi's unique personal history.

But at the same time it can be seen that there has been a readiness in Western society to learn from the religious traditions of other cultures. Several commentators have noted that science, bureaucracy, technology, the mass media and all the other trappings of modern industrial society have altered man's sense of who he is and what his place is in the world. Whereas we can imagine that primitive or pre-industrial man lived in a moral world of unquestioning religious belief and a social world in which his identity and status were fixed and stable, modern man is faced with the dilemma of relativism - he must choose his beliefs, he must construct his own identity. So for modern man, the sources of right action and conduct - his beliefs and his concept of self - are problematic as they have never been before.

Moreover, it appears that modern man's 'existential crisis' has come about primarily through the secularisation of society, the diminishing in importance of organised religion. For example, Berger and Kellner (1974 p75) write:

"through most of empirically available human history, religion has played a vital role in providing the overarching canopy of symbols for the meaningful integration of society. The various meanings, values and beliefs operative in a society were ultimately 'held together' in a comprehensive interpretation of reality that related human life to the cosmos as a whole".

This "comprehensive interpretation of reality" once provided by religion has been largely replaced in modern society by the essentially impersonal, ever-changing world-view provided by science. No doubt Berger speaks for many when, commenting on the consequences of the scientific world-view, he writes that "there is nothing very funny about finding oneself stranded, alone, in a remote corner of a universe devoid of human meaning".....

The popular appeal of the TM movement must be seen in this context. The context is one of generalised feelings of alienation, dissatisfaction with present-day ways of life, a sense of insecurity, lack of direction, and even, from time

to time, an awareness of impending disaster. The act of meditating can be seen as an individual bid to escape from this chaos, to find a space to be oneself, outside the demands and routines of everyday life. Yet at the same time TM also helps the person to make sense of this everyday world - its philosophical basis offers a "comprehensive interpretation of reality", an alternative to a baffling "pluralisation of social life-worlds" (Berger, Berger and Kellner, 1974). Finally, it offers the opportunity of doing something positive about the world.

The TM meditator is part of a world-wide network of like-minded people working together to create a better society. The international aspect and sense of growing achievement and impact are expressed in this excerpt from a TM Newsletter:

"Maharishi appeared twice on the nation-wide Merv Griffin show, accompanied by world famous meditators. Two of the books on TM have been best sellers for many successive weeks. The movement now operates a full-scale university campus at Fairfield, Iowa and a television station in California reaching 20,000,000 people. There are 4 residential academies, 2 in New York State and 2 in California. Among the very many items regarding TM in social and rehabilitation programmes is the news that 120 prisoners of the top security wing of Folsom jail are learning at their own request, and along with dozens of famous people in

sport it is estimated that 8% of top league baseball players now meditate" (Scottish Newsletter, Spring 1976).

The meditator's sense of participating in a movement which will bring benefit to the world as a whole are reinforced by the success of, for example, TM-inspired treatment programmes for drug users (see Brautigam, 1971); Benson, 1969). Also, however, it is believed that if there are enough meditators in a community, the personal benefits experienced by actual practitioners will rub off on other members of the community -

"Now that there is a large number of meditators in the world.....the influence of TM will spread far beyond the immediate effects on individual meditators. There is evidence to suggest that if a proportion as low as 1% of a population is meditating, there is a significant effect on the quality of life of the whole community" (Scottish Newsletter, Autumn, 1975).

Hence we can see that part of the personal meaning of TM for individual meditators is its contribution to their well-being by providing a "comprehensive interpretation of reality" and a means through which the world may be made a better place as a by-product of their own development. However, it is important to recognise that meditators themselves do not see things this way. Mention has already been made of "scientific validation' of the effects of TM. This scientific work is

used to reinforce the belief that personal development or growth occurs simply through the technique of meditation and is a result of the altered state of consciousness brought about by regular practice. That is, meditators are told, and many of them believe, that whatever happens to them as a result of meditation is a product of physical change in their physiological make-up caused by the technique. They discount as incidental the effects of belonging to a social group, learning a belief system, and so on.

All this is summed up in a passage from Kanellakos and Bellin (1972 p106) :

"TM....does not require any change in life-style, dress or diet; and if such changes do take place, they are the natural and spontaneous result of the growth of the individual through meditation. Changes of this kind frequently do occur, because the mental process during TM brings about a psychophysiologic shift (ie a new style of functioning of the nervous system), which can be empirically verified and scientifically studied".

Indeed, much of the existing research on Transcendental Meditation has concentrated on the 'physiological correlates' of the meditation state. It is clear that physiological changes do occur when people meditate. Woolfolk (1974) has differentiated between four categories of physiological event in meditation - the electrocortical, electrodermal, respiratory and cardiovascular.

To begin with electrocortical effects of TM, Wallace (1970) and Wallace, Benson and Wilson (1971) report increases in alpha wave trains in the central and frontal regions of the brain. Banquet (1972;1973) similarly analysed EEG records of meditators and found a predominant tendency for wave patterns to shift to slower frequencies.

The effects of meditation of skin resistance have been examined by Wallace (1970) and Wallace, Benson and Wilson (1971), who found an increase of approximately 60% in skin resistance during meditation. Also, Orme-Johnson (1973) showed that GSR habituated more rapidly for meditators than for a control group.

Turning to studies which examined the cardiovascular correlates of the meditation state, Wallace (1970) found a decrease in oxygen consumption of 20% during meditation, Wallace, Benson and Wilson (1971) discovered similar decreases in oxygen consumption and a decrease in respiration rate, and Allison (1970) noted decreases in respiration by approximately 50% compared to a base rate obtained while watching television. Wallace (1970) and Wallace, Benson and Wilson (1971) found a decrease in heart rate during meditation.

These are all the published studies on the physiology of TM. This work has been reviewed by Kanellakos and Lukas (1974) and by Woolfolk (1974). Woolfolk (1974 p1331) concludes that:

"research indicates meditation to be associated with a slowing and increased synchronisation of electrocortical rhythms, an increased or more stable skin resistance, and slower rate of respiration. These changes are all in the direction of lowered arousal and suggest a diminishing of energy metabolism".

This formulation is congruent with the description given by Wallace, Benson and Wilson (1971) of TM as a "wakeful hypometabolic state" - ie a state of consciousness which combines the levels of relaxation associated with sleep or hibernation with an awareness of the world normally absent from these conditions. Indeed, Benson, Beary and Carol (1974) have coined the term "relaxation response" to describe this state.

This interpretation of the physiological correlates of TM is, however, not without difficulties, Watanabe, Shapiro and Schwartz (1972), for example, argue that the research results demand the interpretation that the meditation state is an anoxic state brought about by reduction in oxygen consumption. They note that effects similar to those caused by meditation can be brought about by other situations that reduce the consumption of oxygen - for example high altitudes. Also, Glueck and Stroebel (1975 p35) put forward a theory that meditation effects are due to the quieting of the limbic system.

However, these alternative interpretations do not take issue with the validity of the experimental data per se. On the other hand, a study by Treichel, Clinch and Cran (1973) failed to replicate Wallace, Benson and Wilson's (1971) report that oxygen consumption decreased during meditation. These researchers compared meditators with non-meditating controls who sat in a relaxed manner with eyes closed, and found no difference in oxygen consumption. An as yet unpublished report by Otis, Kannelakos, Lukas and Vassiliadis (1974) similarly failed to replicate the findings of Wallace and colleagues concerning heart rate and EEG rhythms. However, participants in the Otis et al study were considerably less experienced in meditation than those in other experiments. Two further recent studies have failed to replicate earlier claims. Cauthen and Prymak (1977), with a small group of meditators, did not find any significant alterations in skin conductance or respiration. Rogers and Livingstone (1977) similarly detected no changes in base-line (ie resting rather than meditating) levels of physiological indices of relaxation in 17 meditators.

More serious, perhaps, is the accumulating corpus of research which has found no difference between the EEG records of meditators and those of people who are asleep. For example, Younger, Adriance and Berger (1975) took EEG records of 8 experienced meditators and scored them according to "standard sleep-arousal criteria". They found that meditators spent between 0% and 71% of meditation time in stage I or II sleep.

Pagano, Rose, Stivers and Warrenburg (1976) looked at five experienced meditators who either meditated or took naps in different sessions. They were also asked to give their subjective impressions of what happened during meditation sessions or naps. These research participants both reported drowsiness during meditation sessions and produced EEG suggestive of stages II, III or IV sleep. Further, "in several meditations described as typical and relatively deep, considerable amounts of sleep occurred" (Pagano et al, 1976, p309). Finally, Williams and West (1975) offer evidence for the view that the meditation state is one of prolonged drowsiness rather than sleep proper or, for that matter, any separate state of consciousness.

At the moment these results need to be interpreted cautiously. Quite apart from problems in comparing studies using different electrophysiological equipment in different laboratories, with different experimental procedures, there were big variations both between individual meditators and with the same meditators on separate occasions. For example, in the Pagano et al study, one meditator spent no time asleep in one session and 90% of the time asleep in the next. Another difficulty is that meditators report that often they may fall asleep for a short time during meditation if they are particularly tired, so it is to be expected that at least some of the EEG records of meditation should reflect this fact. Also, meditators find it difficult to report on the

'depth' of meditation achieved - the process of meditating is one which militates against this kind of self-observation. Finally, the effects of meditating in the laboratory, and meditating at an unaccustomed time are confounding factors. It has been suggested that the close personal contact Wallace had with his research participants was an aid to overcoming such problems (Kanellakos and Lukas, 1974).

In passing, some mention should be made of the recent 'negative' findings regarding the physiological correlates of TM. While much of the original research was carried out by individuals who were themselves enthusiastic about TM, the recent research has been conducted by those who seem to be more interested in refuting, or at least testing more thoroughly, the early claims made (eg Wallace, 1970). Also, some of these pioneer researchers, in particular Wallace and Orme-Johnson, have become members of the Maharishi International University, and have failed to publish any papers since that time, although MIU is said to have well-equipped laboratories. It is not known whether the absence of reports from these researchers is due to reluctance of journals to publish their work, difficulty in setting up a new institution, or some other reason.

Nevertheless, the studies reviewed above must make us question just how unique the meditation state is - might it not be just as useful to consider it as a particular kind of sleep? This point of view is appealing, especially

in the light of the finding by Taub, Tanguay and Clarkson (1976) that college students who take naps during the day appear to reap the same kind of benefits that are claimed by meditators - increased alertness and calmness. In the end, though, firm conclusions cannot be arrived at on the basis of physiological or behavioural evidence alone. Meditators assert that, most of the time, they are not asleep when they are meditating. The experience of meditating, they say, is distinct from the experience of sleeping or napping. This kind of phenomenological evidence must be respected. After all, we know what we mean by sleep, we do not need EEG machines to tell us when we are asleep. In fact, these machines are in the first place calibrated against subjective reports of sleep state.

And this observation takes us on to another perspective on the physiological changes which occur during meditation. Even if significant physiological events take place, they must still be made sense of by the people undergoing them. At the simplest level, this may consist of a belief in the benefit to be gained from such physiological happenings. As Benson, Beary and Carol (1974 p45) put it : "belief in the technique in question may well be a very important factor in the elicitation of the relaxation response".

This is to say : people do not respond automatically and mechanically to physiological changes in their hormone levels, blood lactate levels, or even brain wave patterns. They must

interpret these bodily events, they must learn how to make sense of them, must become sensitive to what is happening. And then the actual physiological event affects the person's actions through his or her conceptualisation of it. For example, the physiology of pregnancy and labour is presumably the same for all women in all cultures, yet there are vast differences in how these factors - pain, immobility, hormonal changes and so on - are interpreted. While women in some cultures may be back at work within hours, in our culture new mothers are typically taken care of for some time after labour. So we can see that the same physiological event can produce very different behavioural outcomes when the people involved possess contrasting frames of reference or systems of interpretation.

It seems as though all basic physiological needs or motives are expressed only through socially sanctioned patterns of action. Nuttin, for example, talks of the 'canalization' of needs; Allport of the 'functional autonomy of motives'. Two further examples can be offered of the importance of social factors in the fulfilment of biological needs. The first is sleep. In his comprehensive examination of the social meanings of sleep, Aubert(1965) demonstrates that "human sleep is an important social event" (p169). He writes:

"sometimes an individual may fall asleep as an automatic reaction to great exhaustion. Usually, however, falling asleep is not the fulfilling of an immediate biological need, but a result of activities bearing many overt

symptoms of role playing.....Going to sleep usually means going through a number of culturally defined motions, such as dressing in a certain way, modifying light and sound conditions, assuming one of a limited number of postures, closing one's eyes even in darkness, expressing certain emotions and attitudes towards others, and so on. These motions, together with the perceptions of the actual state of sleep, and motions associated with awakening constitute the role of the sleeper. Since childhood most people have been trained to take this role, often with great difficulty. The training of children shows beyond any doubt that sleep at the proper place and time is not a process which is being left to be determined by biological needs alone" (Aubert, 1965 p170).

A second very basic biological function which is channelled through its social meanings is sexuality. Gagnon and Simon (1974 pp1-3) note that :

"at no point is the belief in the natural and universal human more entrenched than in the study of sexuality. The critical significance of reproduction in species survival is made central to a model of man and woman in which biological arrangements are translated into sociocultural imperatives. In consequence, it is not surprising that it is in the study of sexuality that there exists a prepotent concern with the power of

biology and nature as opposed to an understanding of the capacities of social life.....

.....Rarely do we turn from a consideration of the organs themselves to the sources of the meanings that are attached to them, the ways in which the physical activities of sex are learned, and the ways in which these activities are integrated into larger social scripts and social arrangements where meaning and sexual behaviour come together to create sexual conduct".

If such basic human functions as sleep and sexuality are shaped by social factors, what chance is there that an acquired or learned set of physiological events - those associated with meditation - will lead to "natural, and spontaneous" behavioural outcomes? Another source of evidence here is the work on the cognitive alteration of feeling states stemming from Schachter and Singer's (1962) classic experiment. This research work strongly suggests that internal cues arouse evaluative needs which are met by a process of explanation in terms of an external cue (London and Nisbett, 1974). As Schachter (1964 p78) puts it : "given a state of physiological arousal for which an individual has no immediate explanation, he will label this state and describe his feelings in terms of the cognitions available to him".

And of course meditators have no shortage of cognitions, meanings and beliefs in terms of which to make sense of the

internal cues brought about by meditating. It will be the task of this study to describe some of the ways in which the expectations, reasons and stock of knowledge that meditators possess interacts with the physiological event of the meditation act itself to produce the experiences meditators have and the benefits they claim. This is to say that the meaning of bodily events in meditation is not neutral. These bodily events do not lead in any straightforward or "natural" way to the changes in their lives that meditators talk about. The meaning of these events is interpreted and negotiated.

It is worth remembering, in this context, that the physiological event of meditating is caused, in the first place, by the will, or intention, to meditate. It seems that the person begins with the wish or intention to live a better life, and in various ways uses the practice of meditation to help achieve this goal.

Methods

The aim of this study, then, has been to uncover the personal meaning of TM for people actively involved in using this technique. It has been assumed that the meaning, or significance, of elements of TM practice may be explicitly stated by meditators or may be implicit in their actions and attitudes. Thus, while account gathering methods have been predominant, observational approaches have also been used (see Chapter 3). The basic strategy has been to find out what meditators have to say about meditation - their reports on its effects, their ideas, theories and expectations have been recorded. These reports have been brought together to form a description of what happens when people meditate, and this description has been used as a base for further analysis and interpretation.

The information used in this research has been gathered in the following manner : the author was a meditator for more than six years - his observations and experiences have been called upon. This six year period cannot however be regarded as constituting a continuous spell of participant observation. Only in the last two years of this period was the author engaged in formal research on TM; during this spell alone were his interactions with meditators used systematically as research material. At the commencement

of this research work, the author made it clear to all concerned that his role had changed in this way. No hindrance of any kind was put in the way of his inquiries. In fact, those in positions of authority were actively helpful.

The research was based on a TM centre in a Scottish city. The local organisers made address lists and records available. Some interviews were held on TM premises. The local news; letter was used to announce to meditators in the area the existence of the research (it was said to be research into "personality development in meditators") and to encourage co-operation. At one time, for about a year, the author was a member of the organising committee of the centre, and was active in setting up a series of meetings for student meditators. The author also attended residential courses.

Further, open-ended questionnaires were sent to 185 long-term (more than one year since initiation) meditators. This group was composed of all such meditators in the centre's catchment area who were still in communication with the TM movement (ie those for whom quarterly Newsletters were not returned by the Post Office). Of these, 72 questionnaires were returned, along with one letter and a postcard. These documents provide most of the quotations used below. The author also talked with 20 people beginning meditation, some 6 of whom wrote about their experiences at some length.

There were also informal, unstructured interviews with more than 30 meditators, of whom 12 were close friends or family and whose testimony is therefore, one might hope, of particular reliability. In addition, a small group of six people who have given up TM were also interviewed informally. Public documents such as newspaper articles, Newsletters, movement handouts and books have also been consulted.

Finally, a paper on this research was prepared for meditators and widely distributed among them. Resulting from this, five lengthy communications have been received, and these comments have been assimilated into this version of the work. This research, however, is a dialogue which continues, and much more in the way of feedback is expected from this source.

Copies of all letters and questionnaires sent to meditators, and the paper prepared for them, are available in Appendix B.

Meditators' accounts

What do meditators have to say about meditation?

Before presenting a more detailed analysis of meditators' accounts it might be useful to give an example of the kind of material being worked with. Here are the replies of four experienced meditators to the question - "what effect do you think TM has had on the way you are and the way you live your life?"

"From the very moment I started the effect was most marked - for myself I felt as if I had been travelling down a very unpleasant road and suddenly I had been completely turned round and was walking confidently toward the light. I had just returned to part-time teaching and found it shattering - I came home grey with fatigue and could only lie down and rest even after ½ day session and TM was my last hope to keep on my job/avoid another breakdown. My husband observed 'I don't know what on earth you do in there but it certainly has done wonders'. My 15 year old daughter was so impressed that she became a meditator herself".

"My emotional characteristics have become much more positive and stabilised. ie less depression, inertia etc although it still happens sometimes in a qualified way. TM has also helped me to purify my system to a great extent ie stopping smoking and narcotics - although not immediately on learning TM, only when a certain stage was reached the necessity went. Also have stopped

almost completely eating meat. My life is lived on a much more spontaneous level, my head being less crammed with thoughts. Things are less hard to accomplish in general - ie work etc. Things that are not particularly interesting are not 'boring' in the same way.....

The way I live my life has altered subtly in that I am also ie I perceive myself as part of the environment, both being as real as the other and both affecting each other. My life is therefore lived at a greater level of enjoyment of the unique experience of change and subtle variations. I feel that I am living while others are surviving although I still feel that I waste too much time in non-productive actions".

"1. SELF CONFIDENCE; am generally more assured.

Hands shake less, breathing less disturbed in tense situations. Better in public situations, although still nervous when called on to speak publicly etc.

2. ENERGY; probably more stamina or merely distribute energy better instead of having 'bursts'. Excess energy, rather disturbing eg after rounding, because not dissimilar to experiences when hypermanic.

3. ORDER; approach to study, paperwork, etc much more ordered. First degree, before learnt to meditate, more taxing and stressful than present postgrad. course.

4. VALUES; some values changed, eg no longer eat meat, but probably going in these directions anyway.

5. SENSITIVITY; I think I am more sensitive to nature and all senses are finer. Reactions more consistent, less subjective.

6. EMOTIONS; much more independent emotionally and take misfortunes with no pain. Find this disturbing as I feel very isolated, but am rarely upset or depressed".

"It has made me able to cope with a long hard day of study - I feel TM stops me from getting 'screwed-up' as I used to get with the worries of being able to cope with only 24 hours a day and the seeming need for 30 hours. I seem to be able to organise myself more and apply logic more often and more determinedly.

The feeling of being more able to apply myself and feeling relaxed and able to cope with anything applies across the board and not only to studying.

There was a time before I started meditating where the endlessness of work and the increase of burdens of responsibility, ie money matters, house management, being able to cope with the emotionalism of fellow students who were finding their studies overpowering, began to wear me down to the extent that I was physically tired almost permanently. I feel that I am still pressurised in the same manner, but since starting TM the tiredness and apathy have left me".

These testimonies are typical of meditators' accounts.

A salient feature of the accounts gathered was the enthusiasm displayed for TM. For example, one woman who had in fact given up doing meditation, wrote at the end of her account - "I think I'll go off and meditate now that I remember all the benefits of TM." However, there was also a large measure of agreement in the accounts regarding what were seen as being the main effects attributable to practice of TM. These 'main effects', as perceived by meditators, were :

Less anxiety

"Don't worry so much....Not so scared and worried"

"I have become a calmer person. I do not worry and take everything as it comes"

"Less anxious and strung up. This is very noticeable"

"No I never get angry or worry, never visit my doctor or take any drugs"

"It has probably made me calmer and less tense"

Greater energy

Meditators typically report that they are less fatigued and have more energy after meditating. As one said :

"sometimes in the day when feeling tense five or ten minutes (meditating) will have an effect of lessening nervous tension and giving more energy for a short time". Or : "I did find that TM released great energy.....through the day I noticed that my physical energy tremendously increased eg I trotted up to tutorials on the 8th floor....whereas before I had always taken the lift".

Problem solving became easier

"I'd say that I was more able to adapt immediately to a change of circumstances or some new demands put in the way"

".....can stand on the outside of situations"

".....things are less hard to accomplish in general"

Feeling of being relaxed

"It made me relax"

"I do feel more relaxed"

".....helps me to relax when feeling tense and gives a feeling of well-being afterwards"

Better organised life

"I'd say that I live a more regulated life, or, at least, that TM makes it easier to live a regulated life autonomously"

"I feel calmer, hence better able to decide and discriminate between how to divide my time"

"I seem to be able to organise myself more and apply logic more often and more determinedly".

These are just a few of the statements made by meditators. The five 'main effects' mentioned here - less anxiety, greater energy, easier problem-solving, feeling of relaxation and a better organised life - are found again and again in meditators' reports. Other effects are also reported - these will be

described later. Two comments must be made in relation to the 'main effects', however. The first is that these effects can only be understood in terms of benefit. There is no hint of misgiving or doubt in such claims. Hardly surprising, then, that one widely used TM poster is headed "How to Enjoy the Rest of your Life".

The second point is that these claims are universal. While it is sometimes not so easy to decide whether an informant is talking about anxiety, for example, or problem-solving, it is nevertheless clear from inspection of accounts that the theme of these 'main effects' is present in all of them in some form. But, more than that, this theme dominates the results of research conducted on the effects of TM on personality.

All studies of the effects of TM on various personality variables are agreed on one point - all find positive changes. On all personality dimensions measured, meditators change in socially-desirable directions. Taking only published studies which have tested people before and after learning TM, and which have used control groups, the following personality changes have been reported over periods of approximately three months; increased self-actualisation (Seeman, Nidich and Banta 1969), more internal locus of control (Stek and Bass, 1973), less field dependence (Pelletier, 1974), less anxiety and more internal locus of control and self-actualisation (Hjelle, 1974), greater self-actualisation (Ferguson and Gowan, 1975),

decrease in neuroticism (Williams, in press), less physical and social inadequacy, neuroticism, depression and rigidity and more self-esteem, ego-strength and self-actualisation (van den Berg and Mulder, 1976), increased intelligence and lowered levels of neuroticism (Tjoa, 1975). In addition, Glueck and Stroebel (1975) reported positive personality changes in psychiatric patients treated with TM.

The significance of these research findings is highly problematic. One problem is that meditators are, as has already been suggested, eager to participate in research which will 'verify' the benefits they claim. This point is also made in the two reviews of this literature by Smith, J(1975) and by Kanellakos and Lukas (1974). Another problem lies with the paper-and-pencil psychometric tests used in these studies. As we saw in Chapter 1, these tests call heavily upon the testee's common-sense notions or implicit theories. Finally, the relationship between research and the beliefs or behaviour of the people being studied is an unusual one with TM. Much use is made of research results in selling and advertising TM. Posters display charts of research results. People who come to introductory talks are given pamphlets containing reviews of research work. All this has some impact, as we shall see. The extent to which research results influence the behaviour being investigated is, then, a factor to be taken into consideration when evaluating this work.

yet these research findings do back up the accounts of local meditators to the extent that it seems as though meditators all over the world report the same sort of effects - reduction in anxiety or neuroticism, 'self-actualisation', less tension and so on. And also, the fact that the themes identified in meditators' accounts have emerged in the work of researchers using different methods is certainly evidence that these ideas are at least very central constructs in the TM system. They are ways of looking at the world or making sense of behaviour that are used by many meditators. This interpretation is also reinforced by the recognition that constructs such as 'less anxious' or 'relaxed' are general, higher-order constructs. They are constructs used by all meditators in a vague fashion. This aspect of these ideas becomes more apparent when we look at some of the comments made by sub-groups of meditators concerning more specific effects.

One observation which is made by many meditators is that soon after they take up TM their tolerance for alcohol becomes reduced. A similar kind of effect is the also quite frequent report that meditators tend towards vegetarianism.

Another claim that was made several times in meditators' accounts was the assertion that physical health improved dramatically as a result of meditating. For example, one woman reported that "I seldom have migraine headaches now.

Before becoming a meditator I suffered very badly from this".

Or : "I would also say that my general health has improved".

An experience which was not very frequently reported spontaneously by meditators, but which many recognised and admitted to when asked, is the experience of recovering 'repressed' or archaic material during meditation. That is, meditators will remember scenes from childhood which they say they had not thought about for years. They also state that these were scenes of some emotional content. Sometimes such memories are experienced as divorced from the feelings which would normally be associated with them. This aspect of meditation will be dealt with later. Perhaps linked in some way to such events are the numerous reports of muscle twitching during meditation and the less frequent reports of full body tremors, bursing into tears, or breathing difficulties.

A last category of meditation effects are reported feelings of detachment and emotional isolation (see Kennedy 1976). One woman reported that she "got feelings of 'detachment' from everyday affairs", and another wrote that "once I was meditating and felt as if I was outside myself and could see myself quite clearly - as 'other'". Other meditators said that on occasion they have felt that they were observing themselves doing something, that they were not involved in the part they were playing at that moment.

These additional effects of meditation - in terms of diet, health and anomalous experiences - are not reported by all meditators or reflected in the results of psychometric research. However, they are of interest in that they allow a more complete description of what happens to meditators. Those who had turned their backs on TM were also interviewed in case they might be able to add to the completeness of the description being pieced together. However, little useful information was gained from this source. Most of the people who had given up did so merely because nothing much seemed to be happening to them rather than because of any special kind of negative experience. However, some people do give up as a result of the kind of experiences described above - recovery of repressed material, sobbing and the like. Nevertheless, many who continue with meditation also have such experiences. As we shall see, the important factor seems to be how these experiences are understood and put into context.

This section has attempted to bring together a wide range of meditators' accounts, to discover what it is they have to say about meditation. These reports must now be taken as a basis for analysis and interpretation. To begin with, we shall see that an examination of the process of becoming a meditator and doing TM regularly will take us a long way towards understanding why meditators should report the effects described here.

Becoming a meditator

The process by which people become meditators can tell us a lot about what it means to meditate. The initial contact with the TM movement, the person's reasons for following up this contact, and the means by which he or she becomes a member of this new social group are all important factors in shaping the experience the person has when actually meditating. To bring to light some of these issues, the open-ended questionnaire sent to meditators contained the following questions : 'how did you find out about TM?' and 'why do you think you decided to learn TM?'

Analysis of the 72 replies received indicates that 57% of this group of experienced meditators found out about TM through personal contact with someone else who meditated - either a friend or professional person who meditated such as a yoga teacher or doctor. The remaining 43% learned about TM by reading newspaper or magazine articles, watching a TV programme, spotting an advertisement or poster, or dropping in on an introductory talk. A detailed breakdown of sources of contact with TM is given below.

Source of first contact

Friend or family member who meditated	50%
Yoga teacher or doctor	7%
Poster/advertisement/leaflet	21%
Article/book/TV programme	16%
Introductory talk	6%

Total no. of informants: 72

It appears to be the case, then, that most people who become meditators already know quite a bit about TM - from friends, advisors, or information media - even before they are exposed to the introductory talk which precedes initiation. It is also of interest that many of those who attend these introductory talks, and who decide to start TM, do not ask questions about it at the time. Some of them, it would appear, have made up their minds even at this stage that meditation is likely to be of benefit to them. But even those who have no such expectations may be impressed with the person giving the talk. For example, one meditator has written:

"what decided me to learn the meditation was not so much what was said as the quality of the two speakers. One of them in particular gave such an impression of vitality and happiness that I could not doubt that he was speaking the truth". (Campbell, 1973 pp27-28).

People who begin TM are well prepared for it. They often have high hopes for benefit, based either on their reading, contacts with friends or advisors, or the image presented by the meditation teacher giving the introductory talk. Of course, it is highly likely that only those who suppose it will benefit them are going to follow up their initial interest in the technique - the substantial cost of learning TM will discourage those with only a passing interest or curiosity. But, what are their reasons for taking up TM?

What is it that these people see in TM which attracts them, and what is it about them which leads to these, rather than thousands of others, becoming meditators?

Both experienced meditators and those about to be initiated were asked to write about their reasons for taking up TM. The reports from experienced meditators, which provide the basis for the analysis presented below, may be biased in the sense that they could be re-interpreting their initial reasons for starting in the light of subsequent experience. However, the reasons they give are similar to those given by the smaller group of beginning meditators interviewed.

The most frequently given reason for taking up TM was that it appeared to be a way of relaxing and reducing tension or stress. Informants mentioned "pressure of work", believed it "might help nerves" or admitted to be "going through a period of emotional instability". This reason was often accompanied by another - the person had seen the effect of TM on a friend.

A third type of reason given was that of seeking personal growth or self-realisation. People in this category wrote that they thought TM would be "an avenue to unexplored parts of the self" or mentioned their "desire for self-improvement". Fourthly, some said they were curious. For another group of meditators, the scientific evidence was an important reason for their learning TM. Some said that TM seemed a natural

follow-on from their reading and interest in Yoga and Eastern religion. Finally, a seventh group comprised those who claimed they started TM "in the hope of a transcendental experience", to fathom the enigma of creation" or because they "wanted to find God". There were also idiosyncratic reasons - for example, "intuition". The relative frequency of each of these categories of reason is given below.

Reasons for taking up TM

To reduce stress; pressure at work	49%
Personal growth and self-realisation	10.5%
Curiosity	10%
Its effect on a friend	8.5%
Follow-on from Yoga or reading	8.5%
Seeking inner peace/God/higher states	8.5%
Scientific evidence	5%

Total no. of informants: 68

Total no. of reasons given : 82

It seems clear that the most frequently offered reason for learning TM parallels the reported main effects of actually meditating - these people see meditation primarily as a way of reducing stress and tension, relieving anxiety and helping them to relax. As we shall see later, there certainly appear to be processes that happen during meditation which reduce anxiety. However, the new meditator's expectations of and hope for personal benefit

of this kind also have a part to play in leading him or her to interpret what happens during meditation in this light.

The initial contact, and the person's reasons for following up that initial contact, are important first steps on the road to becoming a meditator. These background factors have been briefly described above. Further analysis of this material will follow, but before moving to that task, some other features of the group of people who are drawn towards TM demand attention.

Going back more deeply into the lives of people who begin meditating, we find that for many the decision to take up TM was taken at a time of personal crisis. For example: "it was my last hope to keep my job/avoid another breakdown". Others talked about wanting to move away from the life-style they had adopted - "I wanted to give up drinking". One man wrote: "I took up meditation immediately before coming tofrom.....; it was a 'cusp' of greater significance of any other event in my life, and it precipitated me into a better style of life than ever before, with the (more or less) constant hope of improvement

in almost every respect, from the ability to genuinely care about other people to the ability to do jigsaws better". A few mentioned that they had been seeing a psychiatrist or were on "tranquillisers" before TM. There were some working through the effects

of recent divorce or separation. Finally, for many students who started, TM appeared to offer some hope and comfort in unfamiliar and lonely university environment. It is difficult to be sure of how many people came to meditation from a background of personal life crisis - not all of them would recognise the events as such, and inquiry concerning such matters would need to be extremely rigorous to cover all the possible areas of life which might be affected. Nevertheless, the evidence from those meditators who were interviewed in greatest depth indicates that a life crisis appears to be an important background factor in many cases.

The vast majority of meditators encountered in the course of this study might be categorised 'middle-class'. The open-ended questionnaire asked meditators to give occupation details, and the most frequent given occupations were : student, lecturer, professional or para-professional, housewife or civil servant. All age groups were represented, the largest single group being students.

Apart from these very general educational and social class variables, there were wide differences in the people who seemed to find TM beneficial. Introvert, extravert, disturbed and stable are all to be seen at TM meetings. What little psychometric research there is either shows no difference between those about to start TM and matched controls on various personality variables (Orme-Johnson, 1973); Seeman, Nidich and Banta, 1973; Stek and Bass, 1973) or shows that

those starting meditation are slightly more neurotic (Williams et al, in press). The 'neuroticism' of meditators on psychometric tests is predictable enough in the light of their interest in Eastern religions, seeking help for tension at work, emerging from life crises and so on. The kind of generalisation which psychometric research produces is seen to be inappropriate as a characterisation of 'the meditator' when we make actual observations of the people who go to meditation centres, and discover that every conceivable type of person turns up at introductory talks and may go on to learn, and claim benefits from, the technique itself. This is not to say that there may not be aspects of meditators' personalities which could tell us something about why they take it up and how it works for them. It is just that these have yet to be discovered. There are, however, some tantalising clues - for example a large proportion of meditators are highly musical.

But what does all this mean? Is there any way we can bring together and make sense of these background factors? A framework within which this information can be put can be found in a model constructed by Lofland and Stark (1965) to account for the adoption by individuals of a "deviant perspective". They were interested to trace the process by which people came to give up one ordered view of the world for another. Their model is a useful one in the context of asking how it is that people come to take up TM.

The first stage in the process as hypothesised by Lofland and Stark is the would-be initiate's experience of a tension or discrepancy between the actual circumstances of his or her life and what he or she would consider as the ideal. It is clear that many meditators have felt such a tension. One wrote - "I wasn't very satisfied with myself and needed changing". As can be seen from the kind of reasons meditators gave for starting TM, the idea of moving closer towards some goal or ideal is very prevalent - reports of wanting to reduce stress, achieve personal growth, or find inner peace, suggest that the person is not satisfied with his or her present way of life, or at least is attempting to improve it.

But, as Lofland and Stark point out, there are many ways of dealing with such tensions. Many people would take their problems to some psychiatric or medical agency, or perhaps locate their difficulties in society as a whole and therefore engage in political activity. For the person to turn from choice to an organisation such as the TM movement requires they have a pre-disposition to look for religious or similar kinds of solutions for their tensions, rather than psychiatric or political ones. So, Lofland and Stark suggest, people who become involved in 'deviant perspectives' such as TM, will often have a history of interest and involvement in similar types of organisation. For example, in their study, they found that the converts of a millenarian cult were often individuals who had grown up in religious homes and who had rejected conventional Christianity while still searching for a more acceptable substitute. Lofland and Stark define

this personal pre-disposition as being in a state of 'seeker: ship' - the person perceives himself as being a religious seeker and interested in religious matters.

Again, this model seems to fit the information we have about meditators. When we look at how meditators heard about TM in the first place, and why it was they began meditating, we see that many had been interested in Eastern religions, Yoga, and so on. Also, a significant number of meditators had a background of Christian belief. Many from both these religious traditions said that they saw TM as a way of experiencing mystical states they had read only about. Even after beginning TM, for many individuals the religious quest did not end. Some mentioned in the questionnaires that they had taken up Yoga since starting TM. It was clear from talking to others that their interest in the Occult continued, and perhaps even deepened, since TM is in a sense an introduction to non-Western systems of thought, it is a meditative practice that does not require the change of life-style and discipline which makes Westerners reluctant to investigate other, similar approaches. So TM was a channel for religious seekership, sometimes in new directions, sometimes familiar ones.

However, there were also meditators who were seekers of a kind, but who had little previous contact with religious groups. These individuals, mainly belonging to younger age groups, had used drugs rather than religious practices to bring about self-transformation. Many of these people

were looking for a means to bring about 'altered states of consciousness' through TM. It is generally assumed in the TM movement as a whole that its massive growth has been due in part to the widespread exposure to hallucinogenic drugs among young people. These drugs are said to not only open the 'gates of perception' but also implant the idea that states of mind are dependent on states of the body. As one experienced meditator put it:

".....people who have used consciousness-expanding drugs are intimately aware of the link-up between physiology and states of consciousness and are therefore more inclined to respond to TM..... than 'religious mystics' who think of mystical experience as something ethereal and divorced from the state of the body".

There is also evidence from other sources that many of those who take up TM enter this sub-culture from the drug one. For example, surveys of people learning TM show that many were users of marijuana but lost interest in drugs once they started meditating (Shafii, Lavelly and Jaffe, 1974; Wallace, Benson, Gattozzi and Luce, 1971). Also, studies of drugtakers suggest that some leave this world for the world of meditation. In his study of English drugtakers, Plant(1975) writes:

"some groups of individuals became attracted to religious cults, which sometimes involved a rejection of drugtakingI knew one group of students who were all frequent

users of hallucinogenic drugs and who claimed they derived profound mystical experiences through these drugs.....within a short period of time the group, who all lived in the same building, became members of a religious sect which disapproved of the use of drugs. Overnight, virtually, all drugtaking ceased and several of the males had their hair cut short as an outward sign of their metamorphosis. All drug-oriented literature was discarded and was replaced by religious pamphlets and books on mysticism and meditation. In addition, posters of musical stars were taken down and a shrine to the newly espoused religious leaders was erected....."(Plant, 1975, p118).

The existence of tension between actual and ideal, and an interest in religious solutions, are background factors which set the scene for entry into the TM world. Entry proper is often precipitated by some crisis. As Lofland and Stark(1965) put it, there is a turning point in the person's life, in Esterson's (1970) phrase, a 'developmental moment', which makes change not only possible but necessary. Lofland and Stark(1965 p870) sum this up well when they write that :

"the significance of these various turning points is that they increased the pre-convert's awareness of and desire to take some action about his problems,

at the same time giving him a new opportunity to do so.

Turning points were situations in which old obligations and lines of action were diminished and new involvements became desirable and possible".

A further factor in the process of becoming a meditator appears to be the influence of what Lofland and Stark call 'affective bonds' between the would-be meditator and people who have already become meditators. As we have seen, many meditators say they took up TM because of the advice or example given by friends, family members or other significant figures. Sometimes the recruit merely observes the effects of TM - for example the woman who wrote that she "witnessed the benefits to my brother over three years". Or more directly persuasive tactics may be tried - "my friend.... tried to tell me about it, but I refused to listen for years", "a friend told me about it and gave me a book to read". In a sense, as Lofland and Stark (p871) put it, coming to believe a world-view such as the TM one is indeed "coming to accept the opinions of one's friends".

The other side of this facet is the dimension of friendships with people who are not interested in TM. This may cause problems for the meditator, especially when those involved are spouses or sharing living accommodation, as we shall see later. However, for many meditators there were few intimate friends on the scene to hold them back. Many of

the university students who took up TM, for example, had recently come to college and had yet to build up any very intimate relationships. And, of course, for others learning TM was an opportunity to leave old friendships and patterns of life behind. The author of a research report on the effectiveness of TM in treating drug abuse, noted that "meditation opened up opportunities for social contacts without drugs.....and break with previous role expectations" (Brautigam, 1971 p9).

What is being said here, then, is that the decision to learn TM must be seen in the context of the person's life as a whole. Learning TM is a means to fulfilling certain projects in which the person is involved. The individual who learns to meditate is in a state of intentionality characterised by a wish to change, or improve, or develop, his or her life. Meditation is seen as a way of achieving such a goal. It comes to be seen as such primarily through the example of other people, but also to some extent through reading and a background of interest in such matters. A turning point, or life crisis, dramatises or emphasises whatever it is that individual senses he or she is lacking, the person becomes aware of these tensions, and acts - learns to meditate. When we think about what it means to meditate, therefore, we must take these factors into consideration. Every time the person sits down to meditate, that activity is in part an outcome of all these needs and interests. When the meditator reflects on what meditation is to him, he sees it in this

context of making life better. And yet these matters are typically very much taken for granted, implicit, the meditator seeing first the immediate meaning of his meditation, what it brings him in day-to-day living. This deeper meaning of the meditation act is on the horizon, to use Schutz's word. To retrieve this meaning from that horizon is, however, a necessary step in reconstructing the full significance of meditation.

Another layer of the meaning of TM for those who practice it can be dug out of the description of being initiated. Given that the individual has found out about TM from friends, advertisements, books or television, and given that he or she wishes to learn this technique, what happens next?

In brief, what happens is that the would-be meditator attends an introductory talk, often held in a TM Centre but possibly also conducted in a church hall, university lecture theatre, community centre, hotel etc. This talk is in two parts. In the first part the meditation teacher giving the talk describes the history of the TM movement, its aims, the mechanics of meditation and the benefits to be gained from it. There are questions. At the end of the question period the teacher asks those who intend to learn the technique to stay. After the others have left (some people attend several introductory talks before deciding to start) the teachers may go into more detail about the technique, if there are further questions but primarily uses this time to arrange

times for initiation. The would-be meditators fill in a form at this point in which they are asked such things as their psychiatric history and whether they use drugs. People who are receiving psychiatric help are told to discuss the matter of starting TM with their doctor before going any further. Those who use drugs are given instructions to stay free of them for a specified period before being initiated. These matters are discussed privately with the initiator during a brief interview. The meditators - to - be are also told what they will be charged (approximately three-quarters of one week's income) and what they must bring to the initiation ceremony.

The initiation ceremony usually takes place within the fort: night following the introductory talk. It consists of a short ceremony conducted in Sanskrit by the initiator and using the symbolic gifts brought by the learner - fruit, flowers and a new white handkerchief. At the end of the ceremony the person is taught how to meditate - he or she is instructed in the use of a mantra, or sound and the correct posture, breathing and attitude of mind required for correct meditation. The person then meditates alone. After this meditation the initiate is asked by the teacher to describe the experience he or she has had. The teacher may at this point repeat the initial instructions and give recommendations on how the new meditator should proceed with the technique at home.

The initiate has three further meetings with the teacher

on subsequent days. These meetings may be group meetings, if there are a group of people being taught at the same time. The purpose of the meetings is to check that initiates are meditating correctly and to impart more information about the technique and its philosophical background.

This, then, is how people learn to do TM. It is a process in which the initiate is exposed to the great faith that the teacher has in this technique, and in the learner's ability to master it and benefit from it. The first meditation in particular, but also to some extent the following communal meditations at checking meetings, are often reported as being profoundly relaxing and liberating experiences -- new sides of their being may be revealed or it may simply be "the first time I've felt relaxed in ten years".

However, for many meditators this is only the beginning. There is a whole career structure open to those interested in the particular kind of spiritual or personal growth offered by the TM movement. The first step in this career is to move from "new" to "experienced" meditator status. This distinction - between "new" and "experienced" meditators - is revealed in various forms throughout the TM movement.

For example, special group meetings are arranged for the former and they are gently discouraged from attending meetings intended for their more experienced colleagues where more advanced ideas are discussed. The rationale appears to be

that new meditators are still learning how to use the technique properly, whereas 'old hands' are less likely to want to talk about basic problems such as finding privacy and peace for meditation, knowing when to stop meditating, and so on. So the "new" - "experienced" dichotomy seems to be a pragmatic one from the point of view of meditation teachers. Yet from the point of view of the initiate it appears as though he still has some way to go before he can truly see himself as a meditator. From his perspective there is a barrier which can only be overcome by meditating regularly, going on courses and the like. And when he has reached the other side of the barrier he knows he has "arrived" in the TM movement. The achievement of "experienced meditators" status, however informally it may be bestowed, functions both to motivate the beginner and to provide him with a measure of his progress towards the final goal.

This first task - that of learning to use meditation over a period of time - is only one stage in the career of the meditator. The experienced meditator is encouraged to take 'rounding' and 'SCI' courses, learn advanced techniques and train to be a checker and eventually a teacher of meditation. These options are described below.

'Rounding' courses: These are residential courses lasting for between three and seven days and usually conducted in some quiet rural setting such as a convent, monastery, country hotel or TM - owned centre. During these courses meditators

are expected to meditate four to six times a day rather than the usual twice, and are taught yoga and breathing exercises which are done between meditations. This programme is supervised by a meditation teacher. In addition, emphasis is placed on rest and relaxation - the course is designed to be a complete retreat from the worries or pleasures of everyday life. Finally, tape or video - recordings of talks given by Maharishi are played and discussed.

'SCI'Courses: Courses in the 'science of Creative Intelligence, the philosophical and theoretical system expounded by Maharishi. The basic teaching material used in these courses consists of a set of video-tapes of Maharishi.

'Advanced techniques' : Additional meditation techniques, taught after a short ceremony by certain senior meditation teachers during rounding courses.

'Checking' training: Experienced meditators may learn to check the correctness of others' meditation. The would-be checker must pass a stiff examination before being permitted to carry out this function.

'Teacher' training : A lengthy course of instruction in the philosophy and techniques of TM. Those who aspire to become meditation teachers (initiators) must undergo at least one year of full-time training ending in personal examination by the leader of the movement, Maharishi.

In addition, there are a variety of roles for meditators associated less with the spiritual than with the organisational side of the movement. For example, there is now in most areas a TM Centre - a flat or house used for introductory talks, initiations and so on. The administration of the Centre is the responsibility of a committee formed of experienced meditators. Members will be elected to secretarial, financial, publicity and other positions.

What is the significance of this process of becoming a meditator and taking the first steps along the path of the meditator's career? The importance of these social factors becomes obvious when we remember that people do not merely learn to meditate - they also become meditators. This role of meditator becomes a part of their identity, it becomes part of the way they deal with the world, and perhaps even the way the world deals with them. Meditators gradually learn to internalise the values of the TM movement and the various stages in the process of becoming a meditator offer opportunities for this kind of learning. If the initiation ceremony itself marks a turning point or milestone in the meditator's life, then later aspects of the process of becoming a meditator provide challenges which can themselves serve to mark out the course towards a new self.

(Glaser and Strauss (1967)) and Strauss (1969) use the term "status passage" to describe the kind of self-transformation that meditators undertake on moving through the various ...

stages on the road to enlightenment. The meditator gains in status within the TM movement as he meets and overcomes the challenges at each stage. One of the means by which the novice is helped on his way/^{is}through coaching. Those who have already been through this process give advice and encouragement to their successors. As we have already seen, the first hurdle, that of deciding to learn TM, is often only cleared with the support of friends or family who are already meditators. But many of the subsequent difficulties that meditators encounter are also dealt with by coaching during group meetings and 'rounding' courses.

There are three kinds of difficulty which the beginning meditator faces and which are resolved through coaching or negotiation.

These are:

- 1) Physical sensations such as twitching, tremors, breathing difficulties, feelings of detachedness, or depersonalisation, tiredness, mood swings, tears or unwelcome thought content.
- 2) Problems in finding privacy and space within a household in order to meditate.
- 3) Discovering what are the benefits that are being gained.

By examining these three areas of difficulty reported by meditators we shall discover the importance of coaching and negotiation in the process of becoming a meditator.

The first category refers to a whole set of experiences which meditators have which may not appear on the face of it to be related. They are, however, within the TM world-view, all examples of 'unstressing'. The TM theory is that we all carry around in our nervous systems stresses which have accumulated as a result of living in a manner which is out of harmony with the way the world is. As people meditate, their nervous systems become 'purified', and this stress is released. Stress-release may take many forms - twitching and the other activities listed above would all be considered as examples of stress being released.

What are these phenomena? Whether or not the theory of 'unstressing' holds water is difficult to decide, although it appears to be consistent with the approach to psychosomatic disorder pioneered by Selye (1974). However, we can start from the realisation that these phenomena all consist of alterations in the felt experiencing of the body. While some of these changes in body awareness may have deeper psychological significance (see Schilder, 1950), there may be simpler explanations. For example, the similarities between the meditation state and sleep were outlined above. And certainly at an experiential level, twitching and dream-like thought content are occurrences we associate with sleep. But, further, some of the other effects, such as depersonalisation, are similar to those reported by those who have undergone lengthy periods of sensory deprivation (see Note 1).

This analogy is strengthened by the observation that more of such effects are reported during long meditations on courses, and meditators are cautioned against meditating for longer than the prescribed time in order to avoid just such hazards.

Whatever the reason, these bodily experiences occur as a result of meditation, and they demand interpretation. As Schachter(1964 p78) would put it, they constitute "a state of physiological arousal for which (the) individual has no immediate explanation". These incidents are enigmatic for novice meditators - their meaning must be negotiated. This negotiation and interpretation takes place during the first day of learning to meditate, when the initiate has meetings with his or her teacher, at later group meditation meetings, and on courses. On these occasions, the meditator is taught to accept such happenings, and, indeed, welcome them as signs of progress. Here is one meditator's account of such an episode :

".....was unlucky enough to have some kind of physical breathing difficulty which carried on to become a psychosomatic problem. Became very upset, couldn't meditate as the breathing becomes very shallow and this set off the feeling of not being able to breathe. Have gradually got over it - my friends and the people on the course helped me and am now not frightened by the symptom.....the teacher explained about it releasing stress".

What happens, then, is that when these physical symptoms are reported, the manner in which they are dealt with by teachers or experienced meditators is likely to reinforce the initiate's belief in the efficacy of TM. The teacher is not surprised by anything the new meditator might report - there are a complete set of instructions, which must be committed to memory, which the meditation teacher or the 'checker' has for dealing with all eventualities. So the initiate gains confidence from thinking he or she is in the hands of people who know what they are doing. Also, at these times the teacher's great faith in TM, and the optimistic, happy image he or she presents, will also have an effect. Finally, the values implicit in the TM approach to life - detachment, calm, creativity, tolerance and so on - are communicated in the way the teacher handles difficult queries. This is particularly noticeable in group meetings, where they may be individuals intent on demolishing the TM system, or who insist on asking idiosyncratic questions. These people are invariably treated with genuine personal respect. It comes across that while their questions may not make sense, they are accepted as people. In ways like this the essential passivity, acceptance and tolerance of the TM world-view is communicated.

The second category of difficulty meditators report - that of claiming privacy - is also of interest. Here again, the way that such problems are handled by teachers and experienced meditators is a model of the TM approach to

life. But this kind of difficulty is significant in a different respect - it represents a testing-out of the meditator's new image of herself. Taking the role of a meditator does not necessarily involve performing successfully at the TM centre. Many of the hardest aspects of the new role are those in relation to others in one's life. Many of those who give up TM appear to do so because of the impossibility of negotiating an adequate level of peace and quiet for meditating with the people they live with. One woman who was enthusiastic about the effects of TM wrote - "I stopped meditating because I could no longer find a quiet corner". The struggle to make this personal space can bring other issues in relationship to the surface :

"I am aware now, more than ever before, of the need for more personal privacy. I become resentful when I am needlessly interrupted during my own pursuits. I guess what I'm really saying is that I have been a bit of a push-over in the past and now feel in the need of a little more respect".

There were many reports of families or flatmates not accepting the meditator's request for silence during meditation times. The meditator's announcement that he or she is going off to meditate can sometimes meet with a quizzical hostility which can either contribute to that individual giving up, or, on the other hand, identifying that little bit more strongly with TM. Similarly, the struggle to keep to the TM schedule -

to meditate in the morning and the evening - is a test of the novice's commitment. These are problems which are often brought up by initiates in early group meetings. Their resolution is another sign of the person's increasing competence as a meditator.

The third problem which meditators talk about is that of discovering what good it is doing them. One man wrote a few days after being initiated :

".....incident which sticks out happened on the third day of TM. My car broke down at traffic lights and there were many other cars held up. The time was 8.30 am and I was already late for work. In 'normal' circumstances this would have been an extremely stressful situation for me, but in fact I quite placidly accepted the predicament and resolved it".

This incident is a highly typical example of the kind of effect reported by newly initiated meditators. It describes exactly what a meditator would be expected to do in that situation - "placidly accept the predicament and resolve it". It represents a very rapid adoption of the role of meditator.

Incidents like these are reported in the group meetings which initiates have, and are approved by the teacher as paradigm cases of the sort of effect TM should have. Reports that "orgasm is no longer such a mind-bending experience" are not

treated so seriously. There is, to some extent, a selective filtering of the events of the day, some episodes being taken as evidence of progress and other equally enigmatic ones being left unexplained. After all, the man who made the report reproduced above might have had the same experience the day before starting TM and put it down to just being in a good mood, it was a lovely morning, or whatever. But this is not to say that there are ^{no} real effects on people's conduct resulting from TM. It is only to point out one of the ways new meditators piece together the story of what is happening to them - by negotiating with others to produce a credible and, in this case, creditable account. As Goffman (1974) puts it, people attempt to make some sort of sense out of everyday life experience by putting a frame round it, by organising all kinds of incidents in terms of certain themes. He writes :

"what is presented by an individual concerning himself and his world is so much an abstraction, a self-defensive argument, a careful selection from a multitude of facts, that the best that can be done with this sort of thing is to say that it is a lay dramatist's scenario employing himself as a character and a somewhat supportable reading of the past" (Goffman, 1974 p558).

The meditator's 'reading' of the benefits TM is bringing him, then, is a "selection from a multitude of facts" which is guided and informed by more experienced meditators and teachers, by the things they talk about, what they expect him to say,

what he has read, and so on.

Coaching and negotiation of the meaning of meditation experiences take place at group meetings, which are held weekly at the centre, and on residential courses. At these times the meditator is exposed to a community which supports certain values and standards of conduct. Moreover, he or she is exposed to a community which has its own language, and many sessions are spent clarifying the meaning of 'transcending', 'unstressing', 'cosmic consciousness' and so on. One of the means by which the usage of these terms is learnt is through listening to tapes of Maharishi. Most group meetings are built around such tapes, and group meditation.

The group meditation is said by many to be the reason they go to group meetings. It is claimed that group, as opposed to individual meditation, is deeper and more satisfying. Certainly, meditating with a group of people appears to provide a feeling of "experiential communality" (Bebout, 1974), a basic sense of being with others which is highly valued by meditators. The meditation group is also a supportive group, particularly in relation to meditation-related difficulties, as has been discussed above, but in other ways as well. Thus the group meetings fulfil what has been called the basic requirement for "affectively positive interaction with others" (Henderson, 1977).

Finally, at meetings other meditators, especially teachers, may be taken as models. We construct our sense of self from models of all kinds, and many of the people involved with the TM centre were remarkable by any standards - their artistic and personal achievements, style and knowledge surely had some effect on those who were seeking change and development in their lives.

In this section we have identified some of the ways that people become meditators. It seems as though this process starts with the person deciding that he or she would like to change in certain ways. The TM movement provides a social setting in which he or she finds support for this attempt at self-transformation. Meditation provides certain experiences and ways of interpreting them. It offers confirmation of progress towards the final goal. The group of meditators is a place where the person is valued and an organisation through which his energies may be channelled to good effect. These are some of the meanings associated with the role of meditator.

It would be misleading to give the impression that meditators agree in full with this analysis. Some are, indeed, very skeptical. They say that the social aspect of TM is minimal, and that in fact, there are many people who seem to gain much benefit from TM who never go near a meditation centre. One man reported that for the first year after being initiated,

he lived in a town where there were no other meditators, and he had no contact whatsoever with the TM movement. Some meditators would argue, then, that the whole organisation is merely a by-product of the necessity to teach TM in a controlled manner, and bears no relationship to the effects the technique is said to have on people.

Now, there are clearly degrees of involvement which people have with the TM movement. This study, in using as its main group of informants people contacted through, or met at, a TM centre, might be in danger of missing those who meditate quite happily in isolation. On the other hand, those who were seen who had least contact with other meditators, because they lived in places where there was little TM presence, or because they did not have the time or inclination to come to group meetings, nevertheless appeared to have a great interest in what was going on in the movement, and what kind of experience other meditators were having - when they had the chance to do so. Indeed, some made long journeys from remote regions to attend meetings and courses. It seems that those who do not actively take part in movement events still like to know that there is a group of like-minded people somewhere, a resource they could call upon if they needed to.

Also, the social organisation of the TM movement is extremely loosely-knit. There is no pressure on members to take up courses or come to meetings, unlike, for example, the Scientology or other movements. There are no rules for diet,

life-style or dress. So, in one sense it can be said that the TM social group is not sharply defined. But this is not to say that it does not exist. As we have seen, the whole process of becoming a meditator is one which shapes the experiences the person has when he or she meditates. When the person meditates, he or she is affirming his or her membership in a social group, and his or her progress from a state of crisis to a happier future. These kinds of meanings are in the background of what TM means to people. So the meditator is certainly a member of a group with a certain world-view and set of values. But there are other processes at work too, and it is these we now turn.

The experience of meditating

The meditation act itself is of great significance.

When we examine the experience of meditating, we discover that much of what TM means to the people who practice this technique can be accounted for through careful description of what appears to happen during meditation.

TM is a form of mantra meditation. That is, the meditator is taught how to use a mantra, a meaningless Sanskrit word or sound, in order to reach certain states of consciousness. The mantra, once given to the meditator, is never to be repeated aloud to another person, and it becomes, for the meditator, a powerful symbol of their inner life, as well as of their allegiance to a social movement and system of thought. (Note 2).

If the mantra takes on great personal significance for the meditator through its participation in this personally important ritual of meditating, then the place where the meditation is done may also acquire such a meaning. While it is possible to meditate in all kinds of surroundings, on buses and trains, out of doors, and so on, many meditators like to define the more clearly the boundaries of this personal area. It is an area which becomes, in Goffman's (1971) words, one of the "territories of the self". It becomes -

"somehow central to the subjective sense that the individual has concerning his selfhood, his ego the parts of himself with which he identifies his positive feelings". (Goffman, 1971 p60).

Rooms in meditation centres and private homes which are often used for meditating are said to acquire an atmosphere of stillness which makes meditating in these places powerful and effective. One might say that these rooms take on the feel of churches and other places of worship.

But what happens when someone meditates? What is the experience like? First of all, the person chooses as quiet a place as possible, where the chances of interruption are slight, and sits with a straight back, and eyes closed, for twenty minutes. At the end of this time, the eyes are slowly opened, the person sits still for a minute or two, and then carries on with his or her everyday business. The externally observable behaviour, then, is unremarkable. The inner experience is more complex.

While meditating, the person may be aware of the following: thoughts, images, memories, feelings in the body and external stimulation. The individual may sometimes fall asleep and awaken with the realisation that he or she has been sleeping. The person will also from time to time be giving attention to the mantra. The mantra, this meaningless sound, is repeated or repeats itself during the meditation. The meditator has been instructed to return his attention to the mantra when he notices he is no longer thinking it. On the other hand, he has also been told not to force the mantra, not to repeat it compulsively. So, the meditation takes place at a point of balance between voluntary and

involuntary mental activity, somewhere between thinking and listening, and consists of thoughts or images of various kinds, followed by the mantra, followed by more thoughts, and so on.

Maharishi (1969 p470) has this to say about the experience of meditating:

"the technique may be defined as turning the attention towards the subtlest levels of thought until the mind transcends the experience of the subtlest state of the thought and arrives at the source of thought.....

A thought-impulse starts from the silent creative centre within, as a bubble starts from the bottom of the sea. As it rises, it becomes larger; arriving at the conscious level of the mind, it becomes large enough to be appreciated as a thought, and from there it turns into speech and action. Turning the attention inwards takes the mind from a thought at the conscious level to the finer states of the thought until the mind arrives at the source of thought. This inward march of the mind results in the expansion of the conscious mind".

Goleman (1972 p487) puts it this way:

"with the inward turning of attention in meditation, the meditator becomes keenly aware of the random chaos characteristic of thoughts in the waking state. The train of thought is endless, stops nowhere, and has no destination. The meditator witnesses the flow of

which is essentially one of being outside the everyday world. And it is of interest that if prolonged for too long a period, meditation can produce feelings of depersonalisation and detachment, feelings of being outside the world in an unpleasant, unwelcome, too extreme, fashion, But normally the feeling is merely one of temporary retreat.

Meditators use words like 'restful', 'peaceful', 'relaxing', and 'tranquil' to describe the experience of peace which is often found in meditation. This feeling becomes something which meditators anticipate : "when I have missed a session I feel annoyed and slightly at odds with the world because I have been 'thwarted'. I now look forward to my sessions each day...." It is also a feeling which seems to be carried around during the day, an always available reminder of the possibilities of life. And one man, writing about the ways he thought TM was effective, commented that it might be :

".....simply the memory of a degree of inner peace, little though it be. You actually remember that you don't have to let the furious cataract of your internal dialogue run away with you".

A woman suggested that :

"the conscious effort of setting aside 20 minutes a day to experience 'stillness' underlines what we set out to do, ie bring more tranquility into our lives. Unconsciously, some of the stillness we experience during meditation spills over into our everyday lives".

Often, however, the experience of meditation is one of witnessing a succession of images, thoughts and feelings of varying levels of intensity and meaningfulness. For example, there may be a primary awareness of an uncomfortable posture, or memories of commonplace everyday events. At the other extreme, memories of emotionally significant events which had been repressed or forgotten, or feelings associated with current circumstances, may also be experienced. Sometimes these feelings may spill over into tears:

".....after meditating for approximately 10 minutes
.....I burst into uncontrollable sobbing which lasted for about 2 minutes followed by very deep sighing and a great sense of relief....."

The woman who made this statement does not mention any thought content associated with this expression of feeling. Such is often the case. On occasion, however, the feelings appear to accompany memories of specific events :

"some of the old material which comes up.....(goes) back several years, and even sometimes back to childhood. This very old material generally carries a fairly high affective charge.....it is sometimes strong enough to be depressing or to cause anxiety for a few minutes" (Tart, 1971 p137).

When powerful feelings are experienced during meditation, the meditator is instructed to accept them and, once they

have passed, attend to the mantra once more. What seems to happen, therefore, is that the emotions or feelings associated with an incident are discharged or expressed, leaving the person able to appraise or assimilate that memory. (Tart(1971 p137) uses the phrase "processing of unfinished psychic business" to describe these experiences. Glueck and Stroebel(1975 p316) write:

"during meditation, thoughts and ideas may appear that are ordinarily repressed, such as intense hostile-aggressive drives, murderous impulses, and, occasionally, libidinal ideation. An impressive aspect of this phenomenon is that, during the meditation the intense emotional affect that would ordinarily accompany this ideation, eg when obtained by free association, seems to be markedly reduced or almost absent".

In passing, the reference above to free association may bring to mind the strong resemblance between Freud's instructions to his patients to free associate 'uncritically' and the passive, witnessing attitude demanded for successful meditation. However, it would be more correct to say, Glueck and Stroebel, that emotional affect becomes markedly reduced. There appears to be a process by which the individual achieves a state of emotional equilibrium, by 'sitting-out' or waiting for the emotional storm to pass. And often this is not easy - some at least of the people who give up TM do so because it uncovers and brings to the surface feelings they are not ready to confront.

Two examples are given, both from women who turned to TM as an adjunct to psychiatric help. One wrote that she was being treated by a psychiatrist for an "acute depressive illness", and that :

"I tried meditating on a number of occasions, but this seemed to intensify the depression. I have therefore not meditated since.

.....sometimes waves of sensation come over one as if deep seated anxieties are rising to the surface leaving the self clean and pure".

Another woman reported similar problems, but suggested that meditating, while unpleasant at times, did help her to work through such difficulties :

"TM helped me to get over a nervous breakdown, which was building up before : I began meditating and which was probably much less serious than it might have been because I meditated. It may also have brought the problems to the surface, and made me face them all at once, which wasn't so good, because I just couldn't cope then. However, I'm fine now, and meditation helped me recover.....

.....if you have something bothering you, its much better that it comes up during meditation, and not while you're trying to deal with other things at the same time. That way you can think about it more clearly, and come to a soluticn more easily".

But how is it that meditation can bring to awareness such

material? To begin with a simple reply to this question, the person is put in a situation - that of sitting silently for 20 minutes - which is, one might suppose, certain to make him or her feel frustrated or anxious sooner or later. The meditator, however, has been taught to accept whatever happens during this period, whereas the non-meditator would react in ways designed to maintain his control of the world, he would attempt to repress, or deny the anxiety, therefore perpetuating it. This may be a simple model of how the meditator comes to feel emotions and work through them in meditation.

Yet, the meditator does not merely have feelings which correspond to current exigencies. Sometimes these feelings appear to represent "deep seated anxieties". How is it that such content, which would not normally be available to consciousness, emerges during meditation? This phenomenon can be more readily understood with the help of the theory of 'experiencing' developed by Gendlin(1962;)

Gendlin's contribution has been to clarify the relationship between feeling, meaning and symbolisation. What follows is a summary of work published in several places (Gendlin,1962; 1964,1966,1974).

Gendlin begins with the observation that "at any momentone can refer directly to an inwardly felt datum" (Gendlin,1964 p111). This inner sensing Gendlin calls the

"direct referent", and he suggests that this direct referent contains meaning :

"at first it may seem that experiencing is simply the inward sense of our body, its tension or its well-being. Yet, upon further reflection, we can notice that only in this direct sensing do we have the meanings of what we say and think. For, without our 'feel' of the meaning, verbal symbols are only noises (or sound images of noises)" (Gendlin1964 p112).

Gendlin is here suggesting that there is a relationship between feeling and meaning such that words or other symbols get their meaning from the feelings associated with them. Sometimes the word may be an accurate symbolisation of a feeling state. Gendlin says that when this happens, when feeling and symbol coincide, we are being explicit, we are saying exactly what we mean. More often, however, there are many meanings implicit in a verbalisation, there are feelings which are not symbolised in the statement. When this happens, it seems to people that there is a lot left unsaid. Or, to put it another way, our experiencing is incomplete, we have not been able to express what we meant and so we are not able to move on from that feeling. We have a feeling which we cannot symbolise. Gendlin has attempted to explain how it is that in psychotherapy, the therapist helps the client symbolise and complete feelings which were not being expressed. Briefly, Gendlin suggests the therapist can do this by encouraging the client to stay with the feelings,

partly by building up a relationship of trust with the client, and then offering the person symbols which carry forward the client's experiencing.

What Gendlin is saying is that the feelings which people take to the therapist - that they are depressed, that there is something missing in their life, and so on - can be dealt with only by staying with them and exploring the meanings implicit in them. He suggests that a therapist is necessary for this kind of process because, when alone it is too easy for the person to run over and over the feeling without result, to deny it, repress it or to project it on to someone else.

The kind of effect which Gendlin describes as coming from the symbolisation of a felt meaning which was conceptually vague but definite as a feeling is very similar to the kind of release reported by meditators. He has observed great feelings of relief, a realisation that something has changed, an acceptance of previously repressed attitudes or emotions, an availability of lost memories. The psychotherapy situation is one in which these aspects are often formally worked out and made sense of in terms of some system, but Gendlin notes that this "opening-up" or "dawning" is primary, and intellectual understanding or 'insight' come later. He writes :

".....some of the foregoing observations have been termed by others as 'insight'. I believe that this

is a misnomer.....insight and understanding are the results, the by-products, of this process, as a few of its very many changed aspects call attention to themselves". (Gendlin,1964, p120).

It certainly seems that the experiences meditators report of confronting and re-claiming repressed memories or feelings are similar to those reported by psychotherapy clients. But, how can the meditation process facilitate the symbolisation of implicit meanings? The key to this problem seems to be in the role of the mantra in meditation. The meditator, as we know, is instructed to return to the mantra when he or she notices that other thoughts are present. We can suppose that this return to the mantra is equivalent to the therapist's keeping the client with the feeling. While the person is repeating the mantra, or, perhaps, listening to the mantra repeating itself, he or she is with whatever feelings he or she might have. As the meanings implicit in that feeling begin to come to awareness, presumably a train of thought is set in motion, perhaps a denial or rationalisation, and the actual felt meaning is lost. But then the person returns to the mantra, and is again able to be with the feeling. It may be in this way that meditation with a mantra can help individuals in the unfolding of meanings and the working-through of feelings. The relaxed posture and time set aside for meditating ensures that the person stays with the task, and the mantra ensures that he can stay with the feeling.

The kinds of effect which have been accounted for here in terms of a theory of experiencing, have also been compared to those produced by systematic desensitisation (see Goleman, 1972). In systematic desensitisation, the person is taught how to relax and then encouraged to imagine himself in various anxiety-eliciting situations. The anxiety response is therefore put into conflict with a relaxation response. By starting with less anxiety-evoking stimuli, and then working up to more and more fearful scenes, the person comes to master his fears. Very similar effects appear to occur in meditation. As Goleman (1972 p488) puts it :

"in meditation, relaxation is deep, the hierarchy of thoughts is innately experience-encompassing, and self-observation conditions are such that inner feedback for behaviour change is optimal. It is natural, global self-desensitisation".

There are two of the ways in which the meditation experience can be seen to produce the kinds of benefits that meditators claim - less anxiety, and an increased ability to approach problems dispassionately. These effects flow, to some extent, from the opportunity meditation gives for dealing with the emotional aspect of problems. However, as we have already mentioned, to meditate is to step outside the everyday world. It is a "withdrawal", to use Macmurray's (1961) word. The act of meditating cuts across the routines of

everyday life, it is a private and sacred area within that world. And this aspect of meditation has its own meaning and its own part to play in the reduction of anxiety and in the discovery of enhanced coping skills reported by meditators.

When we talk about anxiety we refer to three areas of experience that anxious people typically encounter in their daily lives. These are: distorted time experience, heightened emotionality, and compulsive thoughts. Thus, when we say that someone is anxious we mean that, in the first place, they are unable to confront current reality to the extent they are involved with events that have happened or those that are about to happen. Berne (1974) uses the term "reach-back" to describe the habit of anticipating future events, and "after-burn" to describe the effects of allowing some episode to remain in one's thoughts long after it should have been dealt with and forgotten. So anxious people are often either waiting or remembering. There may be too much time, leading to despair and boredom, or there may be too little, leading to frenzy and fatigue, or paralysis. This, then, is the first everyday-life aspect of anxiety - distorted time experience.

But of course such time distortion is associated with particular thoughts or ideas. Anxiety is often translated in colloquial terms as 'worry', with the implication that there is something 'about' which one is worried, either a future event for which one entertains 'catastrophic

expectations', or a past transaction which is in some way incomplete. In either case, the anxious person repeats over and over again scenes, ideas or conducts an internal dialogue which prevents the ongoing flow of current experiencing and relation to the world.

This kind of repetition is different from mere rehearsal, daydreaming or reminiscing, for two reasons. The first is its compulsive quality. These thoughts are experienced as invading the consciousness of the anxious person and are not easily banished. Secondly, they are accompanied by unpleasant bodily feelings - various degrees of muscular tension, headache, twitching and so on. This is the aspect of anxiety we have labelled 'heightened emotionality', which appears to be discharged in certain ways discussed above.

Thus the whole person is involved in being anxious. The personal accomplishments of remembering, of thinking, of feeling, are all involved in the experiencing of anxiety. So, when meditators claim that they are "less anxious and strung up" or that they "don't worry so much", and when these claims are backed up by psychological research and by observation of meditators, we can begin to understand how this might happen by looking at how the experience of meditating interferes or conflicts with the experience of being anxious. When people meditate they construct routines and experiences for themselves, which replace anxiety routines and experiences. How do they do this?

Meditators typically use at least some of their meditation period making plans and agendas for the time ahead. It would be a mistake to overemphasise this aspect of meditation - meditators say that it is far from being their primary aim. However it does happen and it seems to have the effect of enabling them to put the concerns of timetabling, sorting out priorities and so on into the background to some extent and allow them, as many put it, "to live each day as it comes".

In addition, many meditators report that doing TM facilitates problem solving. It seems as though the relaxed attitude of 'witnessing' and 'letting thoughts come', and the essential passivity of meditation allows the kind of 'playing with the ideas' or 'regression in service of the ego' which has been shown to be an important part of the process of creative problem solving. Also, the space set aside for meditating gives the person an area in which problems can be identified and tackled. As one meditator said:

".....if you have something bothering you, its much better that it comes up during meditation and not while you're trying to deal with other things at the same time. That way you can think about it more easily and come to a solution more easily".

These two functions of the meditation experience - planning and solving problems - contribute to reduction in anxiety in the sense that they conflict with the anxious person's

efforts to distort time. After all, it is more difficult to worry about what is going to happen if it is already worked out. A problem resolved is one which does not persist.

The sense of being able to attend better to the salient features of problems, the essentials, which many meditators report, and which is backed up by research on a method of meditation similar to TM (see Linden, 1973), is perhaps better understood in the light of certain observations on the art of writing poetry. Stephen Spender writes that :

"the problem of creative writing is essentially one of concentration, and the supposed eccentricities of poets are usually due to mechanical habits or rituals developed in order to concentrate.(it) is different from the kind of concentration required for working out a sum. It is a focusing of the attention in a special way, so that the poet is aware of all the implications and possible developments of his idea...

.....De la Mare once said to me that he thought the desire to smoke when writing poetry arose from a need, not of a stimulus, but to canalise a distracting leak of his attention away from his writing towards the distraction which is always present in one's environment". (Spender, 1952 p113).

This is another way we can understand the mantra - it "canalises a distracting leak of attention".

What conclusions can be drawn about the experience of meditation? What meaning or significance does the experience we have described have for meditators? There appear to be two aspects of this experience which have meaning. The first is the existence of the mantra and the means of using it. This constitutes ^a personal skill which meditators have, and which they learn to use properly, as we saw, through coaching and negotiation. Meditators use this skill to help them overcome everyday problems.

But the mantra, although a powerful tool in itself, is only a means to an end. This end, the second sense in which the experience of meditation has meaning, is to produce in the meditation experience the interplay of values on which the TM movement is built. The act of meditation, then, symbolises the meditator's attitude towards life, and towards self, and this is its primary significance. The act of sitting passively, waiting for an inner silence, expecting the clouds to clear, typifies the meditator's approach to life as a whole.

Conclusions

Our discussions have taken us through much different territory. The TM movement as a social force and as an organisation with a history and a future, the process by which people become meditators, and, finally, the experience of meditating itself, have all been examined with a view to discovering what each contributes to the total meaning of the meditation act for the individual meditator.

Our final conclusion must be this : TM provides the meditator with an 'image of life' and also a role and the various means by which such a role can be sustained. The meditation experience itself, we saw, constitutes an arena in which the values of the TM movement are dramatised. The experience of meditating is one in which the person can see him or her self in the terms made available by TM language and philosophy.

The benefits which are reported by meditators can then be seen as flowing from the new identity which can be attained through meditating. Meditation makes possible, through the skills it teaches and the roles it ascribes, the development of certain personal powers. We might say that the meditator allows himself to be more relaxed, more aware, better at solving problems. He is given permission by the TM world-view to go ahead and develop these powers to the limits of his ability. Other powers, those of anger,

or assertiveness, or independent, critical thought, are given a lower priority. Of course, we speak here of those who are most involved in this movement. The majority allow themselves to be transformed by the TM experience, and step back from it, retaining whatever it is they have a mind to keep. It is believed that perhaps as many as 50% of people who begin TM give up within a year.

But this is to talk only of benefits. There is another sense in which can be said that people do TM for its intrinsic appeal. That is, the experience of meditating, the interplay of meaning and value in the arena that is the meditation act, appears to be an experience which is aesthetically satisfying to many. We have talked about "inner silence", the "memory of a degree of inner peace". These, as much as benefits, are the reasons why people continue to meditate.

CHAPTER 5

THE CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY IN THE BASIC
ENCOUNTER GROUP

Introduction

The idea of the basic encounter group appears to have developed separately in different centres in the years following World War II. Perhaps the best known beginning was in the social science laboratories set up by Kurt Lewin in 1946 (see Back, 1972, 1974; Benne, 1964). These labs were intended to give educators, social workers and other professionals "training in human relations". It was discovered, however, that the more formal aspects of the training programme were of less interest than the unstructured discussion groups where various issues brought up in other sessions were explored. Gradually these small groups became the core of what was to become the National Training Laboratory at Bethel, Maine and which began functioning in 1947, shortly after Lewin's death. NTL became the pioneer of small group work in the USA, setting up branches in other parts of the country and training many of the group leaders who were to contribute to the spread of the small group as a social movement during the late 50's and early 60's.

At the same time, in the immediate post-war years, the psychiatrist W.R. Bion was developing small group methods for use, in the first place, with psychiatric patients (see Bion, 1961). The Tavistock Institute as a centre for education in group dynamics grew out of Bion's work and thinking, and represents a distinct approach to and tradition in group work.

In the early 1950's, also, Carl Rogers and his colleagues at the University of Chicago were experimenting with small groups as a means of training counsellors for the Veterans Administration (see Rogers, 1969). This work was to lead to the establishment of 'non-directive' groups, what Rogers has called 'basic encounter' groups, by Rogers and others influenced by his 'person-centred' philosophy.

Finally, the Psychodrama technique, originally devised by J. Moreno in the 1930's, was imported to the USA at around about the same time. Many of the techniques pioneered by Moreno have found their way into other group-work approaches, particularly the Gestalt Therapy of Perls and Schutz. These latter figures were members of the Esalen Institute, the most prestigious of the Californian 'growth' centres set up in the early 1960's to fulfil the demand for group experiences (see Schutz, 1967).

Thus the historical picture is a fairly complex one. It certainly seems as though the encounter or T (Training) group movement filled a gap in Western, specifically American, culture. The rapid penetration of the group experience though American social life is documented by Back (1972,1973). In Britain and Europe the picture is slightly different. While there do exist organisations which offer the intensive group experience to members of the public, these do not exist on anything like the scale found in the USA. The better established institutions such as the Tavistock Institute

concentrate solely on professional training. It is also of interest that while groups have achieved a certain popularity, albeit minimal compared to the situation in the USA, in Britain, Holland and Germany, one market which has proved impossible to break into is France.

Each of the approaches mentioned above has its own rationale and way of working with groups. Yet most group leaders have had experience with various approaches and are thus, to a greater or lesser degree, eclectic in their outlook. Partly this is due to the fact that there are few accredited training courses for leaders, and little supervision of what leaders do once they have received training. It is hardly surprising, then, that in their extensive comparative study, Lieberman, Yalom and Miles (1973) found that the description group leaders gave themselves bore little relationship to their actual activities.

Therefore it is difficult to characterise the typical encounter group, T-group or 'sensitivity' group. Perhaps it can be best described as a setting in which people attempt to communicate with each other as honestly and openly as they can. However, further than this, any definition must run into contradictions. In some groups the leader may take an active, initiatory role, while in others he or she will be 'non-directive'. The group may even be leaderless. Some groups have rules, others do not. Members may be strangers or indeed all belong to the same organisation. And so on.

This study describes what happened at two encounter group workshops held in Britain in the summer of 1975 and the summer of 1976. The unique flavour of these events should be apparent in what is written below. Yet, in the light of what has been said about the history and circumstances of the encounter group movement, certain comments are necessary.

These workshops were staffed by group leaders trained primarily in the non-directive or 'Rogerian' approach. That is, they saw the role of the group leader as being that of a 'facilitator' - their task was to facilitate communication between group members. Also, the Rogerian approach demands that the group facilitator should be 'congruent', that he or she should 'be a person' in the group, express personal feelings and opinions rather than attempt to be in the group solely as a resource. However, all the staff had received training in other approaches - Gestalt, Transactional Analysis and Psychodrama, mainly - and they each had their own style of leadership within a broad non-directive framework. Also, the event was advertised as a Rogerian one, and this is what participants expected.

Thus, while this study can be placed in a historical context as a piece of research into the Rogerian type of basic encounter group, and, indeed, comparisons with research on similar groups will be made when relevant, it is also a description of a uniquely complex event, one which can only be

categorised as 'Rogerian encounter' by discounting important aspects of the experience as a whole.

The object of this work is to describe and give an account of the social ordering of experience in the basic encounter group, as observed at these workshops. The basic thesis expounded in the second part of the Chapter is that the encounter group constitutes a region of or context for social activity identifiable by characteristic behaviour and morality and with its own spatial and temporal boundaries. The third section examines how this situation influences the individual. It will be seen that the struggle to be - with - others in the group brings into focus many issues involved in being a person normally concealed in the routine activities of everyday life. A final, fourth part of the Chapter will offer a deeper interpretation of the meaning of the encounter group experience. First of all, however, it is necessary to set the stage. Part one of this work introduces the background information and description needed to make sense of later analysis.

Participants and Staff

The first workshop lasted for ten days and involved 44 participants and four facilitators; the second 56 participants and five facilitators over eight days. The author participated in both these events as research associate. Participants were almost all members of the 'helping' professions - counsellors, teachers, psychologists, priests, social workers or students of these profession. Four participants, as well as the staff, took part in both workshops. There were slightly more women than men. Ages ranged from 23 to over 60. Half the participants paid personally for their attendance. Most of the remainder were financed partially or in full by their employers. A few were aided by partial 'scholarships'. Ten of the 96 participants over the two workshops were attending their first such event. The rest had been, on average, to three, four or five basic encounter or similar type of experiential group before, although in few cases had these been of comparable duration to the present one.

The workshop was advertised in the relevant professional and popular journals and through mailing lists as being concerned with "theory and experience in facilitating groups" and as an exercise in "cross - cultural communication". In the explanatory brochure, emphasis was placed on the organisation's espousal of the non-directive philosophy of Carl Rogers and its link with the Centre for Studies of the Person at La Jolla, California. It was stated that the organisation was non-profit

making. The brochure also mentioned that learning experiences in other group approaches, such as Transactional Analysis and Psychodrama, would be offered, and that there would be a "research evaluation" of the outcome of the workshop.

In the light of recent controversy regarding the possible riskiness of the encounter group experience, it is of interest that the brochure played down the therapeutic aspect of the workshop in favour of education and learning aspects. Offering 'scholarships' also emphasised these ~~later~~ aspects. The brochure for the second workshop specifically stated that attendance was no substitute for psychotherapy. In any event none of the participants appeared to be under: going current psychiatric treatment or counselling and, although it is difficult to certain, probably fewer than 10% had ever received such treatment.

It should also be noted that completion of the workshop made participants eligible for a limited number of course credits at an American University. Although few of the participants made use of this offer, one of the facilitators reflected that it helped to give the whole operation a veneer of respectability. Indeed, the facilitators themselves had impressive credentials, set out in some detail on the brochure. All had extensive encounter group experience and were working professionally in teaching, counselling and clinical psychology.

Their reputations were apparently sufficient to draw participants from several countries, including Norway, Germany, Spain, France and even America. In all, over a dozen nationalities were represented. Proceedings were conducted in English.

Although these group leaders were all nominally facilitating groups in non-directive, 'Rogerian' style, there were marked differences in their approaches, a fact which did not escape participants' notice. The issue of leadership style was made explicit, both in discussion between participants and facilitators (a group was set up to allow further exploration of this topic) and also, on more than one occasion in the community group, between the facilitators themselves.

However, group leaders shared at least some basic elements of style. They did not instigate 'games' or 'exercises' in the groups, nor did they provide any formal cognitive input, or provide 'interpretations' of statements. Within these similarities there were wide differences in personal style and philosophy.

Location

These workshops took place in University halls of residence. Features of these settings with some relevance to this account are: surroundings were comfortable and everyday domestic tasks (preparing food, tidying, cleaning) were taken care of. There was open parkland available, with the alternative of a busy city centre a short busride away. Although non-workshop residents and staff were generally around, certain rooms were exclusively at the disposal of participants. There were bar and dancing facilities, both of which were widely used.

About three months after the end of each of the workshops there were follow-up meetings. One was held at the home of a participant; the other at the school of which a participant was headmaster. The follow-ups were week-end events, and provided some sense of continuity of friendships established during the workshops.

Methods

Back (1972,1973) has described how the encounter group movement emerged from the interests and activities of social and behavioural scientists during the post-war years. It is not surprising, then, that even though encounter groups have become more of a social or cultural phenomenon in the last two decades, they have continued to be the focus of scientific research. Back (1972) in fact claims that encounter as a social movement has used science to legitimate rather than test its procedures.

The aims of this research are to describe the experience of being in an encounter group and to consider how that experience is made possible, or constructed, through participants' actions and beliefs, through the meaning the group has for these people. Thus its aims differ from that of most previous research in this area, and the conventional research methods - questionnaires, rating scales, inventories - are considered inappropriate.

The existing research in encounter groups has been reviewed by Stock (1964), Campbell and Dunnette (1968), Cooper and Mangham (1971), Smith (1975) and Blumberg and Golembiewski (1976) among others. The monumental research effort of Lieberman, Yalom and Miles (1973) deserves mention in a category of its own. The conclusions drawn by all these reviewers are similar : participants in encounter groups report a high degree of global, generalised positive feeling

toward both self and others. This positive effect is often not reflected in specific measures and tends to lessen markedly over time. There also tend to be increases in participative behaviour and risk-taking.

However, in the methods and experimental design adopted by this type of research, the meaning of the event for participants is not considered. The most extreme example of research which omits meaning is McLeish's (1974) Skinnerian analysis of an experimental learning group.

There do exist, however, pieces of research which take meaning into consideration. Two of these are journalistic accounts of the encounter group experience by Maliver (1973) and Gustaitis (1968). While these works are certainly valuable background reading, they hardly represent systematic research.

The work of Rogers (1969,1977) is similarly difficult to evaluate. Rogers is a figure of such stature in the encounter group movement that one might suspect that his informants would be also out of the ordinary. Rogers (1969) has conducted research into group outcomes using open-ended questionnaires. This material, however, was not given detailed analysis of the kind outlined in Chapter 3. More useful, perhaps, is his description of 'group process' (Rogers, 1969), which, although not a piece of formal research per se, is at least

a well-observed account offered by one of the most experienced practitioners in the area. A more recent contribution by Rogers (1977) is a description of a workshop like the ones studied in this work. The reader is directed towards this source for an alternative perspective on such a workshop.

Three further studies are of some relevance. Ottaway(1966) gives^a a book-length account of a series of groups he ran on a weekly basis with social workers and others interested professionals. While this work contains much valuable material, some of which will be referred to below, its bias is towards a 'how to do it' manual rather than a theoretical treatise. Ottaway's group members kept diaries of their group experiences, a practice adopted also in this study.

The final pair of works to be dealt with are those by Slater (1966) and Bion (1961). Both give detailed descriptions of the processes involved in small groups. Both suggest that the issue of the authority relationship is central to the life of the group, a conclusion at odds with the one offered below. However, closer examination of these studies reveals that the particular composition and raison d'etre of these groups made it unlikely that any other themes would surface to anything like the same extent. Slater's groups were experiential groups run as part of an assessed course in graduate school - the group leader was also the assessor. Bion's group members were psychiatric patients who were told that they were to be treated by a doctor with expertise

in group therapy (Bion himself). When the doctor remained obdurately silent in the face of their questions, speaking only to interject enigmatic comments from time to time, little wonder the issue of leadership and authority should be prominent!

Thus, while these other pieces of research form a context within which this research must fit, none of them are sufficiently similar in aims or methods to be seriously examined as a comparison study. Moreover, none of them employed the network of checks and controls suggested as being a necessary part of a scientific approach to the person. All these studies were written by leaders of groups. This one is from the point of view of the participant.

To move on to the actual methods used in this study, some mention needs to be made of its general aims. The author was invited to be research associate to the organisation which put on the workshops to be described. While it was clear that any material he might gather could be used for his doctorate, there was also an understanding that the primary purpose of the research was to elucidate the meaning of the group experience for the participants themselves. The organisation sent out bi-annual Newsletters to everyone who had ever attended a Workshop, and the research work was to be published there piece by piece (see Appendix B)

Thus, not only would participants be able to negotiate their accounts of the group experience with the researcher, they would also have available a source of recording and clarification in the research. The researcher's personal correspondence with participants was also an opportunity for developing ideas. This work continues.

The material presented in this Chapter is continually being supplemented by correspondence, articles written by participants for the Newsletters, and so on. A Workshop held in the summer of 1977 has not been included in this presentation.

The aim of the research then, is to describe and interpret the group experience in the interest of participants themselves. How was this done?

In this study the method chosen to record and explore members' understandings and perceptions of what was going on was the medium of personal documents (Allport, 1942). Participants were invited to write freely about their expectations for the workshop, their experiences during the workshop and their feelings at the end of the workshop and on returning home. Open-ended questionnaires were sent out before and after the event. During the group, participants were asked to keep diaries or daily journals. The co-operative aspect of the co-research technique was maintained in the following ways. Firstly, participants were sent a letter

which told them the aims of the research (to obtain a description of their experience during the workshop). They were assured that participation in the research was entirely optional and that confidentiality would be maintained regarding anything they wrote. Secondly, the research associate (the author) introduced himself at the beginning of the workshop and re-iterated these themes. He explained that he himself would be a participant at the workshop and that they could judge for themselves whether they wanted to share their experience (as written in a journal) with him or not. Thirdly, the researcher was available to discuss any problems that might arise regarding style of writing etc. Finally, any research reports that were written would be circulated to them for comment.

Copies of letters and other research documents are available in Appendix B.

Thus, a relationship was established between researcher and co-researchers. Also, there was a personal pay-off for members in taking part in the research - they would have a record of the workshop (the researcher merely took a photocopy of the journal and sent it on to them). Indeed, it seemed to be a meaningful task for most of those who completed journals, and they mention how the discipline of writing provided a **welcome** contrast to the intense involvement of the groups, even helping them to resolve issues raised there.

As for the relationship with the researcher, it seemed to be the rule (but by no means exclusively so) that those who took most care with their journals were those who liked the researcher and wanted to help him, while those who did not bother were unsympathetic either to the idea of research, that kind of research, or to him personally. It is of course difficult to be sure about this, although there is the evidence of one person who stopped keeping his journal for two days when he was annoyed with the researcher, beginning again when this difference had been ironed out. On the other hand, two people admitted to not handing in their journals because they felt that they contained material too personal to share with the researcher. Others found a way round this problem by taking the journals home and editing them, sending in only those portions they wished to contribute for research purposes. Many journal-keepers reported that they started off writing the journal for the research, and came more and more to write it for themselves. Similarly, many said that as time went on they had more and more to write about. Some stopped because they could not record everything that was happening to them. Some of these completed their accounts at home and mailed them to the researcher later.

Another problem is that of honesty - are participants honestly reporting their experiences, their thoughts and feelings, in what they write for someone else? Firstly, the journal method surely captures more of the experience of participants than do questionnaires and rating scales. Also, there are

a couple of journals which certainly appear to disclose more intimate material than these particular people talked about in groups. Finally, in discussion with people who wrote journals, after the event, they assert their bias was more in not being able to write enough rather than in falsifying or 'dissimulating' through what they did write.

The experience of the researcher as a participant was essential for this type of research. Quite apart from the opportunity it gave members to decide whether they trusted him or not, the data gathered through participant observation allowed for an independent check on the accuracy of journals. In other words, it was clear that the journals were not totally false, since the researcher had at least some insight into the experience of some participants. Also, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to make sense of what was written in the journals without the shared background knowledge of the events that took place. Another important feature of participant research is that it is only possible given a sympathy for the point of view of informants. When research is carried out from an opposing point of view, the effect is to produce results which deny the reality of the situation as experienced by informants. While we may, as social scientists, be legitimately interested in re-interpreting common-sense ideas, surely our task is not to deny them.

Less than half the participants took part in the research - 23 out of the 44 in the first workshop and 21 out of 56 in the second. These are the people who either kept journals during the workshop (22 at the first workshop, 12 at the

second) or who contributed substantial retrospective reports (longer than 1500 words). However other participants sent in partially completed questionnaires or letters or spoke at some length with the researcher, and there is no obvious way in which those who co-operated are different from those who did not (except of course in that they co-operated and they were, in general, more friendly with the researcher). That is, they did not differ in sex, age, previous experience in groups or occupation.

The length and 'quality' of journals varied widely. The longest contribution was over 50 pages in length, the shortest about 8. Some were full of bald descriptions of "what I did", "who was in the group today", and so on, while others attained a poetic or novelistic level of expression.

All quotations in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, are taken from these journals. The identity of participants has been concealed by using misleading initials instead of names and by omitting any other information likely to lead to embarrassment.

What happened

Although the main focus of this account is to explore people's experience at the workshop, it is necessary first of all to give a short description of what 'objectively', happened, what these people did during their time together. The organisation of both workshops was similar enough for us to treat them as one.

On arrival, participants registered, were shown their rooms and met at least a few of the staff (facilitators) who were **organising** all this. They were given name tags, and told there would be a meeting in a certain room at a certain time. At that time, when most, if not all, participants had arrived, the meeting was begun by one of the facilitators introducing himself and saying a little about how he hoped the workshop would develop. The other facilitators introduced themselves in similar fashion. The research associate talked about the research. Fairly soon participants began to announce themselves and their expectations and hopes for the workshop. This first meeting ended in time for the evening meal. At the second meeting, after the meal, the demands that the large group break up into small 'encounter' groups, became stronger. People began to drift off to form small groups in the rooms available, either inviting facilitators to join them, or being joined by facilitators. These small groups went on until late that night.

The next morning all participants met again in the large 'community' room. Various ways of structuring the time at the workshop were discussed. At both workshops the following solution was adopted:

Mornings: Community meeting involving all participants
Afternoons: Choice of options - eg psychodrama, Transactional Analysis, Poetry reading etc.
Evenings: Small group meetings, followed by dancing and general conviviality in community room.

It was agreed that at the halfway point in the workshop the composition of the small groups should change, so that more participants could meet each other and experience different styles of facilitating. While some participants may truly have been exposed to the 'group process' others used their time in idiosyncratic ways. For example a few could not decide to stay in a particular group, changing several times. Others just walked out if they were bored or unhappy with what was going on. There were some who took little part in the workshop. Participants took time off to go sightseeing or shopping. At most times there could be found a deviant group in the bar.

Community Meetings

These meetings were held in a large room, in the mornings. Usually at least 35 people attended. At the beginning of the workshop, topics of discussion centred on practical issues such as setting up groups, allocating times for options, and the like. Although there were voices raised in protest at what was seen as being a "flight into structure", the community soon adopted a fairly rigid routine. While the community meetings continued to be used to debate practical matters, this became less important as time went on. A notice board was also used to advertise meetings and counter-meetings. As distinct from these matters of common concern, many participants came to use the large meetings to make 'statements' in which they expressed their perception of what was going on in the workshop and their personal philosophical convictions. Some of these statements took the form of lengthy monologues while others were brief. However they appeared to be statements which had been previously rehearsed, either in whole or in part. There are two sources of evidence for this. The first is that in the journals participants wrote for some days beforehand about the issues they were eventually to raise in the meeting, and mention in reporting their own 'statements' that they waited for a convenient pause before beginning. Which leads to the second source of evidence, the tape recordings, which show that 'statements' seldom related to what went before, they were not made in response to what the previous speaker had said (dialogue).

Another striking feature of the community meetings was the level of boredom. People said in the meetings they were bored, they also said this in journals and in discussion outside the meeting. They looked bored, stopped coming, and walked out. Can this general boredom be related to the 'statements'? On one occasion when there was an extended dialogue in a general meeting, a confrontation between a facilitator and a participant (initiated by the latter) and it is significant that this event was probably the most powerful single event in that whole workshop. Not only were many people visibly distressed during the confrontation and afterwards at mealtime, but the emotions raised during it were brought up again and again in the ensuing large and small groups. This event was also referred to many times in the journals. To return briefly to the reports of boredom, many participants stated that they were unable to follow what was happening in the large groups because of fatigue. They said that there were so many different issues being brought up that it required a great effort to attend to them all. It was noticeable that towards the end of the workshop talk in the large group was better ordered. There seemed to have been established a communal language and communal feeling for priorities which made communication easier and less fatiguing or boring.

Towards the end of the workshop, topics of discussion were raised in the community meetings which are seldom mentioned in the encounter group literature. For example there were

explorations of the political implications of the encounter group movement, and of the financial aspect of the workshop. It is impossible to say whether these issues were unique to this workshop or whether they have merely been obscured by the typical assumption that encounter groups are wholly psychological events. Again it must be emphasised that the participants in this group used it in many different ways. - as a holiday, a political forum, a place to meet people as well as in the more accepted way of a 'sensitivity', 'training' or 'growth' experience.

The community meetings, then, provided a forum for the group as a whole, and ~~was~~^{were} used in the main to debate practical, organisational problems or wider philosophical and political issues. However, on those few occasions when personal matters were brought up in the community group, it became apparent that the particular features of these meetings - the larger audience, bigger room, necessity to talk more loudly so people could hear - gave such episodes a powerfully dramatic quality.

Encounter groups

These consisted of from eight to twelve participants and a facilitator and met in separate rooms. Two leaderless groups were also set up by participants. At one of the workshops the composition of the encounter groups was the cause of much discussion in initial community meetings. Some participants wanted to be allocated to groups at random, others wished to choose themselves the group they would join. Important considerations for members were other participants they either did or did not want to be in a group with, and the facilitator they wished to be with or to avoid. It is of interest to note that groups were identified by the facilitator's name even when he had no part in its organisation. Groups were initially formed by individuals who walked out of committee meetings, inviting others to follow them.

The small groups broke up at the halfway point in the workshop. Most of the first groups met again for a short session at the end of the workshop. What happened in these groups is the main topic of the rest of this Chapter. Suffice to say at this point that most participants became attached to 'their' group and the other members in it. They became protective of each other and of the room in which the group was held.

Options

In the afternoons there were a wide variety of optional groups which offered participants learning experiences in areas of interest. Most of these options were organised and led by the facilitators, although some came about through members' efforts. They ranged from more structured forms of encounter - Gestalt, Psychodrama - to discussion groups (on facilitating, the political implications of the encounter movement and sexuality), structured learning of skills (empathy training) and finally almost recreational activities, such as poetry reading. The optional groups included the following:

- Castaneda seminars
- Chalk drawing
- Educational innovation
- Empathy training
- Facilitating groups group
- Family therapy
- Gestalt therapy
- Life planning workshop
- Massage
- Non-verbal communication
- Poetry reading
- Political implications of encounter group movement
- Psychodrama
- Sexuality group
- Transactional Analysis
- Women's Group

These afternoon sessions offered an opportunity for many participants to explore unfamiliar areas of life. Many of the issues raised in these groups were examined again in the encounter and community groups.

THE ENCOUNTER GROUP AS A REGION OF SOCIAL ACTIVITY

Introduction

As members of a culture we possess knowledge about how to act in diverse circumstances. As Schutz and Luckmann (1974 pp99-100) put it:

"every actual present experience is inserted into the flow of lived experience and into a biography according to the set of types and relevance found in the stock of knowledge.....each situation is defined and mastered with the help of the stock of knowledge".

This knowledge comes from many different sources - watching other people, instruction in childhood and so on - and forms a reservoir of common-sense rules which we use to guide our actions. These rules are a resource we are seldom consciously aware of; they are most of the time taken for granted. Similarly, participants in encounter groups have an understanding of what/^{it}is they expect to happen there. Sometimes these expectations are made explicit, as in the early discussions concerning how the workshop was to be organised. During these early sessions, group members talked about what they hoped and expected to happen at the workshop, and suggested methods of achieving such goals. Or expectations may be implicit in members' behaviour. For example, the entrance of the facilitator can be a signal for the group to begin. At one moment participants are talking in groups of two or three. Then the arrival of the facilitator brings into play the rules of being in an

encounter group, and those present fall silent, sit in a circle facing the centre and adopt the serious expression apparently required for 'encounter'. From now on if anyone talks it is publicly and for all the others to hear. Ottaway (1966 p7) writes:

"the circle is a definite physical structure which is insisted upon. The members speak one at a time, and while one speaks the others are normally paying attention. This method structures the behaviour to some extent, and is a convention that groups soon come to accept".

What is being suggested is that the encounter group constitutes a distinct social setting with its own unique rules of conduct. Just as the waiter's conduct is transformed as walks through the door separating the 'back-stage' kitchen from the 'front-stage' dining room, the participant going into an encounter group must adapt himself to a new world with new rules of conduct. Goffman(1974) puts it thus: "When individuals attend to any current situation, they face the question: 'What is it that's going on here?'" For people in encounter groups their answer to the question 'What is it that's going on here?' is their definition of the situation, their plan and agenda which makes it possible to engage in co-operative action with other group members. Group members communally construct a social setting, "awareness context" (Glaser and Strauss,1964), "region of social activity" (Goffman, 1959), "frame of reference" (Goffman, 1974) or "province/reality" (Schutz and Luckmann,1974) which transforms their experience of themselves. Argyris (1969) labels this an ~~atypical~~ "atypical interpersonal world" - "a world of high openness, trust and interpersonal competence".

The transformation or re-organisation of experience within this world is perceived by members in the following way: they claim that what occurs in the group is of a different order of reality. One of the most salient issues to emerge from the journals was that of 'reality'. One participant talked about others trying to "smile away his reality" It became a craze at one workshop to award "ARP" (a real person) badges to those who made authentic contributions. One participant wrote in his journal after a group - "A wonderful session with real people not opinions and theories". Or - " I realise the important thing is to be 'real' without this becoming a totally selfish aim". Another commented as the workshop came to a close: "It's almost as if we have moved back again into the 'real' world".

Participants used the concept of 'reality' in two senses. One use of 'real' referred to the common-sense world of every day life. This sense of 'reality' made the city 'real' and the women who served the food 'real', and was characterised by consensual taken-for-granted definition and validation of meaning. On the other hand, a second sense of 'reality' made reference to the intensive group experience, where the meaning of action was grounded in felt experiencing or inner state rather than common-sense shared understandings. As has been mentioned, the workshops took place in residential settings which were nevertheless not completely insulated from the outside world (for example the women with the coffee trolley

getting on with their work and in the same room emotional scenes at a community meeting) these two realities clashed, leading to a consciousness of their separateness perhaps, not found in better insulated 'growth centres' (eg Esalen), psychiatric units or other 'total institutions'.

Thus participants at these workshops point through their comments at a fundamental feature of all encounter groups - the construction in such groups of a radically different social context or reality. In the following sections we examine some of the processes by which this reality is constructed and maintained.

Expectations

One source of evidence for the claim that participants in encounter groups act to create a special social setting is in their expectations for the event. Members' expectations function as a pre-existing definition of the situation which summarises their ideas of what they would like to happen at the workshop, a set of personal goals to work towards.

(See Note 3). There follows a selection of what participants wrote about their expectations:

"I had several problems which I thought I might get worked out.....

I felt very confident that I would meet people I could get very close to"

"I needed to work out my personal problem....."

"My expectations were that I would be taught how to relate to....."

"I knew from the literature certain things were likely..."

".....meet people....in conditions which eliminate some of the usual conventional structures".

"I like meeting people on a deeper than superficial level and hope to do so.... I want to learn more about myself and my feelings, hopefully to enable me to become less defensive and result in greater personal freedom".

"Personal development expectations - self knowledge from feedback. Greater awareness of real feelings and opportunity to express these appropriately (and inappropriately!)
Opportunities to experiment with self-assertion - new ways of behaving.

Opportunity to learn from other individuals by observation and relationships.

Greater awareness of group pressures and learning about how groups work under the surface.

Expected opportunities to work on specific personal difficulties and general learning in the area of authority and responsibility and my attitudes towards it. Acquisition of skills in helping relationships. Acquisition of clues about my own creativity".

It was also clear through observation that many participants had expectations and standards for the groups. Frequently in group members commented that what was happening was not what 'should' be happening. That is, they made reference to notions of the sort of conduct and experience they expected from that situation. For example, during a silence at the beginning of the first community meeting, a participant at his first encounter workshop stated that what was happening was like a Quaker Meeting. This remark, made in all seriousness, was treated as a joke. His 'reading' or 'definition' of the situation was taken to be totally inappropriate by those who had different expectations.

There were in fact wide differences in the elaboration of expectations. Some participants (see the final quotation above) had very detailed and accurate expectations which they did their best to make sure were fulfilled. Others, usually those without much previous experience of encounter groups, held few expectations and limited personal goals.

Finally, members' expectations - of forming 'intimate' relationships undergoing personal learning and change, talk about personal problems and so on - were generally fulfilled. As one participant wrote: "If people come they will work to get what they came for".

Theories

Closely related to participants' expectations for encounter groups are their theories of what happens in these groups. If expectations are the goal towards which members work, their theories are the means through which their efforts are channelled. Their theories are their ideas of "what will happen if or when" and represent their understanding of how to achieve group and personal goals. Here are some statements which reflect participant's theories of how groups work:

"Should I resent it that some people don't want to be involved?....

Only very strong commitment will make things happen."

"The small group still feels awkward and stuck to me.

We're all so nice.....I keep wondering if it is totally impossible for things to move or happen unless someone hurts".

"....in an attempt to get into depth I gave an account of my.....problems".

"Encounter groups are groups in which the individuals involved set up relationships with each other which mirror the ways they relate to others outside the group. As a result people are able to learn how they relate to others....Groups are (also) places where people can learn other ways of being in the world by means of an unconscious group process whereby the members of the group respond, at a level beneath the level of speech and expressed needs, to the needs of each other".

"When others bare their weaknesses, we realise that 'the more intimate, the more universal', and this boosts our self-respect and self-esteem".

participants at these workshops possessed both pre-existing expectations concerning what would happen there and also theories of how they must act (give feedback, make disclosures, express feeling, be committed to the group) to achieve these goals and expectations. This body of knowledge makes possible their definition or understanding of the group situation. It could be argued that only those who had been in groups before would use expectations and theories in this way. This argument is reinforced by the refusal of some members to write about "how does the encounter group 'work'?" in reply to a questionnaire request since, in their estimation, they did not know enough to be able to theorise. However, there were people who had never been to an encounter group who could write about their expectations and theories. And, finally, it seems unlikely that anyone would invest so much time and energy in a completely mysterious event. It must be concluded that even those who claimed to come without pre-existing ideas had at least simple, implicit expectations and were prepared to follow the example of those who appeared to have a better understanding of what was going on. Much of what happened in the opening sessions can indeed be understood as negotiation of expectations. Members either learned about what were seen as legitimate expectations, or modified their own plans in the light of what others had to say about them.

Asking people about their expectations and theories gives a very incomplete picture of their understanding of a situation. To get a clearer picture it is necessary to observe how their understanding or definition of the situation is expressed through action. In the following sections we examine the ways that

basic forms of activity - listening and talking - are used
to generate a special kind of social reality or moral order.

Listening

A very simple item of knowledge people have about encounter groups is that, in them, one listens to other people's talk. For many participants in encounter groups the time spent in the group represents the longest spell of listening they have ever done in their lives. Some indirect evidence for this proposition comes from several reports that on immediately leaving the workshop, participants experienced the world as being very loud. The sound of traffic was overpowering, it was difficult to focus in one conversation in a bar, and so on. These temporary phenomena can be understood as the carry-over effects of intensive listening.

This is not to say that when people are silent they may not be fantasizing, daydreaming, remembering or rehearsing, but that in general members of an encounter group follow the rules of being-in-a-conversation rather than those of being-at-a-lecture. In conversation we are expected to attend to everything that is said and we expect listeners to give us the same attention, whereas in lectures, the theatre, cinema and so on "time-out" is acceptable. Thus in recordings of group meetings there are many instances of "would you repeat that, I didn't hear it" but few of "sorry, I wasn't listening". What does it mean to do so much listening?

In the first place listening confirms the listener as part of the group. Through sharing the same experience, listening to the same stretch of talk, members see themselves as being in a group to which other people do not belong. Conversely,

by turning off for a while, not listening, a person implies that he or she is no longer of the group for that time. One participant wrote about how pleased she was that other members could accept the idea of her going to sleep during a group session. Her anxiety about this implies a fear that rejection or resentment may be shown to anyone in the group who does not listen. So, if we talk about group cohesion or trust, we mean that, at least people in the group listen to each other.

Secondly, there is a sense in which intensive listening mediates involvement and the feeling that what is perceived is 'real'. For example at the theatre when one is 'fully' attending to the drama it is experienced as being real while one is 'half' attending and at the same time watching the audience, the stage apparatus etc., it seems not so real, it is more readily seen as being a performance. In this context, James (1901 p295) writes that:

"reality means simply relation to our emotional and active life. This is the only sense that the word ever has in the mouths of practical men. In this sense, whatever excites and stimulates our interest is real; Whenever an object so appeals to us that we turn to it, accept it, fill our mind with it, or practically take account of it, so far is it real for us, and we believe it. Whenever, on the other hand, we ignore it, fail to consider it or act upon it....so far it is unreal for us and disbelieved".

Thus, in an encounter group when one is listening very hard in an attempt to enter the world of the other to 'empathise', it all seems very real. But if one is not paying that much attention, or is maintaining a skeptical distance (as, we shall discover, happens) the events at hand can come to appear unreal, phoney, contrived, a theatrical performance. It seems that as participants become better at listening (become more empathic) they also become more convinced of the 'reality' of what it is they are hearing.

To summarise: Listening is a basic activity in encounter groups. Even people who have never been to an encounter group before somehow know that this is a situation in which they should listen. The contribution of this basic activity to group cohesion and trust, and to the feeling that what is happening is 'real', is sketched out.

Talk

What do people talk about in encounter groups? We have already seen that members bring with them powerful expectations that they will talk about themselves, that they will disclose areas of their "information preserve" (Goffman, 1959), their secrets and their feelings, to other participants. But people also talk about themselves at parties, coffee mornings and many other social gatherings. What, then, are the particular features of talk in encounter groups which reflect its distinctiveness as a social context?

Talk in encounter groups is frequently overtly 'therapeutic', in the sense of striving to bring 'unconscious' material to awareness. Goffman's (1974 p386) remarks about individual psychotherapy also hold good for encounter groups: "behaviour which would usually be treated as outside the main track, such as initiatory and terminal rituals, spurts of anger and the like.....are to be treated as proper subject matter". Turner (1972), in his analysis of talk in therapy groups, suggests that the patient's initiatives or questions are not followed by expected, 'normal', everyday replies on the part of the therapist. For example, a patient who attempts to step outside the therapy framework for a moment to ask "are we doing what we're supposed to be doing here?" does not receive the everyday kind of affirmative or otherwise reply. The therapist is likely to come back with - "what do you think you should be doing?" (Turner, 1972 p392). Thus the patients find that "any and all of their talk to be accountable" (393). Thus, following Goffman, we see that anything anyone says can be "treated as proper subject matter". The difference between

encounter and therapy groups is that in the former all group members, not just the therapist or group leader, engage in such talk.

However, it is not enough to say that this way of talking is merely an attempt to be 'therapeutic' - it is also a response to some of the global features of the encounter group as a place. For example group members are likely to be strangers, and, after their few days together as intimates, will become strangers again. Thus they do not have any shared experiences, any taken-for-granted background knowledge of each other or each other's life situations, from which to construct talk. Nor can they initiate talk on the basis of beginning a permanent relationship.

Finally, there is no concrete task around whose demands the group can talk. The task is one of being a group and being with each other.

Now it is no easy matter to characterise talk in everyday life. What do people normally talk about? Yet it is clear that very frequently people talk about their work, their shared roles - as teachers, students, housewives and so on. And, because they know each other already, they can assume a certain stance from the other person - a lot is taken for granted. Or, if they are getting to know each other, there is the tactic of breaking off the relationship, or formalising it, if there is no chance of

establishing a shared understanding. In an encounter group, there can be much less shared understanding or background knowledge. If a participant begins to speak about his or her job, the other group members will not know what the problems or personalities involved are. And, when someone tries to make this sort of talk in a group, other members say they are bored. So, in an encounter group, the sort of talk we engage in most of the time, talk which relies on one form or another of shared understanding, is just not possible.

When we enter an encounter group, we move out of our everyday world of consensual, taken-for-granted definitions and understandings, and into a world in which the only basis for meaningful talk is what is currently happening - thus we talk about our feelings, our reactions to other people, our goals and even our mannerisms and postures, in the "here-and-now".

The "ethos of intimacy"

An important feature of the 'region of social activity' that is an encounter group, is that it allows members to express in public sentiments and emotions they would normally articulate only in private with 'close' friends, family or spouse. Whereas in other public situations (work, courtroom) individuals construct performances according to role expectations with little scope for expressing 'personal' bias or feeling, the encounter group is a setting in which such personal matters are encouraged. If 'face' is taken-for-granted in everyday life, 'feeling' is taken-for-granted in the encounter group. Blumenstiel (1970) has identified some of the activities which sustain this "ethos of intimacy":

Attitudes of facilitators: Blumenstiel (1970 p437) writes that "the propriety of intimacy is established in the T-group in part by declarations of trainers during initial group sessions.....Delegates often infer, from such declarations, that.....there will be some demand for personal revelation".

Confidentiality: it is an 'unwritten rule' of encounter groups that confidence made in a group will not be divulged elsewhere. Certainly at these workshops many participants were concerned that the research work might threaten this norm.

The "rejection of cool" : Blumenstiel notes that in encounter groups it is acceptable to 'break down' display emotion and in general disregard conventional standards of reserve and decorum.

The transience of relationships: because it is unlikely that participants will meet again, they see the lowering of inter-personal barriers necessary for intimacy as being less risky than it would be in potentially permanent relationships.

The irrelevance of biographical material : this rule forces members to attend to their here-and-now feelings for each other.

The strategies observed by Blumenstiel could also be seen at work in the workshops being studied here. Yet it must be added that even simpler behaviours contributed to maintaining an "ethos of intimacy" - for example the universal use of first names. While some members may never "lose their cool", even the most skeptical or inexperienced group members will know that first names are used, even when there are wide status or age differences between conversants. Similarly, the greater frequency of hugging and touching sets the group apart from the everyday life experiences of most members. Also, ^agroup would not 'start' until everyone was present.

The situational morality of the encounter group has been noted by other writers. Ottaway (1966), for example, terms it "the permissive climate". He writes that "the ordinary conventions of politeness and good manners are held to be suspended". Commentators are divided as to the value of this climate. Rogers (1968) sees it as being the advance guard of a welcome change in cultural conventions. Koch (1971), on the other hand, argues that it is the product of a false and inauthentic consciousness.

It should be mentioned that this way of being, or implicit morality, in the encounter group is only partially rule-governed. Participants who have been to many groups are perhaps obeying internalised rules. First-timers, however, often have to discover that other ways of being, and other moralities, are inappropriate in the group setting. Thus the morality is not only a set of rules - it is also the outcome of a set of processes.

Boundaries

The encounter group is a region of social activity marked by spatial and temporal boundaries. The activity of the encounter group tended not to begin until the facilitator had arrived in the room set aside for the group meeting, and ended either at some set time or by negotiation - for example if many members claimed to be bored or tired. The entrance of the facilitator could be as abrupt a signal as the ringing of a bell, and members would assume the silent, serious posture of 'encountering'. At the end of the group members would rise, stretch, make jokes and talk in couples.

Exits during the group would similarly be marked by change in conduct once outside the group room - departing members would break into a jog, mock fight with each other or make wry comments once out of sight of the ongoing group.

Places other than the group room might or might not be venues for encountering. Participants often wrote in journals that they were uncertain about how to react to group members they met at the dinner table, in corridors, in the park, the bar or the dance floor. To some extent this may have been a problem because of the increased chance of there being non-workshop personnel at these places, but the uncertainty surely also derives from not knowing what side of the encounter - everyday life boundary they stood at that moment. Some members reported difficulties during phone calls home. Those at home did not seem to be "on the same wavelength".

The existence of boundaries between the practical, concrete reality of everyday life and the 'person-centred' reality associated with experiencing, availability of feelings and 'encounter' was also apparent at times in the 'optional' groups. Members were not always sure whether these were 'experiential' or 'cognitive' events. As one participant commented after a discussion (ie non-encounter) group meeting:

"Interesting to see all these people being serious, shrewd, all slipping into their professional roles. Helps to understand how much they have been exposing themselves here and how difficult it must be for many".

This participant is startled when she sees people jumping from the group frame to the everyday life frame- they have re-defined the situation, re-set the boundaries, before she has.

In this section it has been argued that the encounter group is best understood as being a place in which a certain definition of social reality prevails. This reality is constructed and maintained by members' activities such as talk and listening, its own situational morality (the "ethos of intimacy") and is contained within spatial and temporal boundaries. Within this reality, events have their own unique meaning, the experience of self and others is transformed. This is a reality which, as long as it lasts, many participants find more congenial than the reality of everyday life. As one participant puts it - "What magic we created". Having established the nature of the encounter group - a unique way of organising experience - we can now turn to an examination of what it means to have this experience - its effect on individuals.

THE INDIVIDUAL PERSON IN THE ENCOUNTER GROUP

Introduction

Up to now we have discussed how a group of people can construct a social situation within which the taken-for-granted rules of everyday life are replaced by other rules and permissions. This kind of analysis necessarily oversimplifies and generalises from an in fact enormously complex event. It omits the event as experienced by individuals, and so the following section is devoted to exploration of the way being at these workshops had an effect on individual people. The account is largely in participants' own words as written by them in their journals.

We have taken two perspectives on the individual's experience in the encounter group, awareness and performance. Firstly, the process of learning how to be with others in a group is viewed as equivalent to learning a particular kind of awareness. Secondly, the performance of being-a-person which carries members through everyday life does not have the same pay off in the encounter group - issues involved in being a person in our culture which are concealed, or taken - for - granted in everyday life are revealed and brought into focus in the group.

Awareness

When we say that the encounter group is a particular frame of reference which serves to organise experience we imply that being in this frame involves being in a particular state of awareness. Participants' comments about 'reality' back up this point of view. However, the idea that what is picked up by those who attend encounter groups is a special kind of awareness, is most clearly demonstrated in their reports of what it was like for them when they finally left the group and went home:

"For the first couple of days I was disorientated and felt very fragile".

"...went into the Common Room. It seemed to be full of ghosts, dim, half-seen people. I didn't want to talk to any of them. The usual chit-chat seemed like the twittering of sparrows".

"....life getting cold and detached again".

".....when I meet people now I'm conscious of not really encountering them".

".....my 'feelings' seem to be more accessible and manageable....they are flowing more freely within me.

"Physically, when I leave a workshop I am aware of heightened perception of and memory for detail and feel a need to live deliberately and slowly. I eat slower and less. This stays with me for quite a while until it gradually becomes no longer noticeable".

It may be useful to think of what happens at encounter groups as a learning of or an immersion in a new reality, a new way of looking at the world, of making sense of it, a different kind of awareness or consciousness. It may be that prolonged

exposure to or use of the encounter frame of reference can bring about a change in awareness through the cumulative effects of listening, attending to feelings, examining the implicit messages in statement and all the other elements of the 'cognitive style' of being-in-a-group. We can further assume that some people are already familiar with this reality of kind of awareness (eg the facilitators) while others may pick it up very quickly (eg 'natural' facilitators). Still others will be struggling to grasp it, while some will be unwilling to give up their old world for this strange new one.

This last group, those who appeared to make little or no effort to learn the 'reality' or 'consciousness' of the encounter group, are of interest.

These were the people who either said little throughout the whole workshop, or who maintained an uninvolved or sceptical attitude. As one wrote in his journal -

"I.....accepted as accurate the criticism that I maintained a 'cynical' (that was the word used) detachment. I was not cynical but I did not suspend my mistrust of the shallowness of several 'encounters' and 'revelations'."

There are two points to be made in relation to this statement. The first is to note that the process of achieving a new awareness involves at least temporarily suspending one's rational sense of 'doubt' or 'mistrust' which this person was not ready to do.

A second possible explanation is that it is widely held that the kind of disclosures and interactions that occur in encounter groups are in some way 'shallow' or 'trivial'. This is based on a misunderstanding. What is misunderstood is the attitude of the person making the 'shallow' or 'trivial' response. The critic believes that the person fools himself or is forced by the situation ('group pressure') into thinking that his or her contribution was deep, authentic, significant, etc., etc. While this may sometimes happen, more often the person is distressed at how inauthentic or trivial he has been. For example, one woman, who had in fact said a lot in her group, admitted in her journal that she was "still not in touch with myself". Others mentioned feeling 'empty', "brain-damaged" or "sterile". Another discovered: "My sincerity is not always as great as I like to think". These were also people who had been involved in the work of their groups, who had, in our terminology, been trying to pick up the encounter 'awareness' or 'consciousness'.

Indeed, part of the process of entering this province of reality seems to be the stage of perceiving and break through ways of acting which are not appropriate to the group setting, and are seen as being 'inauthentic'. Individuals who are seen by others as playing a role, for example being a teacher, patient, therapist or a mother in the group, are perceived in this way - as being 'inauthentic' - and may, themselves, feel 'inauthentic'. The movement of group members beyond this stage, into the group reality proper, involves what Rogers (1969) calls the "cracking of facades". Bebout (1974 p412) puts it this way:

"at each presentation of a form of deceit, the validity of the group is thrown into question in the minds of the members. Each unfolding lie is a test of the integrity of the group, and its failure to meet the challenge thereby defines its limitation..... through the succession of group self-deceit and its expose^{ure}, and so on, is a basic mechanism underlying the dynamic process of encounter groups, and this spiralling process leads to ever deeper levels of trust, honesty and risk-taking".

We might also say : in groups people learn by their mistakes.

We may suppose, then, that making 'inauthentic' or 'shallow' or inappropriate statements is necessarily part of the process of coming to terms with this new reality. Ordinary reality is characterised by consensual definition and validation of what is happening. In everyday life when we want to know what someone means we refer to the common-sense understandings that we all have and use, as members of a culture. Meanings are not explicitly 'contained' in the words we use, they are found by following the way the words point to a shared understanding of the world. In an encounter group, however, as has already been argued, this kind of talk is ineffective. There is no agenda, there is nothing concrete, no part of the world of everyday life, that everyone wants to talk about or will understand. One member may begin to talk about their work difficulties but may find that this makes reference to issues others have no experience of. Talk of ordinary affairs and concerns turns out to be somehow ineffective, probably both because of the expectations people bring to the group and because of the 'indexicality' (reference

to a shared understanding of the situation or context) of everyday-life talk. Thus the group member is directed more and more towards his or her feelings, needs or interests in the here-and-now (the group) because this is the only way he or she can communicate meaningfully to other group members. Gradually present feelings, need or interests are expressed in ways that at first may seem 'shallow' or 'inauthentic' and only later become more satisfactory. In many participants this process was not a continuous one - they would return to the 'ordinary', outside world when things were getting on top of them.

There follows a statement from one participant concerning just such a 'retreat' into the external world.

"....all the time I was walking I was trying to notice the physical reality of the people and objects around me, the feel of the road under my feet, the air, the smells and the noises. And I came back, slowly, and I sat on a bench in the park and opposite me was a young Glaswegian boy, I presume, he looked like it, he was about 20, he was sitting, waiting, I don't know what for, perhaps he was cruising, as B calls it. And opposite him was a lady of about 33, she was also sitting and waiting, for time to pass, for her lover to come, I don't know. And as I sat and waited with myself I tried to figure out what the heck was going on and I thought about what C had said the morning before telling the world to "Fuck off" and some of the things H had said about the unreality of the whole situation here. Some of the experiences I'd had of listening to other people talking at one another. Some of the things that were going on inside myself about wanting to love and wanting to be loved.....

And then I went into the large group which was still meeting and it was now about 11 o'clock and the atmosphere was again so sick and turgid and I got a mug of coffee and left and sat outside and drank it and I came upstairs and lay on my bed and totally relaxed my body and just concentrated on my head and my being and I came to this kind of conclusion that I'd spent my life up until perhaps only very recently to arrive at a situation where I was no longer having to fight with my fantasies about 'do you love me?' 'do I love me?' 'I'll listen to you if you'll listen to me' and all those kind of Laingian knots. I'd gone through all that and now I had what I call actual people - physical, present beings who loved me, who I knew loved me, who I loved, who listened. People like my wife and my child and my mother and my father, my brothers and my sisters, my neighbours and my best friends - all in various degrees greater or lesser fulfilling my desires and my hopes and needs just as I was fulfilling theirs. It was no longer a question but a certainty. It was no longer a matter of hope but one of knowledge. And what had happened here seemed that I had been thrown willy-nilly out of control, out of my control, into a soup, a turgid fetid soup other people's uncertainties and fantasies and questions and Laingian knots. And I had been drawn, like a boat toward a sluice gate, by the sheer force of this emotional whirlpool, towards a state of mind which was so full of doubts and uncertainties, just from listening to other people's doubts and uncertainties, other people's projections and fantasies, that it had aroused in me all the emotional anxiety and fear and funk and aspirations that I had been through in my childhood and adolescent and early manhood. And that going out into Glasgow that night had brought me back in touch with actuality itself and it enabled me in fact to work out this solution this morning.

And having worked out that solution it defused in me an area of uncertainty. And I spent quite an enjoyable

day. I went down and I told H of my solution and later on I told C of my solution".

Hora (1961) has written that "authentic group participation - that is, genuine being-in-the-group- is only possible under conditions of open-ness, receptivity and responsiveness toward the world. These human capacities are more often than not thwarted, distorted and blocked to various degrees. The removal of these obstacles to cognition, to authentic inter-human communication and communion, is an essential feature of the existential group psychotherapeutic endeavour".

For many group members, the struggle to achieve "authentic group participation" involved feelings of meaninglessness, despair, 'stuckness' and physical symptoms such as lethargy, constipation, diarrhoea, headache, even reports of impairment of vision :

".....and very disturbed night - a violent headache and sleeplessness.

Feelings of despair and not knowing why...

At breakfast told them how I again feared finding out horrible things about myself - fear of the unknown".

Or, from a different point of view:

".....one of the most important things I've learned in groups is to welcome a feeling of fear, because it has always led, through excitement, to discovery.

The fear is a feeling of being afraid of what it is I am about to learn (in case its something awful) about myself, and the excitement is the feeling of wanting to know what it is. I have learned to just wait until the fear of knowing and the wanting to know - that is the mutual existence of opposites - come to such a pitch of conflict with each other that I have to burst through to awareness".

This, then, is one aspect of the individual experience of the encounter group - the struggle to master a certain way of being-in-the-world, a certain awareness. But this is only half of the story. As Macmurray has said, to be a person is not only to have the power to reflect, to be aware, it is to have the power to act, to be an agent. So we turn towards an examination of some of the ways that participants' actions, or performances, in the group, affected them and transformed their ideas of themselves.

Performance

Goffman's dramaturgical model of society activity leads to a conceptualisation of personality as a performance. We can assume that the performance of being oneself in normal circumstances is a routine activity requiring little conscious effort. Rank (1956 p74) writes that "the average man always plays a role, always acts, but actually plays only himself".

The peculiar reality of the encounter group brings into focus the individual's performance, or way of being a person. Some ways of being a person are not appropriate in the conditions of the group. Some ways of being a person were inappropriate, it seemed, under any circumstances - for example the woman who "built (her) life on the fallacy of being unloveable and unattractive and unacceptable".

Here is the story of a woman whose behaviour was inappropriate for the social context of the group:

"I use being very busy as a defence mechanism. In my own life there is a reality basis for this as I have had to work very hard.....but it came as a surprise to me that I kept up this attitude of 'busyness' at the workshop when I had no more basis for it than anyone else - rushing from one thing to another, trying to do too many things etc. This really did help me to realise that being busy has a dual function and to avoid getting properly involved with people. The workshop demonstrated to me how out-of-touch I was with some of my deeper feelings. There is a lot of difference between knowing these feelings are there and actually having the feelings eg I think that possibly I never really grieved or mourned over.....because at the time the practical problems of coping on my own demanded all my energies".

The transfer from everyday reality to the being-with-others of the encounter group appeared to bring about for many people an intense awareness of the issues involved in being a person. Partially this came about because the freedom of the encounter group allowed people to question basic assumptions or raise 'taboo' subjects such as death or sexuality.

Another possibility is that the focus on personal meanings of events, rather than on pragmatic aspects related to the task of getting-something-done, resulted in the meanings of incidents being followed-through. Often in groups there will be repeated clarification and analysis of the meaning of an interaction, perhaps long after the episode took place. Thus an interaction which was over in a moment became an 'extended moment' - the taken-for-granted, or hidden, or denied, meanings and feelings implicit in that incident could be brought to the surface and examined. And in this way the issues involved in being a person, and being in relation with these other people, became apparent.

But, also, of course, background issues emerge as figure, are thrown into relief, when they prevented the individual from entering the shared experience of the group, as illustrated above by the story of the busy person.

Many people who have been to encounter groups state that it is their first exposure to its unique version of reality which brings most dramatically into relief their way of being a person.

On later exposures they may value the chance to use this group mirror, but the effects are rarely as powerful as that first time. Of course, for some the reality of the groups is frightening, or undesirable, as we saw, and for them this powerful experience may be one not to be repeated.

Feelings

People in encounter groups talk a lot about feelings. Feelings are good, their expression is part of the "ethos of intimacy", intellectualisation is bad. The journal kept by N seems to centre right in on this issue. N wrote before he came that one of his personal goals was "keeping continuously in contact with my own feeling". In his description of himself he wrote that "my feelings come up quickly, but vanish the next moment - that is, before I see an opportunity say anything". Later, he wrote that "what troubles me is that the presence of other people seems to take my feelings away from me". Another excerpt from N's journal seems (almost too neatly) to state the problem -

"I am quite satisfied with not verbally participating in the community meeting - until A bursts out towards J, who sits next to me. There seems to be a fundamental contact, but I have no feelings about it, and cannot respond to J's opening to me. I'm feeling selfish, inadequate and lonely.....

Reading this excerpt makes one want to go back to that moment and tell N that he was feeling something about what was going on - he was feeling selfish, inadequate and lonely, quite justifiably in the circumstances.

Here is a long quote from N's account of what was obviously an important group meeting for him:

"J helps me to pick up on an actual feeling and to overcome it in a very gentle way, and E helps a lot in clarifying by asking just the right questions. Most of all I liked a) J's observation from my physical attitude that I at a certain moment just decided to

cut off - a thing which happens to me often, and about which I forget immediately; it is the thing of which I have been complaining to myself so often. I seem not to be able to give account of my own doings, I lose my actions immediately.

b) his very tender way of simply being with me, by which he actually did give myself back to me.

c) my figuring out what I am doing, being so cumbersome in dealing with my feelings, endlessly justifying them.

d) my last words to D: that she keeps moving me by her facial expressions and her smile and her tears - because they are my truth of last week: I have mostly been living by that movement.

We work till nearly midnight, I fear most of the time on me.

Afterwards I talk and have beers with.....until 5 a.m."

From the evidence N has given us of the events of this small group session, largely devoted to the problem of his feelings, it appears as though the awareness he brought to the workshop of his distancing himself from his feelings has been extended. He is now aware that he cannot accept certain feelings and that he holds on to other feelings rather than act on them. Yet the evidence from N's subsequent time at the workshop, and his reports from home suggest very strongly that this awareness has not resulted in any change. We can only speculate as to what might have happened to N: his extended awareness might have shown him that the way he dealt with his feelings was acceptable to him after all; he may have been afraid of the consequences of changing his way of dealing with his feelings; or the awareness itself might have been painful.

Another possibility - N's performance, his way of being himself in the everyday world, clearly included a dissatisfaction with his way of dealing with felt experience. This dissatisfaction was part of his definition of himself. The discussions which went on until 5 a.m. did little more than confirm N in his opinion that he was a man who could not handle feelings, and in fact reinforced this view by showing him new aspects of his inadequacy.

Self-acceptance

- Day 1 "Very tentative beginnings.
I have been a spectator most of the time....I wait for others to take the lead".
- Day 2 "I tried at various times to give people leads to my distress but they didn't seem to pick them up. I resented this but at the interval P had seen but didn't feel like commenting so I realised once more the responsibility was on me so I launched out to see where it would take me. I know I haven't gone nearly far enough but hope that will happen later. My fear of missing out on close relationships, of only half living....M recognised my feelings very powerfully. I felt such warmth and acceptance that I glowed".
- Day 3 "So many feelings today
Talked with M till all hours on sexual problems mentioned things I'd never dared mention before and discovering I was still acceptable".
- Day 4 "I'm tackling things much more head on now.
Talked of feelings of being a threat to men. Met eyes and did not flinch. Was admired".
- Day 5 "Heavy and depressed now all my confidence seems to have gone. Insecure at changing of small group?."
- Day 6 "Facing tensions with people head on. They cause a block to receiving and caring and however scary are far less so when dealt with.
I began to cling again but recognised it and let go - that was painful but I gained from it.
Realise I couldn't describe myself when I came.
.....now I've stopped trying I am examining what I set out to".
- Day 7 "A hellish day locked in my unwantedness - not open to receiving. Worked with many feelings and shed some.
.....I'm not accepting myself today. I'm locked into myself waiting for someone else to break down

the barriers. Why the hell can't I do it?
I'm a blood sucking spider spinning webs round
people then shutting them out.
My Gestalt fantasy is frightening and I daren't
expose it in such an intense group. I the rose
bush am not really there. I glimpse myself now
and again but don't quite know where I am in
relation to the scenery.
I can't or won't experiment with ways of leaving
people free as I wait in terror to see if they
will come back".

Day 8 "I feel a freedom today....I am tied to no-one and
no-one is tied to me.
There are so many unfinished unresolved feelings -
this is good - life is exciting.
I feel so silly with some of my earlier feelings-
they were unnecessary but still real in me.
I need to experiment with lots of people round me.
I am alive and can enjoy being.
I matter most".

These are excerpts from one woman's journal. Little addition:
al comment is needed. It is perhaps significant that although
the group situation makes it possible for her to "launch out",
she does not go "nearly far enough" and it is only later, while
alone with M, that she mentions "things I'd never dared mention
before". The central theme of this account appear to be a
struggle for self-acceptance. Despite the oscillation between
active ("launching" "head on" "experimenting") and passive
("waiting", "a spectator") selves, which would suggest that
although the story ends on a happy note, it is not over yet,
there is a powerful insight in being able to say that a previous
way of being was "unnecessary".

Personal style

Everyone has their own style, their own way of being, of presenting themselves to others. An issue underlying personal style is - will my way of being a person be acceptable to others? Very often at these workshops people found that they were unable to accept, or believe in, another person's style, or that others were unable to accept their style. This excerpt is taken from the journal of a man who certainly did not come to the workshop with a conscious intention to work on his 'style'. He reports that after he had talked for the first time in the small group -

"I provoked a good deal of anger - not overtly for my declaration but for my manner. I was told I was lecturing them:

B said she found my manner made her very angry. Someone else said he found my 'spilling' turned him off.....It was a very disturbing experience. The real objections had been to my 'manner' which a number of people in the group found very off-putting. J. said that he now sensed a real person in me which had not been there the first day when I had been a load of bullshit".

Here is what two of the other people involved in this incident wrote:

"He had arrived with it all pre-packaged. His problem was presented within 5 minutes of the start of the group with the histrionic impact of a Greek drama and much overt emotion".

"I wish A would shut up. My god how he pontificates. I gather he has already been blasted for it and is hurt. I don't want to add to that hurt but its hard to keep my mouth shut".

A few days later this issue re-emerged dramatically.

A had just taken the risk of confronting a fellow participant who had been worrying him for some time - whose presence frightened him. A had just admitted this in the community group and was "feeling very good" when,

"I heard D's voice saying 'A, that was very EFFECTIVE'. Christ, I was thrown as I have never been thrown. I knew what he meant. moving, right, good, deep, meaningful, etc. etc. but as a man with a gift for words and a great and precise skill in their use with great care for the exact meaning, effective was to suggest planned, well acted, contrived - to ask for rounds of applause, curtain calls and bows. My whole integrity was called in question".

"I seized the first gap to say, 'I have an important thing to say, very important for me. The best thing I did yesterday was running from the room. I wanted everyone to know I was not running away. I was going out to ensure my integrity. I was rejecting the interpretation which the word 'effective' implied. I knew what D meant, but as a user of words, with skill in words and with a precise meaning for words, to me the use of 'effective' meant that it was all an act.....That was an attack on all my sincerity, on my integrity. In running I utterly repudiated that.....' I was utterly in control of myself, felt very good and sat very upright. I spoke of my style.....I would stick to my style. I would not change it to please anybody. It was part of me. I would modify it, yes, this was part of my coming here. If they did not like my style they could stuff it."

Finally, in his replies to the follow-up questionnaire, A wrote:

"I learned from my participation in the workshop that I was arrogant: I talked too much. I did not listen enough.....

Other people have noticed that since I came back I am much quieter;

I have a look of listening in my eyes".

A's story is by no means unique - there were many instances of conflicts over style. What can we learn from his account of his 'struggle with style'?

A's story portrays for us a series of events which ended in the modification of his personal style. It seems important to note that A did not have, in the first place, any expectation^{of} modifying his style. He only became aware that his style was in any sense a problem through the comments of group members. It is likely that being in an encounter group made it easier for these members to make such comments to A, although, presumably, they would have had the same feelings about his style had they met him elsewhere. Their comments, and especially the remarks of D at A's moment of triumph, forced A into an awareness of the effect he was having on others, an awareness of himself as seen by others. With this awareness, A was in a position to make a decision regarding what he could do about his style. There were presumably several options open to him - he could change in compliance with what he saw as being demands to change, he could ignore or deny these demands or he could affirm his own choice of style. In the event, A chose to "modify" but "not change it to please anybody".

A could have decided not to modify his style at all. This is not to claim that every time A listens rather than talks he makes a decision in the light of his new style. While this may happen sometimes, more often it is not necessary - once the 'big' decision is taken the new ways of behaviour take their place with the old in wherever it is we keep our repertoire between shows.

These three examples represent some of the ways that participants' performance as individuals in the group reveal to them aspects of their being-in-the-world. The issues discussed above - feeling, self-acceptance and personal style - are among many moral issues brought to the surface in groups. Others were : love, sexuality, power, authority, relationship and responsibility. It is of interest to note that the idea of tragedy, the temporary and perhaps essentially doomed nature of relationships, emerged as an important theme. American observers of the encounter group movement (Koch,1971; Back 1973) have asserted that the denial of tragedy in encounter groups is a sign of inauthenticity. While this may be true in the USA, tragedy was certainly a salient theme in these predominantly European groups.

How can it be that such issues emerge in groups? Goffman (1959) describes how we use an implicit morality in everyday life:

"in their capacity as performers, individuals will be concerned with maintaining the impression that they are living up to the many standards by which they and their products are judged. Because these standards are so numerous and so pervasive, the individuals who are performers dwell more than we might think in a moral world. But, qua performers, individuals are concerned not with the moral issue of realising these standards, but with the amoral issue of engineering a convincing impression that these standards are being realised. Our activity, then, is largely concerned with moral matters, but as performers we do not have a moral concern with them. As performers we are merchants of morality....." (pp 243-4).

What appears to happen in an encounter group is that the particular circumstances of this region of social activity direct members' attention or awareness towards the actual moral standards upon which their performances are based. The encounter group is an arena in which moral themes are dramatised and given shape.

Conclusion:

The encounter group experience as 'deep play'

The workshop may be seen as an interlude in the lives of participants - a retreat. They come to it with the interests and concerns of everyday life still dominating their thoughts and actions and eventually must return to that 'reality'. But while at the workshop, they become aware of another 'reality', one in which they can express issues usually taken for granted or hidden. During the workshop, their actions become more expressive of themselves rather than goal-directed or instrumental. That is, participants come to live for a while at the level of being rather than doing, for, in fact, there is nothing to 'do' at an encounter group - there are no tasks to be performed. One woman puts it thus :

"I realised as I spoke that the most time I'd had for myself since 1955.....had only been three days at one time.....That's the longest span I've had for myself, and that this was the third day of the course! What am I going to do tomorrow?"

The workshop is a time for the self. Life can be seen not only as a struggle to fulfil practical needs such as food, shelter, sex and so on but also as a struggle to make sense of what is happening, to create a meaningful world, a personal identity, a sense of self. Group members begin to shift their attention from practical questions such as acquiring professional skills or resolving specific problems

to existential questions such as what it means to be a man, a woman, a parent, a leader.

But what effect does this retreat into another reality, this discovery of meaning, have on participants? While many mention their increased awareness, or their feeling of closeness with and ability to understand others, it is clear that this does not last at anything like the same level of intensity for longer than a week or two. This report is typical:

"At the end of the workshop I felt awfully scared to go home. I didn't know what was going to happen to my relationship with my husband. I knew it would be changed, and I was afraid. Then I was afraid that I was going to lose all that I had found, when I got back to the old habits again and left the very special conditions of complete freedom which were realised at the workshop. I said to someone: "Now I can listen to myself and feel myself all the time. Back in the outside world it will be like trying to hear a small bird in Trafalgar Square at the rush-hour.....
.....The first week went by in an absolute ecstasy: everything went so well that I couldn't believe it. Then came moments of utter despair, when I thought I had lost it all and the whole thing had been a dream, that the new self I had discovered had no reality".

Another participant wrote that:

"I find all these changes forcing me to recognise that the present and the future are going to be hard work, and my false illusions of 'security' have all been shot away".

This transient change in level of awareness seems to be the only reliable effect of attending an encounter group. Certainly, close examination of tapes, journals and follow-up reports does not reveal any evidence of consistent patterns of change in the personalities or behaviour of participants. On the other hand, some members go home and change their jobs, finish their marriages, take a new stance towards their parents, and so on. But there are probably more members who seem satisfied to have been confirmed in the rightness of their way of being a person.

What appears to happen is that the group process, the new reality of the group, makes it possible for the person to become aware of the options and issues involved in their life. Thus the group does not cause change or growth, it only creates conditions in which the person can choose to change, or, indeed, to stay the same. (Moustakas(1956) put this well when he wrote that :

"true growth, actualisation of one's potential, occurs in a setting where the person is felt and experienced as sheer personal being. In such an atmosphere the person is free to explore his capacities and to discover for himself meanings and values of life consistent with the self".

We might also say that such a setting is one in which the person can play. Bruner(1972), writing about the function of play in child development, notes that:

".....it is a means of minimising the consequences of one's actions and of learning, therefore, in a less risky situation.....Second, play provides an excellent opportunity to try combinations of behaviour that would, under functional pressure, never be tried".

Shotter(1973 p76) writes about "the necessity for a risk-free environment, a lack of circumstantial compulsion, a sense of being a free agent".

Thus play, like encounter, is a safe setting in which to experiment. But encounter is more than just experimenting with behaviour. As we have seen, it engages the person at the level of being, and is therefore a peculiar type of play - it is 'deep play'.

The concept of 'deep play' originates in the work of the philosopher Bentham, but has been developed by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz to describe forms of social activity which are not in any obvious sense functional. Geertz(1972) studied the social meaning of cockfighting in Bali and discovered that the outcome of contests made no practical difference, either financially or in status terms, to those involved. What seemed to be happening was that cockfighting provided an arena in which some of the fundamental concerns of Balinese life were dramatised. Cockfighting, is, for the Balinese, a form of art. Geertz(1972 p23) writes :

"The cockfight is 'really real' only to the cocks - it does not kill anyone, castrate anyone, reduce anyone to animal status, alter the hierarchical relations between people, nor re-fashion the

hierarchy; it does not even redistribute income in any significant way. What it does is what, for other peoples with other temperaments and other conventions, Lear and Crime and Punishment do; it catches up these themes - death, masculinity, rage, pride, loss beneficence, chance - and, ordering them into an encompassing structure, presents them in such a way as to throw into a relief a particular view of their essential nature. It puts a construction on them, makes them..... meaningful - visible, tangible, graspable - 'real' in an ideational sense. An image, a fiction, a model, a metaphor, the cockfight is a means of expression; its function is neither to assuage social passions nor to heighten them.....but, in a medium of feathers, blood, crowds and mcney, to display them".

It should be clear that the particular form of ritualised drama that is the basic encounter group also serves to display the essential themes to be found in the lives of group members. Like cockfighting, much of the group's time is spent waiting for that moment when something happens, some contact is made, when, as Geertz puts it, one's subjectivity is opened up to oneself.

Further similarities between encounter and drama are the performance of private talk in a public place, in a louder than usual voice. Rehearsal often precedes talk in groups as in drama. Performance can be seen as 'scripted' (see Berne, 1974). The stage is an environment with its own characteristic props and conventions. Finally, much of the time in the encounter group participants are engaged in witnessing or watching rather than acting. The idea that some of the learning that occurs in groups is produced by modelling or passive watching has been proposed by Peters (1973) and by McLeish (1972,1973).

But whereas the cockfight as a Balinese form of deep play appears to dramatise a closed set of values, in our society it is necessary to have forms of art which illustrate a more open, or emergent, set of possible issues. Indeed, Smith(1976) and Harrison and Lubin(1965) have published research which suggests that the most effective groups are those which leave issues unresolved. Harrison and Lubin (1965 p300) write:

"it may be that the groups which leave the most lasting impact are those which seem to drag on in conflict, never quite giving up, but never quite resolving basic disagreements among the members. It may be that the unresolved issues, the confrontations with differing outlooks and views, the feelings of outrage and dismay, puzzlement and challenges, last longer and are more of a force for learning than the feeling of completion and closure of a more 'successful' T-group experience".

The point of all this is to take the encounter group out of the 'therapy' framework. Encounter is not group therapy. It can more profitably be compared to art, drama, literature and other means by which we inform ourselves about the meanings and values of our actions. While this may not be the only interpretation that can be placed on the encounter group experience, it is a liberating one. It is another step away from a mechanical, scientific view of ourselves towards a view which takes account of our creative selves.

CHAPTER 6

'GROWTH' MOVEMENTS AS FORMS OF ART.

Introduction

"In order to illustrate the facts, to control them more effectively, to induce attitudes, or to inculcate ways of behaviour, artists, philosophers, theologians, and scientists have used various devices. An extraordinarily successful one often used to illuminate areas that might otherwise have remained obscure is the model or metaphor. Its use involves the pretense that something is the case when it is not. Hobbes pretended that the state was a many-jointed monster or leviathan; Shakespeare that it was a hive of honey bees, "Creatures that by a rule in nature teach the act of order to a peopled kingdom". Plato, however, presented the obscure facts of human nature as if they were luminous facts about the state. Descartes pretended that the mind in its body was the pilot of a ship; Locke that it was a room, empty at birth but full of furniture later; and Hume that it was a theatre. Theologians have pretended that the relation between God and man is that of father to son. Optical theorists have pretended that we see by geometry. Metal experts present the facts about metals that break after constant use as if they suffer fatigue, while physicists make believe at some times that light moves in waves, at others that it consists of corpuscles, in order to account for different observable facts in the motion of light". (Turbayne, 1970 p3).

These words can set us on our way toward a deeper analysis of the meaning of 'growth' movements. As Turbayne has pointed out, in many fields of discourse, and particularly in science, metaphor has been used to "illuminate areas that

might otherwise have remained obscure". Scientific progress is marked by the exploitation of analogies which allow comparison between diverse areas of experience. Popper (1963) has used the term "conjecture " to describe this strategy, and Hesse (1966 p157) has portrayed "theoretical explanation as metaphoric redescription of the domain of the explanandum".

What does this mean? These writers are referring to the process by which some problematic experience, something which needs ^{to be} explained, is brought into line, made sense of, by being 'seen through' the frame of reference provided by a different area of life. Thus we might say - 'the universe is like a large machine' or 'man is like a wolf'. This metaphoric link is intended to communicate something new about the universe, or about man. The points of similarity between the two poles of the metaphor are thrown into relief.

But this is not to say that there is any one-to-one identity between what is to be explained and its explanatory metaphor. Such reification results in a 'dead' metaphor - what was illuminating or explanatory becomes merely a way of speaking. As Hesse (1966 p160) explains:

"for a conjunction of items.....to constitute a metaphor it is necessary that there should be patent falsehood or even absurdity in taking conjunction literally. Man is not, literally, a wolf; gases are not in the usual sense collections of massive particles".

Metaphors which are 'alive' are those whose significance has not been fully explored. The phase of testing out the value of a metaphor might be thought of as Kuhn's (1962) 'normal science'. Hesse (1966 p162) claims that "as long as the model (or metaphor) is under active consideration as an ingredient in an explanation, we do not know how far the comparison extends - it is precisely in its extension that the fruitfulness of the model may lie". (emphasis added).

It seems, then, that our analysis of growth movements, if it is to be successful, must offer a metaphor or model in terms of which to view these phenomena. And, indeed, there are many metaphors already available. The most commonly used one is the therapy model, but growth movements have also been seen as educational experiences (eg Training groups), pilgrimages (Back, 1972; Kopp, 1972) and religions. These metaphors have made important contributions to our understanding of growth movements, and to the development of the movements themselves. However, there is another way of looking at growth movements which also promises to be fertile, and it is to this alternative that we now turn. We shall consider growth movements as forms of art.

'Growth' movements as forms of art.

What does it mean to look at growth movements through the framework of art? What do we gain by bringing to growth experiences our understanding of the experience of art? First of all, we can acknowledge that one of the functions of each of these areas of experience is to provide a particular 'reading' of life itself. Both growth movements and art create a world in which the individual's experience of self is transformed and the individual can come to see himself in terms of themes which link personal existence to social life in general. They are both areas outside the world of everyday life, even though they initially emerged from that world, may serve to nourish that world, and eventually may be assimilated back into it.

In literature, in art and in growth movements, there is a simplification of life. They give us a way of focussing on our lives and interest. Price (1968 p220) has this to say about the "framing effect" of the novel : "its model of reality, by its very limits, creates a more intensive field than life can offer, and the co-presence of all the elements felt more sharply". In this "intensive field", the person can come to confront himself:

"there are moments when we are required to stand outside ourselves. We are suddenly forced to consider the self we have known from the inside and to consider it in terms that are not our own familiar words for our feelings and hopes.

We must describe ourselves in a language that applies to others as readily as to ourselves. We are cut off from the stream of private associations and personal history, and we must articulate what we have often felt but seldom needed to recognise much less had to capture in categories that will make sense to others. How difficult this proves is an index of our self-awareness. There are some who have seen themselves largely in the terms of public language; there are others who rarely have done so. (Price, 1968 p261).

Price is here writing about the novel, but how neatly his account fits the experience of being in an encounter group or meditating, which are other frameworks of experience which force us to "consider the self we have known from the inside" in other terms, resulting in self-awareness (note 3). As in the dream, the self becomes an object for itself. The elements of everyday life and everyday experience become re-arranged, for a short while, into a new gestalt.

This, then, is the 'framing' effect of the art experience. As we saw with TM and encounter, such a framing or transformation of experience can only come about with the active co-operation of the individual concerned, a willingness to participate. Willingness to participate has also been shown to be an important factor in the transformations brought about by hypnosis (Barber, 1975) and marijuana smoking (Becker, 1963). It seems to be the willingness of

the individual which gives the communication he or she is attending to the power to influence his or her mode of being in the world:

"When I am reading an interesting novel, I think with and vividly imagine the communications from the printed page. To the extent that I become involved in my imaginings, I do not have contradictory thoughts such as 'This is only a novel', or, 'This is only make-believe'. Instead, I experience a variety of emotions, while empathising and 'living with' the character" (Barber, 1975 p12).

It may be useful to introduce here a concept developed by Williams (1961) - "structure of feeling". Williams argues that beneath all the external characteristics of a way of life there is the "actual living sense, the deep community that makes.....communication possible" (p65). That is, members of a culture share a way of feeling about the world - a "structure of feeling". Williams suggests that it is in the art of a culture that structure of feeling is most likely to be expressed.

In our examination of TM and encounter, we saw that both these approaches to personal growth, in their own ways, supplied participants with experiences of emotionality and awareness of feeling. In the encounter group, those who did not themselves express emotion were witness to the expressed emotions of others. In TM, somatic sensations such as tears or trembling, and moments of joy, were

often reported by meditators. These feelings were put into context by the cognitive frameworks of TM or encounter. Feelings were to be expected, and had significance. Similarly, in art the elicitation of feelings is for a purpose. We talk about the 'pornography of violence' when physical force is dramatised for the sake of excitement alone. It is only when violence has meaning that we consider it to be art.

So far, we have compared art and growth movements in terms of their framing effects ~~and~~ ^{and} in terms of feeling. There is, however, another point of contact - the idea of value. TM and encounter, we realised, made reference to particular realms of acceptance in TM, the dimension of hope (see Note 4) common to them both, were elements of a particular moral stance. Maslow (1968) has suggested that the "search for values" is an important element in growth which results from psychotherapy:

"we may soon even define therapy as a search for values, because ultimately the search for identity is, in essence, the search for one's own, intrinsic values" (p 177).

Similarly for art. Gombrich (1970 p132) has written that:

"in freely submitting to a great work of art and exploring its infinite richness we can discover the reality of self-transcending values".

The 'atypical interpersonal worlds' (Argyris) or 'provinces of reality' (Schutz) which constitute art and growth movements

are areas where taken-for-granted issues are brought into awareness and confronted. These issues are our basic decisions about life, our way of being in the world, the fundamentals of a moral order upon which we build our images of ourselves. As Goffman (1959 p244) puts it : "as performers we are merchants of morality".

This is to say that art and growth movements serve to orient the individual in a moral universe. Many other comparisons could be made. For example, the sociology of these phenomena reveals similarities. Both art and growth movements spread from initial innovations; certain fashions and styles are popular for a time, then become outmoded; new developments in each tend to reflect the influence of charismatic leaders . Also, each has a fragile relationship with popular or mass culture. The self-disclosure game as part of a TV quiz show is no longer growth; the surrealist image in the cigarette advertisement is no longer art. As Cohen and Taylor (1976 p212-3) put it :

"the ability of society to co-opt, infiltrate, and subvert those very areas which we had hoped to hold sacred for the attainment of meaning, progress and self has increased throughout this century. No sooner has a new road to the true self been encountered than it is boxed and packaged for sale in the escape - attempts supermarket, no sooner has a new vocabulary of meaning been articulated, than it is raided for concepts and slogans by calendar makers

and record producers, no sooner have we begun acting in an entirely novel way than we see coming over the horizon a mass of others mimicking our every action".

Yet art and growth movements are nevertheless part of mass culture. In a simple sense, they must be because they affect so many people. But in a more subtle sense, they are the source, as Cohen and Taylor point out, of many developments in popular taste. So art and growth cannot become too esoteric, they must maintain a balance between being exciting and outrageous enough to appeal to the consumer without at the same time losing their ability to take the person outside the reality of everyday life by becoming too popular, too much a part of 'paramount reality'.

Other points of contact between art and growth arise from consideration of the nature of art. Artistic performance is a skill, a personal power, which is made possible by study and practice. The knowledge that art makes available is a truly 'personal knowledge' (Polanyi) - it cannot easily be reproduced in written form or reduced to a set of rules. As McHugh, Raffel, Foss and Blum (1974 ch7) put it, the rule of art is "see it". That is, art only exists in the concrete experience of participating in a work of art. The art experience is a re-experiencing of the intentions, feelings or beliefs of the artist. And this is also an important feature of the growth experience. While it may take much preparation to put on the show that is a growth

movement, the show itself is nothing without the active seeing of the participant. Here is a basic difference between, on the one hand, art and growth, and on the other, therapy and education. Whereas the former take as their criterion the quality of a transient, felt, personal experience, the latter are judged on their efficacy in bringing about permanent change in ability or behaviour.

What brings people back to art and to TM and encounter is that "existential moment" (Moustakas, 1966) when the individual is left with "the chill of self-exposure" (Becker, E, 1971 p7). Moustakas (1966) calls this moment when a person recognises his own existence in the world and the unique and incomparable nature of that existence" (p1).

This world, then, is one of positive experience, or 'good times' (Blumensteil, 1973). It may be constructed by trickery, in the sense of art implicit in 'artifice' - the self may be tricked into revealing its secrets. Art and growth movements are in this sense illusions, existing in the interplay of symbols rather than the material objects symbolised. Thus we have argued that the mantra, a central element in the TM growth movement, is effective not because of its properties as a sound of whatever wavelengths or resonance or neural location or whatever, but because of its symbolic value as a sign of group membership, commitment and so on.

In bringing this look at TM and encounter through the framework of art to a close, some mention should be made of the kind of art these growth movements resemble. These forms of art, like most art in our culture, are in the service of the individual. Art as a means towards maintaining a sense of personal identity is very different from art which portrays a religious, hierarchical or socialist vision of the world. The art which is like growth movements is telling us about what it is like to be an individual person in our culture. The art of, for example, Communist China, is intended to communicate the values of the state. In that art, the individual is seen from the point of view of the group. In our art, the group is seen in terms of the individual. This is part of our unique structure of feeling. As Winnicott (1971 p82) puts it :

"We cannot easily identify ourselves with men and ~~women~~ of early times who so identified themselves with nature and with unexplained phenomena such as the rising and setting of the sun, thunderbolts and earthquakes. A body of science was needed before men and women could become units integrated in terms of time and space, who could live creatively and exist as individuals".

We might add that a body of art was needed as well, to help maintain this image of the self as a unit "integrated in time and space". This problem will be re-examined later. Suffice to say at this point that both art and growth movements appear to contribute towards a sense of individual

rather than group identity. They are both concerned with the development, or growth, of the individual.

Encounter groups and Transcendental Meditation, it has been suggested, can profitably be thought of as forms of art. We can gain new insights into these growth movements by comparing them with novels, films, paintings, drama, poetry and other art forms which create a world apart from everyday life in which moral issues normally taken for granted are dramatised and thrown into relief. Perhaps one of the most important effects of this metaphor is to offer participants in growth movements a new way of making sense of their own experience. The therapy metaphor is one which implicitly asserts that there is something 'wrong', in need of repair, with people who use TM or meditation. The criterion of success in therapy is better functioning - a permanent change in behaviour. But, as we saw, and as other research has shown, this kind of change is not the most frequent product of the growth experience. Usually, people experience a heightened awareness of self which gradually dissolves. The art metaphor leads participants, in the first place, to accept that there is nothing 'wrong' with them, and, secondly, to expect no more than awareness or the "chill of self-exposure". From this point of view, any permanent changes must result from a willingness to change the everyday world and not from an imagined change in basic personality which occurs in the world of the growth centre.

In this section some of the similarities between growth movements and art have been traced. The metaphor of art has been seen to be an appropriate and fertile means of making sense of many of the observed and reported activities of participants in encounter groups and meditation. While there are surely ways in which these activities are not art, it has been suggested that art remains a metaphor which puts a different face on the growth movement, one which, on first sight at least, appears to be both liberating and to have implications for future development of these areas of life. Yet we must not forget that art, here, is only a model. In the following section we examine the credentials of another model - myth.

Art or myth?

Art has been suggested as a model for the growth movement. Yet there is another model - that of myth - which must be seriously considered. Growth movements can be said to offer their members a mythology of personal salvation. As we shall see, the difference between myth and art reveals important issues for people who invest in growth movements.

What is myth? Myth is one variety of human activity that has been used by men of all ages to interpret their social and natural worlds. Maranda (1972 p12) has defined myth thus:

"myths display the structured predominantly culture-specific and shared semantic systems which enable the members of a culture to understand each other and cope with the unknown".

Kirk (1974 p28) writes:

".....myths are on the one hand good stories, on the other hand bearers of important messages about life in general or life-within-society in particular".

Schorer (1960 p355) puts it this way:

"myths are the instruments by which we continually struggle to make our experience intelligible to ourselves. A myth is a large, controlling image that gives philosophical meaning to the facts of ordinary life; that is, which has organising value for experience. Without such images, experience is chaotic, fragmentary and merely phenomenal....."

These definitions of myth disclose similarities between it and TM or encounter. In both myth and growth movements the individual is exposed to a commentary on everyday life. He or she is taken to an area outside that of everyday life and provided with a framework within which the meaning of everyday reality is made clear.

It is of interest that both myths and growth movements are resources which are called upon during times of transition or crisis. These are times when everyday values are reaffirmed or called into question. Turner (1968) makes a strong case for considering myths as "liminal phenomena" with close connections with the ritual of the rite de passage. Turner claims that not only are myths often told at a time or in a site that is 'betwixt and between' but that myths are usually about the transformation of individuals from one status or state to another (see also Campbell, 1949, for a fuller account of the process of personal transformation communicated in the structure of myths). Myths carry many symbols of birth, the growth towards new status, and death, the loss of previous status.

The construction of a world of values outside the everyday world, a world which is entered in times of crisis - this would serve as a characterisation of both myth and growth movements. Yet there is an important difference between growth and myth, which was hinted at above. This difference

is best approached by defining myth in another way.

Barthes (1957) asks the question "what is myth, today?" His answer is that myth is a "type of speech", a system of communication, a message, a form of signification. Therefore, for Barthes it is not necessary that the object or content of a myth have 'mythic' qualities, such as supernatural beings or events, although he does admit that "some objects become the prey of mythical speech for a while, then they disappear, others take their place and attain the status of myth" (Barthes, 1957 p110). Neither is it necessary for myth to be communicated in the form of stories - mythical speech can be conducted in photography, sport, advertising.....and growth movements. Myth is characterised not by medium or by content but by the way it uses language. Myth is for Barthes a "meta: language", a second language in which one speaks about the first.

The difference between myth and art exists somewhere in the area between these two languages proposed by Barthes - a language of description and of experience, and a language of valuing, commentary and of mythologising. Mythical speech consists of talking about experience in terms of values or "controlling images" (Schorer). That is, what is apparently being communicated is only a symbol, or metaphor, for another level of discourse entirely. For example, a myth such as Beowulf is on the surface a

story of how the hero defeats a monster, Grendel. Yet at another level the tale symbolises certain moral values - courage, loyalty, the struggle of good against evil, and so on. Similarly, an example given by Barthes : advertisements for washing powder are, on the face of it, conveying information about the product in as positive a fashion as possible. But, as Barthes reveals, there is implicit in the text and picture a whole moral order, a valuing of life signified by the emphasis on softness, cleanliness and strength.

To introduce an idea developed by Turbayne (1970), myth necessitates being used by metaphors or symbols. That is, the gap between symbol and what is symbolised is forgotten, the metaphor is reified. Turbayne (1970 p22) writes:

"What was before.....a screen or filter is now more appropriately called a disguise or mask. There is a difference between using a metaphor and being used by it, between using a model and mistaking the model for the thing being modelled. The one is to make believe that something is the case; the other is to believe it".

We are now ready to return to growth movements. TM and encounter become myths when those involved begin to believe that the particular ordering of reality provided by these experiences is true, is the ultimate reality. On the other hand, growth movements are forms of art when participants continue to believe that everyday reality is fundamental that and/they must eventually return to it.

Now, given this distinction between myth and art, it is clear that TM and encounter partake of some of the qualities of each. There are people who meditate or go to encounter groups in search of that "chill of self-exposure" or "existential moment" which occurs when the controlling image or metaphor dissolves. There are others who seek the opposite. They are intent on re-affirming the power of their myths and have no wish to question the certainty of the moral order provided.

This is not to say that the mythologising function of growth movements is a negative aspect of these organisations. It is probably true that people need some kinds of myth to believe in, and growth movements, we may imagine, are among those myths which "supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward, in counteraction to those other constant human fantasies that tend to tie it back". (Campbell, 1949).

The difference between myth and art can be seen more clearly if we consider how each is created. It seems as though myths are constructed as part of an unintended process whereas art is the result of an intentional act.

Typical mythical figures in our culture are, let us say, the mental patient, the cowboy, the Freemason and the Highlander. We have some idea of how these myths come to be presented to us. For example Scheff(1966) has shown how the popular conception of the mental patient is a by-product of

of the way the news media report cases involving these people. Calder (1974) has written at some length on how the mythology of the Wild West has been disseminated through films and popular novels. Roberts(1972) in his book The Mythology of the Secret Societies tells us that the spectre of Freemasonry was spread across Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries in the form of rumour and pamphleteering. Roberts documents in detail just how little basis in fact there was for these assertions. The mythology of the secret societies, he writes, was based on "errors", "delusions" and "nonsense". Finally, Prebble (1963) tells of how the lairds used phony clan gatherings and commissioned books for the purpose of resurrecting the myth of the Highlander after the clearances.

that whatever
It should be clear/these stories about mental patients, cowboys, Freemasons and Highlanders might be, they are certainly not art. But what are they? Esslin, (1975) would term such creations "folk literature", and the difference between the way folk literature and literature-as-art is constructed will prove to be instructive. Esslin takes as an example of folk literature the television series. He points out that the prime concern of the programme-makers is to gain as large a viewing audience as possible. In this task they face some of the same problems confronted by bards and minstrels, whose function was to make up tales to amuse and flatter their patrons. The strategy adopted by both bards and programme makers is similar. Firstly, they

call upon a limited number of stereotyped heroes, plots and situations which are of proven popularity. Secondly, their finished products are carefully monitored in the light of audience feedback. Esslin shows how the directors of a TV series will attempt to discover which are the most popular characters or types of episode, and develop these aspects of the drama to the exclusion of others.

The result of all this, Esslin suggests, is drama which is "shaped by the audience's subconscious". He writes:

"it is because the makers of the series are motivated by their desire to succeed that the series, the longer they run, become more and more a product of the imagination, desires, fears and dreams of their audience". (Esslin, 1975 p194).

Unlike an art which is the product of an artist's individual vision, folk literature is a reading of themes present in culture as a whole :

"folk literature is the very opposite of individual creativeness: it represents a common meeting-ground of the imagination of a people or civilisation where its preoccupations and interests are focussed. (Esslin, 1975 p195).

It is impossible to create myth consciously or intentionally. The myth-makers of the twentieth century (see Rieff 1960) may be artists or authors (Lawrence or Tolkein) or scientists (Freud), but their work could only be swept into the world of

myth as a result of what must have been an unknowable popular reaction.

Contrast this with art. A work which we recognise as art is effective in the seeing (or hearing or touching) of it, or in the memory of that seeing. It is art when we are participating in it, when we are experiencing or re-experiencing in the presence of the work. At these times the art-work does not stand for anything else, it is not a symbol. All that there can be is the art-work and ourselves. (McHugh et al 1974).

What are we saying here? Perhaps it will help to consider the example of painting as representation. There are many paintings of, say storms at sea. And yet, when we look at Turner's work, we are not so interested in whether he has accurately reported what happened when this ship ran aground, or went on fire, whether he has put in the correct number of masts, and so on. These matters are not important. What we want from this work of art is, perhaps, some symbolisation of a feeling we have. We are searching for another way to "consider the self we have known from the inside".

It is easy to recognise that art is not, primarily, representation. There is a similar case which states that art is not mythologising. When art becomes myth, it starts to go beyond the immediate transaction with the art-consumer, and point towards some "controlling image". For example,

that theme from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony becomes a sign of courage in adversity, the opening bars from 'Thus spake Zarathustra' signify everything wondrous. The Mona Lisa means enigma. These images which were art now become elements in a cultural symbolic universe - they become mythologies, to use Barthes' term.

Now we can be aware of the distinction between the myth-maker and the artist. Myths provide moral messages in the service of a wider system of thought or moral order. As Fromm has put it, the need for myth appears to flow from the "desire to submit to an authority who solves one's own problem of existence". The artist, on the other hand, while creating experiences which have to do with moral issues, designs these experiences to leave the individual in a state of confrontation with his or her self, in the "existential moment". The moral conduct which is made possible by the awareness brought through art is a choice. Myths provide pre-formed ways of coping with recurring situations - Burke (1941) talks about these as being "equipment for living".

Growth movements appear to be areas of experience poised between myth and art. TM and encounter to some extent provide 'images of life' and are to that extent myths. But they also offer areas in which individuals may discover or re-discover the taken-for-granted significance of every day acts. They are also areas in which individuals construct or maintain their sense of personal identity.

The need for such forms of activity appears to arise from the structure of feeling in contemporary society. Laing (1960) talks about "ontological insecurity", the lack of any sense of:

".....integral selfhood and personal identity, of the permanency of things, of the reliability of natural processes, of the substantiality of others.....(of) any unquestionable self-validating certainties" (p39).

May (1969) describes the avoidance of close relationships and inability to feel in our "schizoid world". Matza (1964) mentions the "mood of fatalism" in society.

From these analyses of the contemporary "human condition", at least as it is experienced by people in those sectors of society from which growth movements draw their support, it seems that personal identity is problematic. That is, the myths of whatever kind which offered the individual a secure place in a universal system are no longer credible. Science, skepticism, the 'global village'.....whatever the reasons, modern man is caught in a cultural relativism. He no longer is ascribed on identity; he must construct an identity, either through returning to myth, or moving on to art.

The writer who has seen this most clearly is Otto Rank (see Rank, 1956,1959; Hudson 1976). Rank suggests that personality, or personal identity, is best understood as

constituting an individual's work of art. Thus he tags the neurotic condition a "failed art-project". For Rank the healthy person is one who is continually re-inventing his or her self :

"we can define self-determination as a voluntary and conscious creating of one's own fate. This means to have no fate in an external sense, but to accept oneself as fate and fate-creating power" (Rank, 1956, p70).

Rank argues that while the 'average man' believes in religion, folk-lore or myth, the neurotic

"perceives himself as unreal and reality as unbearable, because with him the mechanisms of illusion are known and destroyed by self-consciousness" (page 72).

The only way out of this impasse, the state of "ontological insecurity" or "mood of fatalism" mentioned above, is if the individual "strives for the acceptance of himself as fate-determining"(p72). If a sense of self is not to be given in everyday social life, Rank is saying, then we must face up to the fact that the only alternative is to create selves, to exist in a "temporary and limited constructiveness", to be artists.

From this perspective, that of the person as an "artist of life" (Suzuki; 1960), growth movements can be seen as art-forms, places in which art is carried out within certain constraints and in a certain style, places where people do art. But, further, we can begin to come to terms with the personal meaning of art.

Cohen and Taylor (1976) make a distinction between "reality work" - the activities we undertake to maintain an orderly social world - and "identity work" - the activities which provide us with a sense of self. They write :

"we do not simply have to get through life; socialisation isn't just a matter of learning how to do reality work. We also require a sense of ourselves as a person who is getting through life in ways which are at times quite distinctively different from even those who follow very similar life plans.....

.....living in contemporary society involves us in 'reality work' and 'identity work'.

These writers are agreeing with Winnicott, (pp19-20) who, earlier, suggested that the ability to live as an individual "integrated in terms of time and space", was a relatively recent historical development.

So, it seems, we do art to maintain our sense of personal identity. We need to have some such activity if we are to exist as individuals. Traditional forms of art - painting, poetry, the novel - and newer forms such as growth movements are arenas in which we re-discover, or re-create, our selves. In Rank's words, we experience ourselves as "fate-creating powers" in these safe, protected, 'unreal' worlds.

What we are creating in these worlds is a sense of individuality. Goffman (1961) talks about "role distance"

as the means by which the holder of role - say that of teacher - can express other aspects of self, or other selves, in the way he or she goes about playing that role. There is, then, always a sense in which the individual is playing the role of himself. Weaving in and through all the social or other-directed roles within which people act, is the continually evolving role of being oneself.

We can conceptualise this project of planning who one will be, of constructing a biography, as a personal art project. The person or artist creates an identity from culturally available symbolic resources. Activities such as TM and encounter extend the range of symbolic worlds which can be drawn upon. From this perspective, then, we can use the language of art to talk about growth movements.

Conclusions

Where does all this leave the idea of personal 'growth' or 'change'? This work began with the aim of saying something about 'growth' movements and 'growth' experiences. What can now be said?

The sense of self or personal identity which people have can be seen as something which is maintained through continued use of areas outside the 'paramount reality' of everyday life. By dipping into these areas, these "identity sites" as Cohen and Taylor would have it, we remind ourselves of the meaning and significance of otherwise taken-for-granted aspects of life.

For example, TM makes that "inner silence" meaningful. Encounter may leave us with a memory of what it was like to have acted 'spontaneously', or what it means to have a certain approach to life. This is what becoming a person (see Rogers, 1961) seems to be about. Shotter (1974) talks about claiming natural powers as personal powers. That is, things that just happen to us become, through processes of negotiation, things that we do.

When we talk about the 'taken-for-granted' we mean that which has also been referred to as 'myth' - the desire for a definite, fixed, identity or way of being. But, as we have seen, identity is not something that one has, it is something

one makes. As Schachtel(1961) puts it, those who attempt to escape from the challenge of making themselves:

"want to substitute a fixed, reified personality for the on-going process of living, feeling, acting and thinking in which alone they could find themselves. They search for a definite, stable shell called 'personality' to which they want to cling. Their quest is self-defeating, because what they search for is an alienated concept of a thing rather than a living, developing person. Their wish is a symptom, not a cure. In this symptom, however, both the malady of alienation and the longing for a more meaningful life find expression, even though in a way which perpetuates the ill from which they wish to escape. The self-conscious preoccupation with this wished-for magical object called 'personality' interferes with the actual experience of living". (pp75-76).

As Erikson (1956 p57) has it, a sense of identity "is never gained once and for all. Like a good conscience, it is constantly lost and regained....."

Growth movements such as TM and encounter, we have seen, are like art in so far as they provide arenas in which the moral issues upon which we build our identities are dramatised and thrown into relief. Growth movements are sources of symbols which can be used to carry forward our lived relatedness to the world, our being-in-the-world. And thus we can say: art is a form of personal growth.

APPENDIX A

Notes

Some of the effects reported by people who meditate for long periods are similar to those observed in 'sensory deprivation' experiments or in individuals who have undergone lengthy spells in isolation because of imprisonment, natural disaster, sea voyages and the like (see Lilly, 1956; Vernon, 1963; Haggard, 1964; Miller, 1962). All these types of isolation or withdrawal from the world appear to involve severe alterations in levels of cognitive, perceptual and emotional functioning. In the most extreme cases, this alteration takes the form of regression. As Lilly (1956 p8) puts it:

"if body-libido is not discharged somatically, discharge starts through fantasy; but apparently this is neither an adequate mode nor can it achieve an adequate rate of discharge in the presence of the rapidly rising level. At some point a new threshold appears for more definite phenomena of regression : hallucinations, delusions, oceanic bliss, etc."

Miller (1962) suggests that isolation sets problems for the individual's ego - autonomy :

"the solitary prisoner experiences the emptiness of his world as a threat to his sanity and endeavours to make himself less affected by the emptiness - that is, to maintain ego - autonomy from the environment - in order to retain his capacity for rational thinking and for distinguishing the real from the unreal - that is, to maintain ego-autonomy from the id."

The struggle to maintain a sense of self, a functioning ego, in conditions of isolation, can have positive effects. As Lilly (1956) notes, "most survivors report, after several weeks exposure to isolation, a new inner security and a new integration of themselves on a deep and basic level" Haggard (1964 p438) writes that:

"there are indications that in cases where an individual has repeatedly experienced the conditions of experimental isolation, adoptive mechanisms develop which tend to reduce the disturbing aspects of the experience and, in fact, may result in integrative and lasting personality changes".

Meditation appears to provide a setting in which the effects of isolation and sensory deprivation are harnessed in the interest of a certain type of change. Meditators on 'rounding' courses, particularly, report isolation phenomena - hallucinations, libidinal urges, oceanic bliss and the like. It is just at these times that the individual is also exposed to the effect of intensive interaction with other meditators and cognitive input in the form of video-tapes of Maharishi.

Perhaps, then, the long periods of isolation serve to 'unfreeze', to use Lewin's term, the individual's way of seeing the world, and the exposure to the TM world-view shifts his perspective on to a level which is "re-frozen" on return to everyday life.

Similar procedures are used in Naikan and Morita - the

Japanese systems of psychotherapy (see Iwai and Reynolds, 1970; Kitsuse, 1965; Gibson, 1975; Kora, 1965; Takeuchi, 1965 and Murase and Johnson, 1974). The core of these systems of treatment appears to be a period of bed rest, social isolation and self-reflection lasting for a week or more. One of the effects of this regime is, as Kora (1965) has put it, the patient's re-discovery of his "desire to live". The period of isolation brings the person to such a pitch of tedium that afterwards his surroundings are seen as possessing a fresh charm and delight. Again, this is an effect reported by meditators on long courses.

Note 2. The significance of the mantra.

This whole question of the significance of the mantra recalls Winnicott's(1971) discussion of the meaning of those certain objects - pieces of cloth, wool, blankets and so on - to which babies display marked attachment and affection, and which Winnicott has termed "transition objects". Winnicott argues that the transition object stands for the breast, or the mother, the first relationship which, in the early stages of the mother's total adaptation to her child, appeared to the baby to be under his or her magical or omnipotent control. The object remains a symbol of such satisfaction during the period when the mother "disillusions" (Winnicott's term) the baby. Winnicott (1971p17) puts it thus:

"the object represents the infant's transition from a state of being merged with the mother to a state of being in relation to the mother as something outside and separate".

An important feature of the transition object is that the claim of the infant to it is respected by adults: "the infant assumes rights over the object, and we agree to this assumption" (p5). It appears to the infant to be an object which gives warmth, and is treated with affection. Through time, the object loses its meaning, to be replaced by a wider territory of intermediate experience - culture in its larger sense.

The mantra can be seen as a kind of transition object. It is a symbol of the individual's relationship with a guru, from whom the mantra ultimately comes, and with a system of thought and social organisation which promises enlightenment and complete satisfaction. But also, like the transition object, it exists in that intermediate area of experience between the totally subjective and the totally objective. And here we might recall Miller's (1962-see above Note 1) discussion of ego-autonomy. Miller suggested that the isolated individual struggles to maintain a sense of self, an ego, separate from the powerful demands of inner, id, forces, on the one hand, and environmental pulls on the other. It is in the area of experience that the mantra appears to function. The mantra is a sound which is a valued personal possession, a part of the individual's inner life but not a product of his own subjectivity, which gives succor and withstands all attacks on it. In these ways the mantra is similar to the transition object. And also, like the transition object, it is not a spontaneous product of the inner life, it also exists in and is received from the external world.

So, it may be that, like a transition object, a mantra is a means of maintaining the illusion of perfect relationship in the face of reality. But, unlike the transition object, the mantra may be used for many years. However, the meaning of the mantra does, to some extent, become lost, or fade - the 'advanced techniques' include adjustments to the mantra which appear to restore its potency.

This way of looking at the mantra raises other questions. Could it be that those who benefit from meditation are those who underwent difficulties at the stage of development in childhood characterised by the presence of transition objects? This hypothesis has yet to be tested.

However, not only those who experience such childhood difficulties may be likely to seek a perfect relationship as symbolised by the mantra. The evidence for the importance of relationships in psychological well-being has been recently reviewed by Henderson(1977). And Bowlby(1976) writes:

"evidence is accumulating that human beings of all ages are happiest and able to deploy their talents to best advantage when they are confident that, standing behind them, there are one or more trusted persons who will come to their aid should difficulties arise. The person trusted, also known as an attachment figure....can be considered as providing his(or her) companion with a secure base from which to operate".

Bowlby is here referring to the secure bases which are most prevalent in Western society - husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, friends, and so forth. We do not have to accept Bowlby's theoretical point of view to see the truth of this observation. But meditators appear to be exploiting quite a different form of "secure base". Their base is, ultimately, their relationship with their guru, and the word he has given them, and also their relationship with others who share this commitment.

Self-awareness is a central theme of this thesis but one which has escaped direct examination. How do people become aware of themselves? What does it mean to be self-aware, and what effect does this have on personal functioning and personal identity?

Unfortunately there is not space to give these questions the attention they deserve. Some aspects of this question can, however, be approached. In their series of experimental studies, Duval and Wicklund(1972) demonstrate various ways in which people are reminded of their "status as an object in the world", are thrown into a state of "objective self-awareness". Perhaps because of the behaviourist bias, Duval and Wicklund suggest that objective self-awareness is a response to certain stimuli - catching sight of oneself in a mirror, hearing one's recorded voice, being watched by an audience. They add that this response is felt as a negative experience :

".....we would argue that the objective state will be uncomfortable when endured for considerable time intervals. As the individual examines himself on one dimension after another he will inevitably discover ways in which he is inadequate....."(Duval and Wicklund,1972 p4).

These writers believe, as is made apparent in this passage, that objective self awareness is always accompanied by negative self evaluation.

Yet we know that people enjoy preening themselves in front of mirrors. Some people are even stage performers because they like being watched by an audience. How can these facts be reconciled with Duval and Wicklunds's theory?

The answer comes from a rather different source - the phenomenological studies of Sartre. Sartre tells us that we are only "reminded of our object - like status" when the appearance of other (another person) undermines our centralisation of the world in ourselves. Sartre offers us the famous example of the voyeur (Sartre, 1969: Pt.3.ch1). When the voyeur, spying through a keyhole, realises that someone is looking at him, he suddenly becomes no longer master of the situation, he is in a "world which flows toward the Other" In that moment, he exists for the Other.

Now it is easier to understand the nature of objective self awareness. It occurs when we are surprised, or tricked, into losing control of the situation. Goffman (1974) has used the term "flooding-out" to describe this experience. Thus it seems that we become aware of ourselves as objects, become able to evaluate ourselves 'objectively', with all that implies, when the carpet is figuratively pulled from beneath our feet. Much more could be said about this experience. Yet it should be clear that good art, and good growth experiences have just this effect, or turning the world upside-down, of leading us to the point of being able to see ourselves from the outside.

In growth movements the work ethic is replaced by the hope ethic. Many of the personal benefits reported by participants in growth movements can be seen to flow from the discovery of hope. As Kopp(1972), writing about psychotherapy as a form of growth, puts it: "the patient's longing for growth is the central force of his pilgrimage".

Frank(1961,1974) places much emphasis on the supplicant's belief in improvement as a factor in therapeutic change:

"the chief problem of all patients who come to psychotherapy is demoralisation and.....the effectiveness of all psychotherapeutic schools lies in their ability to restore patients' morale... ..despite their differences, all therapeutic rationales and rituals have certain effects in common. They heighten the patient's sense of mastery over the inner and outer forces assailing him by labelling them and fitting them into a conceptual scheme, as well as by supplying success experiences".

Finally, Jourard (1971) mentions "dispiritedness" as an element in various kinds of illness.

The growth movement appears to offer an 'image of life, which is, in Jourard's terms,"inspiring", which sets out the possibility of a better future.

APPENDIX B Research Documents

Contents:

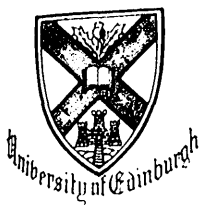
Meditation research

- 1) Letter given to people about to learn TM
- 2) List of items in open-ended questionnaire given to those about to learn TM
- 3) List of items in open-ended questionnaire sent to experienced meditators
- 4) Letter sent to experienced meditators
- 5) Discussion paper sent to meditators

Encounter group research

- 1) Letter sent out before first workshop
- 2) Items in pre-workshop questionnaire
- 3) Items in post-workshop questionnaire
- 4) Journal instructions (same on both occasions)
- 5) Letter sent out before second workshop
- 6) Items in pre-workshop questionnaire
- 7) Items in post-workshop questionnaire
- 8) Paper published in Newsletter

Actual samples of the open-ended questionnaires sent out are not included. In these questionnaires each question or suggested topic was followed by a considerable space in which people could write at length. To have inserted such bulky documents would have resulted in an unnecessary and undesirable increase in the thickness of this volume.



UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Department of Psychology

60 PLEASANCE, EDINBURGH EH8 9TJ

~~031-556 7103~~

667 1011 ext 4305

Dear meditator-to-be,

You are being invited to participate in a research project, under the auspices of the Department of Psychology at Edinburgh University, into the practice of Transcendental Meditation. The purpose of this research is to attempt to find out what effect TM has on people's lives.

You will find along with this letter a questionnaire and two short exercises. Please feel free to answer the questions in the questionnaire as briefly or in as much detail as you think is appropriate. The two exercises may seem a bit strange to you, but don't be dismayed - there are no right or wrong answers.

Finally, it must be emphasised that anything you write in the questionnaire or communicate to me personally is treated as strictly confidential information, and will be used only for research purposes. When you have completed the questionnaire and the other items please return them, sealed in the envelope provided, to the Centre when you come to be initiated.

Thanking you for your co-operation,

Yours sincerely,

John McLeod

John McLeod.

Items in open-ended questionnaire given to those about
to learn TM

Name:

Address:

Age:

Marital Status:

Occupation:

How did you find out about Transcendental Meditation?

How many people do you know who meditate?

What relationship are they to you (family, friends,
colleagues)?

Do you have any experience of other meditation or
yoga techniques? Please specify

Do you have any experience of consciousness -altering
drugs (eg marijuana)?

Are you at present receiving any psychiatric treatment?

Why do you think you decided to learn TM?

What effects do you think TM will have on the
way you are and the way you live your life?

Items in open-ended questionnaire sent to experienced meditators

Name:

Address:

Age:

Marital status:

Occupation:

How often do you meditate?

When were you taught to meditate?

Have you even given up meditation for any period of time? (Please specify)

How often do you attend group meditations?

How often do you receive checking?

How often have you attended rounding courses?

Do you live with people who meditate?

How many people do you know who have learned TM?

How many of them still meditate, as far as you know?

How did you find out about TM?

Why do you think you decided to learn TM?

Do you think TM is worth the money you paid for it?

Do you have any experience of other meditation or yoga techniques? Did you try these before or after taking up TM?

Do you have any experience of consciousness-altering drugs (eg marijuana)?

Have you ever received any psychiatric or psycho-therapeutic treatment?

What effect do you think TM has had on the way you are and the way you live your life? Please give as much detail as possible.

How is that TM can have such effects on you - how do you think it 'works'.



UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
Department of Psychology
4 Roxburgh Street, Edinburgh EH8 9TA
031-667 1011 ext 4305

Dear meditator,

You are being invited to participate in a research project, under the auspices of the Department of Psychology at Edinburgh University, into the practice of Transcendental Meditation. The purpose of this research is to attempt to find out what effect TM has on people's lives. Even if you no longer meditate, your comments would be most welcome.

Your name and address, but no other information about you, were provided by the Edinburgh TM Centre.

You will find along with this letter a questionnaire relating to your meditation experiences. Please answer the questions in as much detail as possible.

Finally, it must be emphasised that anything you write in the questionnaire or communicate to me personally is treated as strictly confidential information, and will be used only for research purposes. When you have completed the questionnaire please return it, sealed in the envelope provided, without delay.

Thanking you for your co-operation,

Yours sincerely

John McLeod
John McLeod.

"The personal meaning of Transcendental
Meditation : a discussion paper".

John McLeod
Dep. of Psychology
University of Edinburgh
July 1977

Acknowledgement:

My thanks to all those at the Edinburgh TM Centre, not only for their help in making this research possible, but for so much else besides.

I would welcome any comments that meditators might have on either matters of fact or interpretation presented in the paper. Written comments should be addressed to me at:

Department of Psychology
4 Roxburgh Street
Edinburgh

Or by phone at 031-229-6711

INTRODUCTION

This paper has been written to stimulate comment. It is concerned to describe and interpret the experiences that people have when they do Transcendental Meditation, and is thus addressed to these individuals. The criticisms, elaborations, and identifications of areas of agreement and disagreement with which I hope they (you) will respond will indicate the extent to which this undertaking has been successful.

In the first place it is necessary to say a little about the social and historical background to the TM movement. Transcendental Meditation is one of the meditation techniques developed in the Indian Hindu tradition and passed on through generations of masters, or gurus, and their disciples. TM itself was introduced to the West by an Indian guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. The details of this story will be familiar to readers. And yet it is surely of interest that a meditation technique, and, indeed, a whole system of thought, which evolved in one culture, could have become so important to members of a very different culture. How can this happen?

Several commentators have noted that science, bureaucracy, technology, the mass media and all the other trappings of modern industrial society have altered man's sense of who he is and what is his place in the world. Whereas we can imagine that primitive, pre-industrial man lived in a moral world of unquestioning religious belief and a social world in which his identity and status were fixed and stable, modern man is faced with the dilemma of relativity - he must choose his beliefs, he must construct his own identity. So, for modern man (and woman), the sources of right action and conduct - his beliefs and his concept of self - are problematic as they have never been before.

The sociologist Peter Berger argues that this 'existential crisis' has come about primarily through the secularisation of society, the diminishing in importance of organised religion. He writes:

"through most of empirically available human history, religion has played a vital role in providing the overarching canopy of symbols for the meaningful integration of society. The various meanings, values and beliefs operative in a society were ultimately 'held together' in a comprehensive interpretation of reality that related human life to the cosmos as a whole".

This "comprehensive interpretation of reality" once provided by religion has been largely replaced in modern society by the essentially impersonal, ever-changing world-view provided by science. No doubt Berger speaks for many when, commenting on the consequences of the scientific world-view, he writes that "there is nothing very funny about finding oneself stranded, alone, in a remote corner of a universe devoid of human meaning".

The popular appeal of the TM movement can only be understood in this context. The context is one of generalised feelings of alienation, dissatisfaction with present-day ways of life and a sense of insecurity and lack of direction. The act of meditating can be seen as an attempt to escape from this chaos, a bid to find a space where one can be oneself, outside the demands and routines of everyday life. Yet at the same time TM helps the person to make sense of that everyday world - its philosophical basis offers a "comprehensive interpretation of reality". But perhaps there is a sense in which meditation fulfils a deeper personal need than just that of adjustment to society. Andrew Weil has suggested that the "desire to alter consciousness is an innate normal drive analogous to hunger or the sexual drive". He notes that:

"the need for periods of non-ordinary consciousness begins to be expressed at ages far too young for it to have much to do with social conditioning. Anyone who watches very young children without revealing his presence will find them regularly practising techniques that induce striking changes in mental states. Three-and-four-year-olds, for example, commonly whirl themselves into vertiginous stupors. They hyperventilate and have other children squeeze them around the chest until they faint. They also choke each other to produce loss of consciousness".

To Weil's observations we might add the age-old and cross-cultural preoccupation with consciousness - changing agents such as drugs, alcohol, trance, dance and song. This is merely to introduce the idea, without expanding on it at this point, that it may be in the very nature of consciousness to periodically demand its transformation, both through sleep and through invented, culturally - transmitted techniques such as meditation.

That is some of the background to the research which is reported in this paper. It is research which has evolved from an interest in the symbolic rather than the biological side of human nature. That is, it attempts to discover what

meditation means to the people who do it. Why they do it, the ways it makes sense to them. Behind questions such as these lies an assumption that people have reasons for acting as they do - their acts mean something to them and to other people involved. It may be difficult to find out just what these reasons or meanings are in any instance, because people may deny or conceal their intentions, or they may be working from beliefs and assumptions that are so 'common-sense', 'obvious' or 'taken-for-granted' that they have difficulty talking about them. Nevertheless, it seems to be true that, if called upon to do so, people can in most circumstances give an account of their actions.

This is to say : people do not respond automatically and mechanically to physiological changes in their hormone levels, blood lactate levels and the like. People are not 'meat machines'. They must interpret these bodily events, they must learn how to make sense of them. For example, the physiology of pregnancy and labour is presumably the same for all women in all cultures, yet there are vast differences in how these factors - pain, immobility, hormonal changes and so on - are interpreted. While women in some societies are back at work within hours, in our culture new mothers are typically taken care of for some time after labour. So we can see that the same physiological state can produce very different behavioural outcomes when the people involved possess contrasting frames of reference or systems of interpretation.

It has been necessary to make this point - that physiological states have symbolic significance - at some length because all of the celebrated research on meditators has concentrated on the bodily changes that happen during meditation. I take these reports as read. I assume that all the people in this study are experiencing profound changes in their body chemistry when they meditate. However, it seems implausible to me that these physiological changes are enough, by themselves, to explain what happens to meditators. After all, meditators have expectations, reasons for meditating, knowledge of what should, or what might, happen, and so on, and I hope to be able to show that these ideas, beliefs and expectations interact with the bodily phenomena to produce the experiences meditators report and the benefits they claim.

It is worth remembering, in this context, that the physiological event of meditating is caused, in the first place, by the will, or intention, to meditate. Similarly, it seems to me that the person begins with the wish or intention to live a better life, and in various ways uses the practice of meditation to help achieve this goal.

How the study was done

The purpose of this study has been to find out what meditators have to say about meditating - their reports on its effects, their ideas, theories and expectations. These reports have been brought together to form a description of what happens when people meditate, and this description has been used as a basis for further interpretation and analysis. The information used in this research has been gathered in the following manner: the author has been a meditator for more than six years - his observations and experiences have been called upon. Secondly, open-ended questionnaires were sent to 185 long-term (more than one year since initiation) meditators. 72 questionnaires, one letter and a postcard were returned and these documents have provided most of the statements used below as examples. The author also talked with 20 people beginning meditation, some of whom also wrote about their experiences. There were also informal, unstructured interviews with over 30 meditators of whom 12 were close friends or family and whose testimony is therefore particularly reliable. In addition, a small group of six people who have given up meditation were also interviewed informally. Finally, public documents such as newspapers, newsletters and books have been consulted.

What do meditators say about meditation?

Before presenting a more detailed analysis of meditators' accounts it might be useful to give an example of the kind of material being used. Here are the responses of three experienced meditators to the question - "what effect do you think TM has had on the way you are and the way you live your life?"

- "1. SELF CONFIDENCE; am generally more assured. Hands shake less, breathing less disturbed in tense situations. Better in public situations, although still nervous when called on to speak publicly etc.
2. ENERGY; probably more stamina or merely distribute energy better instead of having 'bursts'. Excess energy, rather disturbing eg after rounding, because not dissimilar to experiences when hypermanic.
3. ORDER; approach to study, paperwork, etc much more ordered. First degree, before learnt to meditate, more taxing and stressful than present postgrad. course.
4. VALUES; some values changed, eg no longer eat meat, but probably going in these directions anyway.
5. SENSITIVITY; I think I am more sensitive to nature and all senses are finer. Reactions more consistent, less subjective.
6. EMOTIONS; much more independent emotionally and take misfortunes with no pain. Find this disturbing' as I feel very isolated, but am rarely upset or depressed."

"It has made me able to cope with a long hard day of study - I feel TM stops me from getting as 'screwed-up' as I used to get with the worries of being able to cope with only 24 hours a day and the seeming need for 30 hours. I seem to be able to organise myself more and apply logic more often and more determinedly.

The feeling of being more able to apply myself and feeling relaxed and able to cope with anything applies across the board and not only to studying.

There was a time before I started meditating where the endlessness of work and the increase of burdens of responsibility, ie money matters, house management, being able to cope with the emotionalism of fellow students who were finding their studies overpowering, began to wear me down to the extent that I was physically tired almost permanently. I feel that I am still pressurised in the same manner, but since starting TM the tiredness and apathy have left me."

Greater sense of relaxation

"It made me relax"

"I do feel more relaxed"

"....helps me to relax when feeling tense and gives a feeling of well-being afterwards"

Better organised life

"I'd say that I live a more regulated life, or, at least, that TM makes it easier to live a regulated life autonomously"

"I feel calmer, hence better able to decide and discriminate between how to divide my time"

"I seem to be able to organise myself more and apply logic more often and more determinedly".

These five effects - less anxiety, increased ability to cope with problems, greater energy, sense of relaxation, and better organisation of life, - are found over and over again in meditators' reports, in conversations with them and in the official claims made by the movement as a whole (for example in summaries of research and in newsletters). Later on some more unusual (in meditators) effects of doing TM will be reviewed. For the moment, however, we shall see that an examination of the process of becoming a meditator and doing TM regularly will take us a long way towards understanding why meditators should report these 'main effects'.

Becoming a meditator

The process by which people become meditators is described in this section. The first question which must be asked is ----- how do people find out about meditation? And then, how does the manner of discovering meditation affect their expectations and subsequent experience? To throw some light on these problems, the questionnaire sent to meditators contained the following questions: 'how did you find out about TM?' and 'why do you think you decided to learn TM?'

Analysis of their replies reveals that 57% of this group of experienced meditators found out about TM through personal contact - either by knowing someone who meditated or by having TM recommended by a yoga teacher or doctor. The remaining 43% learned about TM by reading newspaper or magazine articles, watching a TV programme, picking up a leaflet, spotting an advertisement or poster, or dropping in on an introductory talk. A detailed breakdown of sources of contact with TM is given below.

Source of first contact

Friend or family member who meditated	50%
Informed by yoga teacher or doctor	7%
Poster/advertisement/leaflet	21%
Articles/books/TV programmes	16%
Introductory talk	6%

Total no. of informants: 72

It appears, then, to be the case that most people who become meditators already know quite a bit about TM - from friends, advisors or articles - even before they are exposed to the introductory talk which precedes initiation and learning the technique itself. And it is of interest that many of those who attend these introductory talks, and who decide to start TM, do not ask questions about it at that time. Some of them will surely have made up their minds even at this stage that meditation is likely to be beneficial for them. It might be added that the cost of learning meditation is also likely to ensure that only those who suppose it will benefit them will follow up their initial interest in the technique.

So it certainly seems as though people who begin TM are well prepared for it. They typically talk to friends or read about TM in as much depth as possible before taking the plunge. But what are their reasons for doing so? What is there about TM and about these people, which leads them to meditation?

Both experienced meditators and new initiates were asked their reasons for taking up TM. The reports from experienced meditators, which provide the basis for the analysis presented below, may be biased in the sense that they could well re-interpret their initial reasons for starting in the light of their subsequent experience. However, the reasons they give are similar to those given by the smaller sample of beginning meditators interviewed.

The most frequently offered explanation for taking up TM is that it appeared to be a way of relaxing and reducing tension or stress. Informants mentioned "pressure of work", they were told it "might help nerves" or they admitted to be "going through a period of emotional instability". This reason was often

accompanied by another - the person had seen the effect of TM on a friend.

A third reason given was that of seeking personal growth or self-realisation. People in this category wrote that they thought TM would be "an avenue to unexplored parts of the self" or mentioned their "desire for self-improvement". Fourthly, some said that they had heard about TM and were curious to try it out. A fifth group were impressed by the scientific evidence. Another set of meditators said that TM seemed a natural follow-on from Hatha Yoga or their reading in Eastern religion. Finally, a seventh group comprised those who claimed they started TM "in the hope of a transcendental experience", "to fathom the enigma of creation" or because they "wanted to find God". One person "had no idea" why he began. Other idiosyncratic reasons were "intuition" and "it seemed to be what I was searching for". The relative strengths of each category of reason is given below.

Reasons for taking up TM

To reduce stress; pressure at work	49%
Personal growth and self-realisation	10.5%
Curiosity	10%
Its effect on a friend	8.5%
Follow-on from Yoga or reading	8.5%
Seeking inner peace/God/higher states	8.5%
Scientific evidence	5.0%

Total no. of informants: 68

Total no. of reasons given: 82

It seems clear that the most frequently offered reason for taking up TM parallels the reported main effects of actually meditating. That is, people see TM as a way of reducing stress and tension, relieving their anxieties and helping them to relax both before they start and after they have been meditating for some time. As we shall see later, there are certainly processes that happen during meditation which reduce anxiety. However, it is worth emphasising that the new meditator's expectations of and hope for personal benefit also have a part to play in leading him or her to interpret what happens during meditation in this light. Furthermore, when the new meditator consults meditation teachers or experienced meditators about his meditation experiences, he will be encouraged to accept whatever happens as a sign of "stress-reduction" and therefore as an indicator of the benefit he is receiving from the technique.

To turn to another issue : sometimes it is claimed that certain types of people are particularly likely to be interested in TM or to benefit from it. What does appear to be true is that the vast majority of meditators might be categorised as "middle-class". The people in contact with the TM Centre in Edinburgh are mostly students, teachers, lecturers, professionals, housewives and civil servants. They are of all ages, although a majority are in the university student age-group.

But apart from these very general education variables, there are wide differences in the people who find TM beneficial. There are successful meditators who are extravert and those who are introverts. There are a few who are disturbed while others are very stable. It seems that all types of people can find something worthwhile for them in meditation. Apart from tantalising clues which are difficult to interpret - for example an unusually large proportion of meditators are highly musical - there would appear to be little that an examination of meditators predispositions or personalities might reveal about how or why they become meditators.

So, to return to our task of describing the process of becoming a meditator, we confront the question - how does someone go about becoming a meditator? Given that they have found out about TM from friends, advertisements, books or television, what is the next step?

In brief, what happens is that the would-be meditator attends an introductory talk, often held in a TM Centre but possibly also conducted in a church hall, university lecture theatre, community centre, hotel etc. This talk is in two parts. In the first part the meditation teacher giving the talk describes the history of the TM movement, its aims, the mechanics of meditation and the benefits to be gained from it. There are questions. At the end of the question period the teacher asks those who intend to learn the technique to stay. After the others have left (some people attend several introductory talks before deciding to start) the teachers may go into more detail about the technique, if there are further questions but primarily uses this time to arrange times for initiation. The would-be meditators fill in a form at this point in which they are asked such things as their psychiatric history and whether they use drugs. People who are receiving psychiatric help are told to discuss the matter of starting TM with their doctor before going any further. Those who use drugs are given instructions to stay free of them for a specified period before being initiated.

These matters are discussed privately with the initiator during a brief interview. The meditators - to - be are also told what they will be charged (approximately three-quarters of one week's income) and what they must bring to the initiation ceremony.

The initiation ceremony usually takes place within the fortnight following the introductory talk. It consists of a short ceremony conducted in Sanskrit by the initiator and using the symbolic gifts brought by the learner - fruit, flowers and a new white handkerchief. At the end of the ceremony the person is taught how to meditate - he or she is instructed in the use of a mantra, or sound and the correct posture, breathing and attitude of mind required for correct meditation. The person then meditates alone. After this meditation the initiate is asked by the teacher to describe the experience he or she has had. The teacher may at this point repeat the initial instructions and give recommendations on how the new meditator should proceed with the technique at home.

The initiate has three further meetings with the teacher on subsequent days. These meetings may be group meetings, if there are a group of people being taught at the same time. The purpose of the meetings is to check that initiates are meditating correctly and to impart more information about the technique and its philosophical background.

This, then, is how people learn to do TM. It is a process in which the initiate is exposed to the great faith that the teacher has in this technique, and in the learner's ability to master it and benefit from it. The first meditation in particular, but also to some extent the following communal meditations at checking meetings, are often reported as being profoundly relaxing and liberating experiences - new sides of their being may be revealed or it may simply be "the first time I've felt relaxed in ten years".

However, for many meditators this is only the beginning. There is a whole career structure open to those interested in the particular kind of spiritual or personal growth offered by the TM movement. The first step in this career is to move from "new" to "experienced" meditator status. This distinction - between "new" and "experienced" meditators - is revealed in various forms throughout the TM movement.

For example, special group meetings are arranged for the former and they are gently discouraged from attending meetings intended for their more experienced colleagues where more advanced ideas are discussed. The rationale appears to be that new meditators are still learning how to use the technique properly, whereas 'old hands' are less likely to want to talk about basic problems such as finding privacy and peace for meditation, knowing when to stop meditating, and so on. So the "new" - "experienced" dichotomy seems to be a pragmatic one from the point of view of meditation teachers. Yet from the point of view of the initiate it appears as though he still has some way to go before he can truly see himself as a meditator. From his perspective there is a barrier which can only be overcome by meditating regularly, going on courses and the like. And when he has reached the other side of the barrier he knows he has "arrived" in the TM movement. The achievement of "experienced meditators" status, however informally it may be bestowed, functions both to motivate the beginner and to provide him with a measure of his progress towards the final goal.

This first task - that of learning to use meditation over a period of time - is only one stage in the career of the meditator. The experienced meditator is encouraged to take 'rounding' and 'SCI' courses, learn advanced techniques and train to be a checker and eventually a teacher of meditation. These options are described below.

'Rounding' courses: These are residential courses lasting for between three and seven days and usually conducted in some quiet rural setting such as a convent, monastery, country hotel or TM - owned centre. During these courses meditators are expected to meditate four to six times a day rather than the usual twice, and are taught yoga and breathing exercises which are done between meditations. This programme is supervised by a meditation teacher. In addition, emphasis is placed on rest and relaxation - the course is designed to be a complete retreat from the worries or pleasures of everyday life. Finally, tape or video - recordings of talks given by Maharishi are played and discussed.

'SCI Courses: Courses in the 'science of Creative Intelligence, the philosophical and theoretical system expounded by Maharishi. The basic **teaching material** used in these courses consists of a set of video-tapes of Maharishi.

'Advanced techniques' : Additional meditation techniques, taught after a short ceremony by certain senior meditation teachers during rounding courses.

'Checking' training: Experienced meditators may learn to check the correctness of others' meditation. The would-be checker must pass a stiff examination before being permitted to carry out this function.

Teacher training: A lengthy course of instruction in the philosophy and techniques of TM. Those who aspire to become meditation teachers (initiators) must undergo at least one year of full-time training ending in personal examination by the leader of the movement, Maharishi.

In addition, there are a variety of roles for meditators associated less with the spiritual than with the organisational side of the movement. For example, there is now in most areas a TM Centre - a flat or house used for introductory talks, initiations and so on. The administration of the Centre is the responsibility of a committee formed of experienced meditators. Members will be elected to secretarial, financial, publicity and other positions.

What is the significance of this whole process of becoming a meditator and then following the career of a meditator? The importance of these social factors becomes obvious when we remember that people not only learn to meditate, they also learn how to become meditators. They gradually adopt this new sense of themselves, this new identity - that of being a meditator. They gradually internalise the values of the TM movement - detachment, calm, creativity and so on. At each stage in this process those further along the path give encouragement^{ment} and coaching to those encountering the familiar problems that meditators have to deal with. Such problems as claiming space and silence in a household, or feeling that it is all worthless, or having strange experiences during meditation, are all landmarks on the route to enlightenment, and are interpreted and put in their place by teachers, experienced meditators, even by Maharishi himself. The meditator has decided that he would like to be more the sort of person described in the books he has read or talks he has heard and the TM movement provides a social setting in which he finds support for this attempt at self-transformation.

And yet this is only a fragment of the whole picture. Certainly the process of becoming a member of a group with a particular world-view and set of values has a part to play in bringing about the benefits and experiences reported by meditators. But there are other processes at work too, and it is to these we now turn.

Meditation and everyday life

TM is very much a part of the everyday lives of meditators. Therefore, when meditators report that they have changed in various ways since taking up TM, it makes sense to look first of all at how this new element of practice has re-arranged and disturbed that previous daily routine. When we do this, we find that TM seems to have a big effect on the everyday-life routines and habits constitutive of anxiety.

When we talk about anxiety we refer to three areas of experience that anxious people typically encounter in their daily lives. These are: distorted time experience, heightened emotionality, and compulsive thoughts. Thus, when we say that someone is anxious we mean that, in the first place, they are unable to confront current reality to the extent they are involved with events that have happened or those that are about to happen. Eric Berne uses the term "reach-back" to describe the habit of anticipating future events, and "after-burn" to describe the effects of allowing some episode to remain in one's thoughts long after it should have been dealt with and forgotten. So anxious people are often either waiting or remembering. There may be too much time, leading to despair and boredom, or there may be too little, leading to frenzy and fatigue, or paralysis. This, then, is the first everyday-life aspect of anxiety - distorted time experience.

But of course such time distortion is associated with particular thoughts or ideas. Anxiety is often translated in colloquial terms as 'worry', with the implication that there is something 'about' which one is worried, either a future event for which one entertains 'catastrophic expectations', or a past transaction which is in some way incomplete. In either case, the anxious person repeats over and over again scenes, ideas or conducts an internal dialogue which prevents the ongoing flow of current experiencing and relation to the world.

This kind of repetition is different from mere rehearsal, daydreaming or reminiscing, for two reasons. The first is its compulsive quality. These thoughts are experienced as invading the consciousness of the anxious person and are not easily banished. Secondly, they are accompanied by unpleasant bodily feelings - various degrees of muscular tension, sweating, headache, twitching and so on. This is the aspect of anxiety we have labelled 'heightened emotionality'.

Thus the whole person is involved in being anxious. The personal accomplishments of remembering, of thinking, of feeling, are all involved in the experiencing of anxiety. So, when meditators claim that they are "less anxious and strung up" or that they "don't worry so much", and when these claims are backed up by psychological research and by observation of meditators, we can begin to understand how this might happen by looking at how the experience of meditating interferes or conflicts with the experience of being anxious. When people meditate they construct routines and experiences for themselves, which replace anxiety routines and experiences. How do they do this?

Meditators typically use at least some of their meditation period making plans and agendas for the time ahead. It would be a mistake to overemphasise this aspect of meditation - meditators say that it is far from being their primary aim. However it does happen and it seems to have the effect of enabling them to put the concerns of timetabling, sorting out priorities and so on into the background to some extent and allow them, as many put it, "to live each day as it comes".

In addition, many meditators report that doing TM facilitates problem solving. It seems as though the relaxed attitude of 'witnessing' and 'letting thoughts come', and the essential passivity of meditation allows the kind of 'playing with the ideas' or 'regression in service of the ego' which has been shown to be an important part of the process of creative problem solving. Also, the space set aside for meditating gives the person an area in which problems can be identified and tackled. As one meditator said:

".... if you have something bothering you, its much better that it comes up during meditation and not while you're trying to deal with other things at the same time. That way you can think about it more easily and come to a solution more easily".

These two functions of meditation - planning and solving problems - contribute to reduction in anxiety in the sense that they conflict with the anxious person's efforts to distort time. After all, it is difficult to worry about what is going to happen if it all already worked out, and a problem solved is one which does not persist. The question of emotionality is less clear-cut, however.

Some writers on TM have argued that it works in similar fashion to the behaviour therapy known as 'systematic desensitisation'. In systematic desensitisation, the anxious person is taught how to relax and then encouraged to imagine himself in various anxiety-eliciting situations. The anxiety response is therefore put in conflict with the relaxation response. If the client begins with situations of relatively low anxiety and only gradually moves on to scenes of which he is truly fearful, he learns in time not to be anxious.

To some extent this happens in meditation too. When the person is meditating, he or she is profoundly relaxed, as has been shown by physiological studies, and has adopted a posture which maintains this level of relaxation whatever happens. So, when feelings of emotionality appear along with the thought content of the person's anxiety, he or she is disposed to 'ride out' these feelings. Meditators often report twitching, feelings of tension and even tears when they meditate, and it makes sense to suppose that these are the emotional responses, or emotional meanings associated with what the person is thinking about at that time. However, it is difficult to show that this is the case since the act of meditating properly is one in which particular thoughts are not noted or remembered. The ideal attitude of mind is one of passivity and acceptance. Therefore it is not possible to correlate emotional feelings with thought content during meditation, and therefore not possible to corroborate directly the 'systematic desensitisation' hypothesis. On the other hand, many meditators report that during meditation they suddenly stopped being worried about some event. One woman, for example, was in an anxious state about an impending driving test. She reported, soon after starting TM, that the worry associated with the test had disappeared, or "dissolved".

But the balance between relaxation and emotionality may sometimes tip the other way. Meditators often report that, particularly during the first year or so of doing TM, they remember stressful childhood events. We might imagine that the passive attitude necessary for successful meditation induces a kind of regression in which such buried memories become more accessible. Nevertheless, these memories often return with powerful emotions. Also, very strong emotions may be felt during meditation when the person is going through a stressful or crisis period in his or her life. What sometimes happens, then, is that these emotions become so powerful that it is no longer possible to meditate. Much depends on the support available for the person at these times. If he or she receives reassurance and advice from other meditators, it is usually possible to overcome the difficulties. Indeed, such difficulties are seen as proof that the person is making progress. However, many others find all this too much to take, and give up TM during such times. To some extent they may be unprepared for such experiences by the TM publicity, which wholly emphasises the positive aspects of the experience.

This is to say that becoming less anxious through doing TM is a process. The person may indeed feel more anxious at times, but this would appear to be a necessary component of any programme to combat anxiety.

The feature of TM which seems to make the biggest contribution to reducing anxiety is the attitude of acceptance and passivity. It is almost as though the person is put in a situation - that of sitting silently for 20 minutes - which is certain to make him or her feel frustrated or anxious sooner or later. But the person has also been taught to accept whatever appears during this period, whereas the anxious person is engaged in various strategies designed to control and manipulate his experience of the world. This seems to be the basic way that TM cuts across habitual everyday-life routines and assumptions.

CONCLUSIONS: some unanswered questions about TM

There is little reason to doubt that people who meditate are generally well-adjusted, happy, productive and creative. They are in many ways similar to the 'self-reliant personality' described by the psychiatrist John Bowlby or the 'self-actualized' person described by Maslow. In this paper we have tried to trace some of the various processes which contribute to this state of well-being. In particular we have noted the symbolic meanings which meditators attribute to the events of becoming a meditator and the practice of meditation in everyday life. Many of the experiences meditators report and the benefits they claim can be understood in this context - meditators are learning a "comprehensive interpretation of reality" which enables them to function more effectively, be happier and so on.

However, there are aspects of TM which require comment. For example, Bowlby agrees that a "secure base" is necessary for the development of the 'self-reliant personality'. He writes:

"evidence is accumulating that human beings of all ages are happiest and able to deploy their talents to best advantage when they are confident that, standing behind them, there are one or more trusted persons who will come to their aid should difficulties arise. The person trusted, also known as an attachment figure..... can be considered as providing his (or her) companion with a secure base from which to operate".

Bowlby is here referring to the secure bases which are most prevalent in Western society - husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, friends, and so forth. But meditators appear to be exploiting quite a different form of "secure base". Their base is, ultimately, their relationship with their guru, and the word he has given them, and also their relationship with others who share this commitment.

This is an unusual arrangement in our society and seems to lead to certain experiences about which meditators are sometimes ambivalent or unhappy. That is meditators often report feelings of detachment or emotional isolation. One woman wrote - "once I was meditating and felt as if I was outside myself and could see myself quite clearly - as 'other'".

This is an extreme case - others simply say that on occasion they have felt that they were observing themselves doing something, that they were not totally involved in the part they were playing at that moment.

To some extent this kind of experience must be a consequence of turning away from familiar sources of identity - other people - to a new source, the guru and his system of thought. Also, however, it will be a result of the attempt to transform the person's self-consciousness. As we mentioned at the beginning of this paper, there appears to be an innate urge to alter consciousness. The TM movement can be seen as a communal project to explore this urge to its limits. Maharishi himself claims that regular meditation over a long period will result in a permanent transformation of consciousness. It is beyond the scope of this paper to comment on such a possibility - it is hard enough to account for the more mundane aspects of personal change which happen when people meditate. But perhaps meditators themselves might like to comment on these issues. I would be glad to receive such comments.

So, in conclusion, it has been argued in this paper that the process of becoming a meditator and doing meditation regularly has the following effects on the everyday - life experience of meditators - they feel less anxious, more relaxed, better able to cope and have more energy. These outcomes flow from the symbolic meaning attributed to the processes involved. However, the longer-term effects of doing TM remain problematic. What does it mean to have a guru as a "secure-base"? What does it mean to attempt systematically to change one's self-consciousness? These questions await further study.

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18th July 1975.

Dear participant,

Facilitator Development Institute: Glasgow Workshop.

You may have noticed on the leaflet describing this event that there is to be an "independent research evaluation of the short and longer term effects of the program." Although the primary purpose of this letter is to invite you to fill in the enclosed questionnaire, I would also like to say a few things about the form this research is to take. As you are probably aware, there are many different ways of doing psychological research, from strictly controlled experimentation to subjective introspection. Since my aim is to learn something about individual people's experience of the group situation, the method I intend to use is to collect individuals' reports of what is happening to them. It is clearly impossible to do this effectively without the help, indeed the active participation, of those involved. However, it is equally clear that participation must be voluntary. Thus, while I hope that everyone will choose to play my psychology-games, and enjoy them too, there will certainly be no compulsion to do so.

The few questions I have sent you are just for background information, and I would be grateful if you could answer them before coming to the workshop. Please feel free to answer them as fully or as briefly as you wish. Anything you write will of course be treated as being completely confidential.

I look forward to meeting you in sunny Glasgow at the end of the month,

Yours sincerely,

John McLeod.

First pre-workshop questionnaire

Expectations: this is an invitation to you to examine your reasons for attending the Glasgow Workshop, and your expectations regarding what is likely to happen there. Please write as little or as much as seems appropriate to you.

Previous experience of groups: please list below your previous experience of encounter or other types of group. Feel free to write as much or as little as seems appropriate to you.

First post-workshop questionnaire

Going home : there are many elements in the encounter group experience. One of the most mysterious is going home. In the group, you may have new insights, learn new ways of doing things. Then you go home to the same old problems and conflicts at work and in your family. What happens when new insights meet old problems? The sentence stems listed below are intended to help you explore your experience of going home. They are only meant to set you thinking in certain directions - finish them with sentences, paragraphs, anything you like.

- 1) Encounter groups are..
- 2) I learned from my participation in the Glasgow Workshop that....
- 3) The best thing I did there was..
- 4) The worst thing I did there was..
- 5) Other people have noticed that since being at Glasgow I...
- 6) I have noticed that since being at Glasgow I...
- 7) The group leaders...
- 8) The research evaluation of the Workshop...

This questionnaire was taken home by participants at the end of the workshop.

The journal

The journal is meant to be no more than a systematic and methodical version of the kind of diary or personal journal that many people use to record what happens in their daily lives. The experiences that people have when attending an event such as this workshop are all too often lost or at best inaccurately recorded afterwards. By using this journal it should be possible to capture or save some of the experiences you are having which might otherwise be lost. The journal is also a particularly appropriate research tool for a workshop such as this since many people find that recording their experiences facilitates self-discovery and understanding. It is also a research tool which allows us to work with meanings rather than behaviours.

It is important to remember that whatever you write in this journal is to be treated as absolutely confidential information. No matter in what form the results of this research are published, it will be impossible to identify individual participants. Therefore I encourage you to be as open and honest as if you were writing for yourself alone.

Some general instructions

The purpose of the journal is to obtain a record of what you are experiencing during this week in as systematic and methodical a manner as possible. This does not mean that there is a "right" or "wrong" way of using the journal. Indeed, different people tend to evolve their own individual styles of working in it. There are, however, a few general suggestions you may find useful.

Firstly, always begin each entry with the date.

Secondly, give yourself a few minutes, sitting quietly alone when you decide to write in the journal. Even if you don't think you have much to write, ideas can often spring up once you have begun writing, and it can be frustrating not to have given yourself enough time to have developed them.

I suggest that a good general rule for writing in the journal is to avoid the temptation to analyze or interpret your experiences - it is often more useful to try to record what you felt at the time. Don't be afraid to include material such as dreams, flashbacks, fantasies or images you might have. These communications can often turn out to be particularly important, yet are too often forgotten. Also, don't restrict yourself to writing about your experiences during organized, "official" events in this workshop - you may well have important encounters outside these situations.

THE RESEARCH OPTION

To all participants at the summer workshop:

It is the policy of the Facilitator Development Institute to investigate the processes and effects of these summer workshops through a programme of ongoing research. As the person responsible for this research, I would like to share with you some of my thoughts and feelings concerning it.

I feel that it is important to do research on encounter groups, both to deepen our understanding of what happens in them, and also to communicate this understanding to those who may not have had the experience of being in such a group. And, it is possible that research may ultimately lead to better ways of using groups.

However, I am aware that the way in which much previous encounter group research has been done has not captured adequately the experience of what it is like to live through an encounter group. All too often the rich experience of participants is reduced to a set of variables. I don't want to do that. What I want to do is to find out how each of you in your own individual ways experience and make sense of the workshop.

So the research option I am inviting you to take part in will use what I hope you will see as being a common-sense method of finding out what is going on with each of us - the method of keeping a journal of your daily experiences at the workshop. At the workshop last year, more than half the participants kept journals. Many of them seemed to find this a beneficial exercise, allowing them to work on their own as well as giving them a record of incidents or insights that might otherwise have been lost. It is my belief, then, that the journal method of doing research will make a positive contribution to this workshop. Paper, folders and so on will be provided. There will also be a limited number of cassette recorders available.

What I am suggesting is:

That, if you wish to do so, you keep a journal during the workshop, to be used for research purposes,

That you allow me to tape record some of the proceedings at the workshop

That you feel free to tell me if you don't want to do any of these things.

My side of the contract includes at least the following:

To keep my copies of the journals secure, and to treat them as being strictly confidential information,

To edit, extract themes from and reflect on the material you give me to the best of my ability and to give you this back by sending you copies of my reports.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that this, like all the options at the workshop, is entirely voluntary. If it doesn't feel right to you, don't do it. If it does feel right, start with the next two pages. If you're not sure if it feels right, maybe we can talk about it at York.

John McLeod
Department of Psychology
University of Edinburgh.

Second post-workshop questionnaire

This questionnaire was sent to participants a week after the Workshop. It was accompanied by a covering letter.

Expectations: Use this page to write about what your expectations for the Workshop were, and whether they were fulfilled by what happened there.

Changes: Do you feel that you have changed in any way as a result of participating the the workshop?

Incidents: What were the important things that happened to you, the recollections that really stand out when you look back?

Going home : How did you feel at the end of the workshop, and what has it been like since you went home?

How does it work? I would like you to use this page to write about your own personal theory of how encounter groups function.

A RESEARCH PACKAGE

I call this a 'research package' because it's a conglomeration of different things - quotes from you, some of my interpreting of what you have written, and some of my theorising. It is all deliberately left unfinished, because I want to hear from you, and because it doesn't feel right to claim to have conclusions when there are still so many of the journals and so much of the tapes that remain a mystery to me.

A note on the use of abbreviations for peoples' names : I didn't want to make the contents of journals totally public (or semi-public, since only FDI participants will be reading this version). It seems a reasonable compromise to use initials rather than trying to disguise excerpts (which probably wouldn't work anyway) - this way only folk who were involved in a particular incident are likely to be able to guess who it is who is writing.

This stuff is a selection of the work I've been doing. I have other papers on the methodology of the research (nearly finished) and on the theoretical work of Rogers and Gendlin (just started). If anyone is interested in this other stuff, which I thought would be of less general interest, just get in touch and I'll send you a copy.

My style....can be a bit odd. Between the demands of preparing this material for a PhD thesis and trying to report back to you I have evolved a style which probably doesn't suit either.

I make no apologies for the obviousness of what I say. This kind of research must start from descriptions of experience that participants (you) can recognise, which can sometimes seem like stating the obvious.

My thanks to all of you who have let me share your journals and your experience at these workshops. I am very eager to get your feedback on this research - there's no point in waiting until its published and then saying, "you missed this, or that bit of the workshop."

John McLeod
Dep of Psychology
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How do encounter groups work? 1

"Traditionally, encounter is for non-directed, warmly-assisted self-discovery. The norms that have developed have resulted instead in encounter becoming centres for ego-stroking, where acceptable behaviour is as rigidly defined as in any bureaucracy; this is an illusion of openness and freedom and the illusion is maintained at all costs, eg by insisting on things like non-directiveness, the 'real person' etc. If there is a 'real person' it will never emerge in encounter and Berne's real message is that everyone plays games; encounter should be an exploration of the games on the understanding that we're all playing them and that game-playing is not necessarily Machiavellian or psychopathic. It can be, and encounter could instead try to show how this distinction is to be made. Perhaps there should be two kinds of encounter, one 'conventional' and the other less naive; the criterion for participating in the second would be a willingness to tolerate and even create ambiguity in relationships. Encounter is about as un-free as any other ideology, in its present form, and has outlived its usefulness. Not that I can provide a blueprint for change, but I have seen and done things in other groups that have certainly been freer and more rewarding."

How do encounter groups work? 2

1. Perhaps it does not work. Cognitive dissonance ensures that people think it does work. The reality may be very different.
2. Perhaps it works for a few days. Back to the daily routine with old relationships wears away the useful change and leaves only a very small residue.
3. Perhaps it cements or freezes a change already in progress. Public expression of a new attitude does much to freeze that attitude.
4. Perhaps it provides a catalyst. A person leading a lack-lustre existence may be jolted out of the rut and forced to re-evaluate his whole life style.
5. Perhaps the people who attend such groups are so 'odd' that one cannot generalise. The fact that people pay a lot of money to attend means that they have a special need which groups fulfil. However, such people may be in need of constant reassurance which they can get by selecting the most 'comforting' people at such groups - they want a shoulder to cry on but in fact may need a different kind of relationship."

Listening

Most research on encounter groups is behaviourist in the sense that it looks at only that which is observable. However, the most frequent 'behaviour' in groups is not giving feedback, self-disclosure or expressing feelings, but listening. Participants in encounter groups spend far more time listening than they do any of these other activities. indeed for many of them the time in a group represents the longest spell of listening they have ever done in their lives. This is not to say that when people are silent they may not be fantasizing, daydreaming, remembering, rehearsing or whatever, just that in general members follow the rules of being-in-a-conversation rather than those of being-at-a-lecture. In conversation we are expected to attend to everything that is said and we expect listeners to give the same attention whereas in lectures etc 'time-out' is acceptable. Thus in recordings of group meetings there are plenty of instances of "could you repeat that, I didn't hear it" but few of "sorry, I wasn't listening." What does it mean to do so much listening?

Listening has something to do with being a part of the group. By turning off for a while, not listening, a person implies that he or she is no longer of the group for that time. There are fears that there may be resentment shown to someone who does not affirm the group identity by at least listening. One participant wrote about how pleased she was when other members accepted the idea of her going to sleep during a group session. So if we talk about group cohesion or trust we mean that, among other things, they listen to each other.

Listening is also part of the process of entering the world of the other, of becoming aware of what their experience is like. Rogers has used the term 'empathic' to describe this aspect of a relationship - "very early in my work as a therapist I discovered that simply listening to my client, very attentively, was an important way of being helpful....It seemed surprising to me that such a passive kind of interaction should be so useful." This kind of listening is a skill that can be learned. In a group we become aware from time to time that someone else has picked up some message we have not heard. In this way we may learn we have been listening for the wrong things and we can set about improving our listening.

Finally, the act of listening affects the listener. Being involved in listening (or looking at, or touching) another person stills the 'internal dialogue', which is another competing source of talk, thus enabling the person to listen to himself, rather than talk to himself.

An unfolding

Day 1 "Very tentative beginnings.

I have been a spectator most of the time....I wait for others to take the lead."

Day 2 "I tried at various times to give people leads to my distress but they didn't seem to pick them up. I resented this but at the interval P had seen but didn't feel like commenting so I realised once more the responsibility was on me so I launched out to see where it would take me. I know I haven't gone nearly far enough but hope that will happen later. My fear of missing out on close relationships, of only half living....M recognised my feelings very powerfully. I felt such warmth and acceptance that I glowed."

Day 3 "So many feelings today.

Talked with M till all hours on sexual problems mentioning things I'd never dared mention before and discovering I was still acceptable."

Day 4 "I'm tackling things much more head on now.

Talked of feelings of being a threat to men. Met eyes and did not flinch. Was admired."

Day 5 "Heavy and depressed now all my confidence seems to have gone. Insecure at changing of small group?"

Day 6 "Facing tensions with people head on. They cause a block to receiving and caring and however scary are far less so when dealt with.

I began to cling again but recognised it and let go - that was painful but I gained from it.

Realise I couldn't describe myself when I came.

.....now I've stopped trying I am examining what I set out to."

Day 7 "A hellish day locked in my unwantedness - not open to receiving. Worked with many feelings and shed some.

...I'm not accepting myself today. I'm licked into myself waiting for someone else to break down the barriers. Why the hell can't I do it?

I'm a blood sucking spider spinning webs round people then shutting them out.

My Gestalt fantasy is frightening and I daren't expose it in such an intense group. I the rose bush am not really there. I glimpse myself now and again but don't quite know where I am in relation to the scenery.

I can't or won't experiment with ways of leaving people free as I wait in terror to see if they will come back."

Day 8 "I feel a freedom today...I am tied to no-one and no-one is tied to me.

There are so many unfinished unresolved feelings - this is good - life is exciting.

I feel so silly with some of my earlier feelings - they were unnecessary bit still real in me. I need to experiment with lots of people round me.

I am alive and can enjoy being.

I matter most."

The solution

".....all the time I was walking I was trying to notice the physical reality of the people and objects around me, the feel of the road under my feet, the air, the smells and the noises. And I came back, slowly, and I sat on a bench in the park and opposite me was a young Glaswegian boy, I presume, he looked like it, he was about 20, he was sitting, waiting, I don't know what for, perhaps he was cruising, as B calls it. And opposite him was a lady of about 33, she was also sitting and waiting, for time to pass, for her lover to come, I don't know. And as I sat and waited with myself I tried to figure out what the heck was going on and I thought about what C had said the morning before telling the world to "Fuck off" and some of the things H had said about the unreality of the whole situation here. Some of the experiences I'd had of listening to other people talking at one another. Some of the things that were going on inside myself about wanting to love and wanting to be loved.....

And then I went into the large group which was still meeting and it was now about 11 o'clock and the atmosphere was again so sick and turgid and I got a mug of coffee and left and sat outside and drank it and I came upstairs and lay on my bed and totally relaxed my body and just concentrated on my head and my being and I came to this kind of conclusion - that I'd spent my life up until perhaps only very recently to arrive at a situation where I was no longer having to fight with my fantasies about 'do you love me?' 'do I love me?' 'can I love you?' 'will you let me love you?' 'will you listen to me?' 'I'll listen to you if you'll listen to me' and all those kind of Laingian knots. I'd gone through all that and now I had what I call actual people - physical, present beings who loved me, who I knew loved me, who I loved, who listened. People like my wife and my child and my mother and my father, my brothers and my sisters, my neighbours and my best friends - all in various degrees greater or lesser fulfilling my desires and my hopes and needs just as I was fulfilling theirs. It was no longer a question but a certainty. It was no longer a matter of hope but one of knowledge. And what had happened here seemed that I had been thrown willy-nilly out of control, out of my control, into a soup, a turgid fetid soup of other people's uncertainties and fantasies and questions and Laingian knots. And I had been drawn, like a boat toward a sluice-gate, by the sheer force of this emotional whirlpool, towards a state of mind which was so full of doubts and uncertainties, just from listening to other people's doubts and uncertainties, other people's projections and fantasies, that it had aroused in me all the emotional anxiety and fear and funk and aspirations that I had been through in my childhood and adolescence and early manhood. And that going out into Glasgow that night had brought me back in touch with actuality itself and it enabled me in fact to work out this solution this morning.

And having worked out that solution it defused in me an area of uncertainty. And I spent quite an enjoyable day. I went down and I told H of my solution and later on I told C of my solution.

Struggling with style

Everyone has their own style, their own way of being, of presenting themselves to others. And yet we tend to believe that we are more than just our style - that there is a 'real me' underneath that gloss. We get upset if someone else mistakes the style for the person, and we develop strategies for 'seeing-through' the styles of others. For example, one person wrote in her journal:

"Maybe the people I think look like hippies are just trendy and are as within the system as we all are. And can be as chauvinistic as anybody else. I suppose the only cue I can trust is eyes."

Very often at these workshops people found that they were unable to accept, or believe in, or trust another person's style, or that others were unable to accept their style. This example is taken from the journal of a man who certainly did not come to the workshop with a conscious intention to work on his 'style'. He reports that after he had talked for the first time in the small group -

"I provoked a good deal of anger - not overtly for my declaration but for my manner. I was told I was lecturing them: B said she found my manner made her very angry. Someone else said he found my 'spilling' turned him off.... It was a very disturbing experience.

The real objections had been to my 'manner' which a number of people in the group found very off-putting. J said that he now sensed a real person in me which had not been there the first day when I had been a load of bullshit."

A few days later this issue re-emerged dramatically. A had just taken the risk of confronting a fellow participant who had been worrying him for some time - whose presence frightened him. He had just admitted this in the community group and was "feeling very good" when,

"I heard D's voice saying 'A, that was very EFFECTIVE.' Christ, I was thrown as I have never been thrown. I knew what he meant, moving, right, good, deep, meaningful, etc, etc, but as a man with a gift for words and a great and precise skill in their use with great care for the exact meaning, effective was to suggest planned, well acted, contrived - to ask for rounds of applause, curtain calls and bows. My whole integrity was called in question."

And A left the room in some emotional turmoil.

However, next day,

"I seized the first gap to say, 'I have an important thing to say, very important for me. The best thing I did yesterday was running from the room. I wanted everyone to know I was not running away. I was going out to ensure my integrity. I was rejecting the interpretation which the word 'effective' implied. I knew what D meant, but as a user of words, with skill in words and with a precise meaning for words to me the use of 'effective' meant that it was all an act.....That was an attack on all my sincerity, on my integrity. In running I utterly repudiated that.....' I was utterly in control of myself, felt very good and sat very upright. I spoke of my style.... I would stick to my style. I would not change it to please anybody. It was part of me. I would modify it, yes, this was part of my

coming here. If they did not like my style they could stuff it."

Finally, in his replies to the follow-up questionnaire, A wrote:

"I learned from my participation in the workshop that I was arrogant; I talked too much. I did not listen enough...

Other people have noticed that since I came back I am much quieter; I have a look of listening in my eyes."

A's story is by no means unique - there were many instances of conflicts over style. What can we learn from his account of his 'struggle with style'?

A's story portrays for us a series of events which ended in the modification of his personal style. It seems important to note that A did not have, in the first place, any expectation of modifying his style. He only became aware that his style was in any sense a problem through the comments of group members. It is likely that being in an encounter group made it easier for these members to make such comments to A, although, presumably, they would have had the same feelings about his style had they met him elsewhere. Their comments, and especially the remarks of D at A's moment of triumph, forced A into an awareness of the effect he was having on others, an awareness of himself as seen by others. With this awareness, A was in a position to make a decision regarding what he could do about his style. There were presumably several options open to him - he could change in compliance with what he saw as being demands to change, he could ignore or deny these demands or he could affirm his own choice of style. In the event, A chose to "modify" but "not change it to please anybody."

The significant observation that has been made possible through examining A's report is that personal change comes about as a result of individual choice. The feedback A received from group members was not what caused change - it only made change possible. A could just as easily decided not to modify his style at all. This is not to claim that every time A listens rather than talks he makes a decision in the light of his new style. While this may happen sometimes, more often it is not necessary - once the 'big' decision is taken the new ways of behaving take their place with the old in wherever it is we keep our repertoire between shows.

Picking up on feelings

People in encounter groups talk a lot about feelings. Feelings are good, intellectualisation is bad. The journal kept by N seems to centre right in on this issue. N wrote before he came that one of his personal goals was "keeping continuously in contact with my own feeling." In his description of himself he wrote that "my feelings come up quickly, but vanish the next moment - that is, before I see an opportunity to say anything." Later, he wrote that "what troubles me is that the presence of other people seems to take my feelings away from me." Another excerpt from N's journal seems (almost too neatly) to state the problem -

"I am quite satisfied with not verbally participating in the community meeting - until A bursts out towards J, who sits next to me. There seems to be a fundamental contact, but I have no feelings about it, and cannot respond to J's opening to me. I'm feeling selfish, inadequate and lonely..."

Reading this excerpt makes one want to go back to that moment and tell N that he was feeling something about what was going on - he was feeling selfish, inadequate and lonely, quite justifiably in the circumstances.

Here is a long quote from N's account of what was obviously an important small group meeting for him:

"J helps me to pick up on an actual feeling and to overcome it in a very gentle way, and E helps a lot in clarifying by asking just the right questions. Most of all I liked a) J's observation from my physical attitude that I at a certain moment just decided to cut off - a thing which happens to me often, and about which I forget immediately: it is the thing of which I have been complaining to myself so often. I seem not to be able to give account of my own doings, I lose my actions immediately.

b) his very tender way of simply being with me, by which he actually did give myself back to me.

c) my figuring out what I am doing, being so cumbersome in dealing with my feelings, endlessly justifying them.

d) my last words to D: that she keeps moving me by her facial expressions and her smile and her tears - because they are my truth of last week: I have mostly been living by that movement.

We work till nearly midnight, I fear most of the time on me. Afterwards I talk and have beers with..... until 5am."

From the evidence N has given us of the events of this small group session, largely devoted to the problem of his feelings, it appears as though the awareness he brought to the workshop

of his distancing himself from his feelings has been extended. He is now aware that he cannot accept certain feelings and that he holds on to other feelings rather than act on them. Yet the evidence from N's subsequent time at the workshop, and his reports from home, suggest very strongly that this awareness has not resulted in any change. We can only speculate as to what might have happened to N: his extended awareness might have shown him that the way he dealt with his feelings was acceptable to him after all; he may have been afraid of the consequences of changing his way of dealing with his feelings; or the awareness itself might have been painful. An example of the last possibility is this piece from R's journal:

"Boredom drove me into the Find Your Child Option. At first I enjoyed the fun, but I soon began to find my child and it really brought back to me how scaring my childhood was. I developed a head-ache and withdrew, just as I did as a child. I had completely forgotten this part of me and found the memory scaring."

The encounter group as a frame

The encounter group, or in these workshops, the large community group, is seen by participants as being a special situation, context or setting which 'keys' behaviour. That is, participants behave differently in the group, but, more important, they have a different understanding of the same behaviour. In other words, actions which would have a certain meaning if performed at a party, or in a one-to-one situation, or at a business meeting, take on a different meaning when seen in the context of an encounter group. The group setting acts as a 'frame' for actions, making us look at them in a different light. How is this 'keying' or 'framing' made possible?

As members of a culture we possess knowledge about how to act in diverse situations. This knowledge comes from many different sources - watching other people, instruction in childhood and so on - and forms a reservoir of common-sense rules which we use to guide our actions but are rarely aware of. Similarly, participants in encounter groups have expectations concerning what is going to happen there, based on previous experience in groups, knowledge of the rules governing other, similar, situations, their reading, the news media, what other people have told them and the advance publicity. Sometimes these expectations are made explicit, as in the early discussions on how the workshops were to be organised, but more often they are implicit in people's actions. For example the entrance of the facilitator may often serve as a signal for the group to 'begin', and members stop talking to each other, sit in a circle facing the centre - if anyone talks it is publicly and for all the others to hear.

What has been suggested so far is that people have a different understanding of an act, or a statement because they see it has been made in a group rather than an 'everyday life' framework. A specific class of statements that seem to take on a different meaning, that are radically 're-keyed' by being made in a group are statements of affection or positive regard from one person to another. Hugging a stranger, admitting love for them and so on are typically construed in our culture as indicating sexual interest. However in an encounter group this interpretation is not placed on such behaviour. Consequently it seems as though it becomes easier to act in this way - as if the group frame gives us permission to express affection (in a similar manner the frame of the boxing ring gives permission to express aggression).

However a frame has effects not only on behaviour within its boundaries but also on behaviour outside these boundaries. For example, the workshops concerning us here took place in a residential setting. This residential setting constitutes another level of framing. The meaning of people's behaviour was therefore transformed or keyed in the first place by being seen as within the context of a residential week, and then further transformed by the group frame. This may seem very complicated. Imagine you are walking through the grounds of the university campus where the workshop was being held. You meet a member of your encounter group. Do you 'encounter' him, talk to him just as someone who is at a conference with you, or as someone who is merely a stranger?

Very often in this type of situation it appeared to be unclear to participants which was the appropriate frame to use. Possibly as the week went on more people stopped making the distinction between the 'group' frame and the 'residential' frame, although probably not with all other members or at all times. This may go some way towards explaining what some people see as being the greater 'effectiveness' of residential rather than occasional groups - it may be in some sense 'easier' to break down or blur the encounter group-residential barrier or frame boundary than it is to do the same with the encounter-home frame boundary. The residential frame may act as a transition between experimental behaviour in the small group and trying out that behaviour at home or at work.

There again in cases where members are confused about frame they may become aware through this breakdown of their taken-for-granted competence of the routines and assumptions that make up that competence. And finally, it may become possible to exploit the properties of the encounter group as a frame in idiosyncratic ways, as the following report suggests -

"I got a lot out of the workshop in terms of getting my thoughts and feelings together better. I got this mainly from talking with individuals like..... The community or small group meetings did little or nothing for me. And yet, when I think about it, maybe I wouldn't have got so much from individuals if we hadn't had something definite to talk about eg what happened in groups."

Awareness and personal growth

One of the most salient issues to emerge from the journals and tapes has to do with the problem of 'reality' or 'authenticity.' One participant talked about others trying to "define his reality" for him or "smile away his reality." It became the craze at one workshop to award "ARP" (a real person) badges to those who made 'authentic' contributions or who were acclaimed as being 'real' people. One participant wrote in his journal after a group - "A wonderful session with real people not opinions and theories." another wrote - "Had lunch near W who made me feel human again." Yet another refers several times to his feelings of "sterility" and "detachment", his "inner desert."

These uses of the concept of 'reality' seem to be grounded in the experiencing or expression of feelings in the group setting. In the discussion of the encounter group as a frame, it was suggested that the group was seen by participants as constituting a special situation with the result that they acted differently in that situation and they also interpreted actions in that situation in a different way. Part at least of the way the group frame transformed understandings of the way others were acting was to introduce a specific kind of critical attitude to others' statements. Statements would be scrutinised for hidden meanings, expressions of feeling and so on. The question was - what is behind what this person is saying, what is it he is trying to say? The group frame kept directing members' attention to the inner state of the person making a statement, whether it be self or other. Only when this inner state, or feeling, was detected was an action 'real'. When someone else did something you had no feeling about, or when you said something you had no feeling about you or they were not being 'real'.

However there was a second sense of the concept of 'reality' in use, and that referred to the 'real world' - the ordinary common-sense world of everyday life. This second sense of 'reality' made the city 'real' and the women who served the food 'real', and was characterised by consensual validation and definition of situations, in contrast to the definition in terms of inner state in the groups.

Thus there were two 'realities' or 'frames' within which the workshops can be perceived. The first is the ordinary, mundane, concrete reality of everyday life. The second is the personal reality associated with experiencing, availability of feelings and 'encounter'. These are separate realities, as can be seen in the comments of one participant on a discussion (ie non-encounter) group meeting :

"Interesting to see all these people being serious, shrewd, all slipping into their professional roles. Helps to understand how much they have been exposing themselves here and how difficult it must be for many."

This participant is startled when she sees people jumping from the group frame to the everyday life frame - they have re-keyed the situation before she has.

It may be useful to think of what happens at encounter groups as a learning of a new reality, a new way of looking at the world, of making sense of it, a different kind of awareness or consciousness. It may be that prolonged exposure to or use of the encounter frame of reference can bring about a change in awareness through the cumulative effects of listening, attending to feelings, examining the implicit messages in statements and all the other elements of the 'cognitive style' of being-in-a-group. We can further assume that some people are already familiar with this reality or kind of awareness (eg the facilitators) while others may pick it up very quickly (eg 'natural' facilitators). Still others will be struggling to grasp it, while some will be unwilling to give up their old world for this strange new one.

This last group, those who appeared to make little or no effort to learn the 'reality' or 'consciousness' of the encounter group, are of interest. These were the people who either said little throughout the whole workshop, or who maintained an involved or sceptical attitude. As one wrote in his journal -

"I....accepted as accurate the criticism that I maintained a 'cynical' (that was the word used) detachment. I was not cynical but I did not suspend my mistrust of the shallowness of several 'encounters' and 'revelations'."

There are two points to be made in relation to this statement. The first is to note that the process of achieving a new awareness involves at least temporarily suspending one's rational sense of 'doubt' or 'mistrust' which this person was not ready to do. The second is that it is widely held that the kind of disclosures and interactions that occur in encounter groups are in some way 'shallow' or 'trivial'. This is based on a misunderstanding. What is misunderstood is the attitude of the person making the 'shallow' or 'trivial' response. The critic believes that the person fools himself or is forced by the situation ('group pressure') into thinking that his or her contribution was deep, authentic, significant, etc, etc. While this may sometimes happen, more often the person is distressed at how inauthentic or trivial he has been. For example, one woman, who had in fact said a lot in her group, admitted in her journal that she was "still not in touch with myself." Others mentioned feeling "empty", "brain-damaged" or "sterile". These were also people who had been involved in the work of their groups, who had, in our terminology, been trying to pick up the encounter 'awareness' or 'consciousness'.

We may suppose that making 'inauthentic' or 'shallow' statements is necessarily part of the process of coming to terms with this new reality. Ordinary reality is characterised by consensual definition and validation of what is happening. In everyday life when we want to know what someone means we refer to the common-sense understandings that we all have and use, as members of a culture. Meanings are not explicitly 'contained' in the words we used, they are found by following the way the words point to a shared understanding of the world. In an encounter group, however, this kind of talk is ineffective. There is no agenda, there is nothing concrete, no part of the world of everyday life, that everyone wants to talk about. One member may begin to talk about their work difficulties but may find that this makes reference to issues others

have no experience of. Talk of ordinary affairs and concerns turns out to be somehow ineffective, probably both because of the expectations people bring to the group and because of the 'indexicality' (reference to a shared understanding of the situation or context) of everyday-life talk. Thus the group member is directed more and more towards his or her feelings, needs or interests in the here-and-now (the group) because this is the only way he or she can communicate meaningfully to other group members. Gradually present feelings, needs or interests are expressed in ways that at first may seem 'shallow' or 'inauthentic' and only later become more satisfactory. In many participants this process was not a continuous one - they would return to the 'ordinary', outside world when things were getting on top of them.

The idea that what is picked up by participants in encounter groups is a special kind of awareness rather than specific learnings, insights or behaviours, is most clearly shown in their reports of what it was like for them when they finally left the group and went home :

"For the first couple of days I was disorientated and felt very fragile."

"...went into the Common Room. It seemed to be full of ghosts, dim, half-seen people. I didn't want to talk to any of them. The usual social chit-chat seemed like the twittering of sparrows."

"...life getting cold and detached again."

"...when I meet people now I'm conscious of not really encountering them."

"...my 'feelings' seem to be more accessible and manageable.. they are flowing more freely within me."

"Physically, when I leave a workshop I am aware of heightened perception of and memory for detail and feel a need to live deliberately and slowly. I eat slower and less. This stays with me for quite a while until it gradually becomes no longer noticeable."

The workshop may be seen as an interlude in the lives of participants. They come to it with the interests and concerns of everyday life still dominating their thoughts and actions and eventually must return to that 'reality'. While at the workshop, according to this analysis, they become aware of another 'reality', during this time their actions become more expressive of themselves rather than, as in the outside world, instrumental, or goal-directed. That is, participants at the workshop come to live for a while at the level of being rather than doing, for, in fact, there is nothing to do at an encounter group - there are no tasks to be performed. One woman put it thus :

"I realised as I spoke that the most time I'd had for myself since 1955 ...had only been three days at one time...That's the longest span I've had for myself, and that this was the third day of the course! What am I going to do tomorrow?"

Life can be seen not only as a struggle to fulfil practical needs such as food, shelter, sex and so on; but also a struggle to make sense of what is going on, to create a meaningful world and achieve some sense of personal identity. Then we can suppose that group members gradually or even abruptly shift their attention from practical to existential questions. Even in what they wrote concerning their intentions in attending the workshop, they differed in this respect, from those who wanted to pick up professional skills or discover what to do about their marriage, to those who wanted to explore "being a mother" or "being a woman".

What effect does this interlude or retreat into another reality have on group members? While many mention their increased awareness, or feeling of closeness with people, it is fairly obvious that this does not last at anything like the same level of intensity for longer than a week or two. Therefore when we talk about personal change resulting from participating in groups, we cannot mean a permanent change in level of awareness. In fact it is difficult to talk about any kind of change resulting from participating in the groups apart from this transient change in level of awareness. Certainly close examination of tapes and journals does not reveal marked personality change or alterations in patterns of behaviour during the groups - all that emerges is this learning of a new kind of awareness. On the other hand some members go home and change their jobs, finish their marriages and so on. It seems as though the group process makes possible an extended awareness of the options open to the person, and allows them to then make a decision. This decision or choice is the personal growth or development - the moment of deciding to take one's life in another direction. Thus the group does not cause change or growth, it only creates conditions in which the person can choose to change, or, indeed, to stay the same. The extracts "Picking up on feelings" and "Struggling with style" are chosen to illustrate this point. Change does not inevitably follow from attending an encounter group. The group process, as described by many writers, the 'cognitive style' of being-in-a-group and the very fact of being outside the pressures of daily life for a while, combine to bring the person to a level of awareness at which choice is possible, at which the 'unfinished business' or 'blocks' which prevent choice no longer seem important. Another perspective is that the climate of trust generated makes people feel secure enough to change their ways.

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