

# *Psychosynthesis Research Foundation*

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February 1, 1967

Dear Colleague:

The sixth meeting of the 1966/67 series of Psychosynthesis Seminars (held on the third Friday of each month) will take place on Friday, February 17th at 7:30 P.M.

Marilyn B. Rosanes Berrett, Ph.D., New York City, will speak on Gestalt Therapy, and give a demonstration.

The meeting will start promptly at 7:30 P.M. and will be held in the "Directors Room" on the mezzanine floor, Park Sheraton Hotel, 7th Avenue and 55th Street, New York City. There is a public car park across the street from the hotel.

We trust it will be possible for you to be present.

Cordially,

JACK COOPER, M.D.  
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Date & Time of Meeting: Friday, February 17, 1967 - 7:30 P.M. prompt  
Place: "Directors Room," mezzanine floor, Park Sheraton Hotel, 7th Ave & 55th Street, New York City.  
Speaker: Marilyn B. Rosanes Berrett, Ph.D.  
Subject: A Demonstration of Gestalt Therapy

Dr. Marilyn Rosannes Berrett:

I have just a few basic principles that I would like to relate to you and then I'd like to go right into Gestalt therapy and use this group here as a workshop; and we'll go on from there. I work very much like my teacher and mentor Fritz Perls. There are other people doing Gestalt therapy, but I follow him very closely. Therefore, in a group I work with one person at a time and don't have an interchange, I don't encourage much interchange.

Now what is Gestalt therapy? This is Fritz's innovation to existential psychiatry; it is a microcosmic psychotherapy, and the aim is to become aware, very simply: "Who am I. What am I. How do I function?", and in this way to experience oneself. The essence is not to change, we don't stress you have to change, only to become aware; and the premise is that as soon as you are aware there will be a re-organization of structure and function relating to your own experiences.

We work very closely with the patient-therapist relationship, of which there are three aspects: the encounter, self-awareness and experiment. An experiment covers an experience in which action is promoted in a safe environment, where the person no longer feels threatened to express himself. The techniques that Fritz has developed and used are those which promote an easier way of reaching the core of the personality. Gestalt psychotherapy reaches the core very quickly.

As an explanation of the therapy he has divided the psychological structure of the personality into three levels: the games we play - very much like Eric Berne's "Games" - for example the big shot, or top dog, the bully; a stupid person always acts stupid, or the helpless soul - and these we find are similar to so-called defenses on the top level. Now below the games - the structure below - which we find is the most important part of the personality, Fritz refers to this as the implosive layer; and that's where the threatening implicit experiences are; a person feels nailed to the cross in this way; or another way of explaining it is what the Russians call the sick point. Now you know you have reached that part of the personality as soon as you hit what Fritz refers to as "the impasse." An impasse is the part which I hope to demonstrate here, where the person starts hedging, feeling very unsure, confused. He is looking for environmental support or control which is not forthcoming; other indications are where the person starts experiencing boredom, or is concerned that he has had too much time in the group, etc. You know that that's the stage to stay with and see the person through. This can be accomplished generally by encouraging him to stay with the experience.

Once a person goes through this implosive layer, you get to the explosive layer and Fritz believes that in order to feel "one" or whole you have to feel free to explode into joy, grief, orgasms or anger - if this is what you need. You have to feel free to experience such explosions which occur once you have gone through the implosive layer. That is, making explicit what is implicit.

The experiment serves the purpose of creating new opportunities for acting in a safely structured situation, trying out varieties of behavior. Now the aim of this therapy is to develop and use internal controls. Almost every form of existential psychotherapy is based on some philosophy. Buber had Judaism, and Sartre had communism; well Fritz has naturalism: to work and to live according to our natural laws, to follow nature as needs be; that is, to function as our structure permits us. We stay with the here and now.

"Why" is of no moment in this therapy; "why" only throws you off into rationalism and intellectualism. We like to stay away from this. How you function, how you experience; and when it comes to experience I would like to make this clear: People frequently say "I feel", when they really mean "I think" or "I believe." Feelings are strictly the emotions and sensations, within and without, and I will demonstrate this more clearly when a person is actually rehearsing or calculating what he thinks he should say to make a certain picture or image of himself or follow a desired role. He might say "I feel" when he is actually thinking. And to become aware we try to have you realize and know what you are doing, what is going on; are you thinking, are you feeling? For this we use the here and now.

Maturation for Fritz is the developing from environmental support to self-support, which is actually the aim; to become mature, to become self-supporting.

There are two approaches I'd like to use, these are the "awareness continuum": to be aware in the here and now of what is going on, which I would like to demonstrate; also the dreams, for it is in the dreams you get to the holes of the personality. The dreams are worked through in the present, they are your reality, what you dare not face, and what you dare not admit to yourself comes through in your dreams. If you can stay with the essence of your dreams you will be able to become aware of and work through the holes of the personality. We use the dream to go on in the existential sense - write a script - and experience each factor, the objects as well as the various roles or people presented. In this manner you finish a situation and experience yourself as a meaningful whole.

Now I would like to start the workshop with you. This was just a brief description. Come forward and make a circle because I want very much to be part, and in with you.

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DEMONSTRATION

(The pseudonyms "Gloria", "Pete" and "Frances" are used for the three participants who volunteered for the demonstration. Ed.)

Dr. Berrett: I am now available to anyone who would like to start.

(First exchanges with Gloria not recorded - she was speaking too low. Ed.)

Berrett: What do you feel like? Gloria: Very quiet...turmoil....

Berrett: Can you hear yourself? (Answer undecipherable. Ed.) Can you talk as if you were your voice? "I, the voice, am"; and then relate what you experience as your voice.

Gloria: I am - completely quiet - I am...(undecipherable. Ed.)...I am all by myself. I don't want to be laughed at.

Berrett: Gloria, will you stand up and go around the circle to about half a dozen people and laugh at them? (Gloria:...I can't.) And listen to yourself at the

same time? (Gloria: How do you mean "laugh"? Just laugh?) You don't want to be laughed at; so will you laugh at them in the way you do not want to be laughed at. (Here Gloria walked slowly around the group, pausing to giggle-laugh at five or six people. Ed.)

Berrett: How do you feel now? (Gloria: Better!) Do you hear your voice now? (It was stronger. Ed.) This is what I mean; you don't have to interpret. Just by allowing the person to experience what is going on, her fear of not being laughed at - without an attempt to interpret; the interpretation may be wrong. You actually want to laugh at people; so you do it if you want to and you have this bit of an "explosion"; there is a closure then, which you can hear in your voice.

Gloria: I don't know if that is true. Naturally, I have had the experience of my voice being laughed at, for many reasons. I have a funny voice. (Berrett: "I am a funny voice; I make people laugh.") I have a funny accent and I have a funny sound.

Berrett: What would you - the voice - say - "I am small, I am big, I am tall, I am low"? What is your voice?

Gloria: I am small, and I am much younger than Gloria - and I am very cute. (Berrett: How old are you?) Me, as my voice? (Berrett: Yes; how old are you, the voice?) About 16. (Berrett: But you sound more like 4 or 5 years old.) (Period of silence. Ed.) (Berrett: What are you experiencing right now?)

Gloria: Who are you talking to right now - the voice or Gloria? (Berrett: Is there a difference?) Yes, there is! The voice is answering you. I am experiencing I would much rather be 16 than Gloria's age. (Berrett: You have an age problem?) No. I can be whatever I choose to be. (Berrett: I wonder, because your voice gives you as you really are.) I don't understand you. (Berrett: What are you experiencing right now?) I'm amused; I think I'm laughing at all the people who are waiting for me to grow up.

Berrett: "Ha! Ha! I won't grow up". Now you say that.

Gloria: (In a loud voice and with laughter. Ed.) I won't grow up! (Berrett: Will you say that several times?) I won't grow up! I won't grow up! (Berrett: How do you feel right now?) That last time sounded awfully grown up. (Berrett: "Awfully!") (a long silence. Ed.)

Berrett: Where are you now? (Gloria: I was with my granddaughter.) (long silence. Ed.) What are you doing? (Gloria: I...seem to be hovering somewhere in space, and I am not quite sure what I am doing.) Will you close your eyes and go there? .....Now you can come back to us? (long silence. Ed.)

Gloria: Okay. (Berrett: Can you tell us where you were and what you experienced?) Well, I started coming back from outer space, towards the earth and then it got to be like two thoughts...of going through the whole business of a landing as you would see it if you had been away. (Berrett: And how do you feel right now?) Very comfortable. (Berrett: Do you want to go away again or would you like to stay here?) It is all right to stay here because I can always go away. (Berrett: Are you aware of your facial expression - of that funny little smile?) (long silence. Ed.)

Gloria: I really think there is something I am laughing about - a secret I am keeping from everybody. (Berrett: Yes, that was my guess too; quite a big secret, and you can laugh at us and keep your secret?) Yes.

Berrett: Are you aware of what you are doing right now? (Gloria: Yes, I know. What I am trying to do is to figure it out. I know there is a very strange feeling right here and probably. . .) Do you want us to hear you? (long silence and long sigh from Gloria. Ed.) Were you aware of your sigh?

Gloria: Usually, when I speak to a group, people complain that they cannot hear me; but I thought I was speaking loud enough for this room anyway. (Berrett: Do you want to ask if anyone here is having trouble hearing you?) (Several people signified they could not hear. Ed.) Oh!

Berrett: I have a little experiment. I would like to suggest: that you say "I won't let you hear me; you might find out my secret."

Gloria: (Very low voice. Ed.) I won't let you hear me; you might find out my secret.

Berrett: Will you say that again to a number of us? (said a little louder. Ed.)

Gloria: I won't let you hear me, you might find out my secret.

Berrett: Did you hear the tremor in your voice then?

Gloria: (In much louder voice with emphasis. Ed.) I won't let you hear me, you might find out my secret! (Laughter. Phrase repeated fairly softly to three other people. Ed.)

Berrett: What are you experiencing right now? (Gloria: I am picking out the people who it would be all right to know my secret.) (After long silence. Ed.) What are you experiencing right now? (Gloria: I have just found out which people I will let know my secret, but I won't tell you the rule - but there is a rule.) Can you talk about the risk - the risk of people knowing your secret? (long silence. Ed.) What is going on right now?

Gloria: I am trying to find out how I would formulate it. (Berrett: Are you rehearsing?) No; I am just thinking that "if you knew my secret you could" - and then I don't know what comes after that! (Berrett: Well, would you stand up and say that out loud, and with each person write your own script - finish the statement?) I would not want to do that. (Berrett: What do you feel right now?) (long silence. Ed.) Then...if I could...where I am vulnerable.

Berrett: This is the implosive layer that you are getting to right now.

Gloria: And I don't want to tell people...what they could do if they knew my secret. That would be the - (Berrett: A catastrophe?) That would be telling them the secret. (Berrett: Can you picture the catastrophe if they knew?) When you said "picture the catastrophe," the image that immediately came to my mind was that I had wet pants. (Said laughingly. Ed.) And I was thinking about the time in kindergarten when I did wet my pants and my teacher made me stand with my back to the radiator so I would dry! And I guess, well, everyone knows my secret! (Said strongly. Ed.) (Berrett: Do you hear your own voice now?) Yes, it is more open.

(Berrett: "I am more open.") Yes, I am more open. I feel as if I am blushing, but I do not know whether I am. (Berrett: Do you experience any joy now?) Now I feel, now I think, it is very funny!

Berrett: So the big, big, dark secret usually ends up with some little thing like this!

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Berrett: I would very much appreciate a dream - I think that this is where Fritz Perls has made his greatest contribution.

Pete: Well I can give you one, if nobody else will. This dream is in two parts. In the first one I was on a roof top and I was wresting a gun from a man; and in the other part I was about to enter this woman who was lying before me, but there was another woman and she interfered or interrupted the proceeding and I could not go through with it. I was absolutely furious. (Berrett: Are you aware of what you are doing right now?)

Pete: I have a fever blister here (touching his lip. Ed.) if you want to know. (Berrett: Are you aware of your expression?) I am embarrassed. (Berrett: Stay with the embarrassment.) (Long silence. Ed.) This disappears when I look around this group. (Berrett: So what happened to the embarrassment?) It disappeared when I began to look at them. (Berrett: And before you looked at them?) I felt embarrassed. (Berrett: So as soon as you looked at them you lost the embarrassment?) It just seemed to disappear. (Berrett: I am curious to know how far you allowed yourself to go into the embarrassment.)

Pete: Not very deeply. (Berrett: So looking at them was getting away from the embarrassment, do you think?) I am not sure whether I should keep my glasses on or take them off. If I take them off the faces are much more blurred and therefore I cannot see the expressions on the faces. (Berrett: Which way is better for you?)

Pete: It is easier this way. (With the glasses off. Ed.) (Berrett: You push us all away?) I cannot see you clearly. (Berrett: Do you feel safer?) Um! Now I am getting embarrassed! (A group member: Put your glasses on!) (Berrett: Stay with the embarrassment. Have you noticed your breathing?) Yes. (Long silence. Ed.) (Berrett: Where are you now?) I was thinking of Shirley, then I was thinking of my mother. (Berrett: And what happened to the embarrassment?) It goes when I start thinking. (Berrett: So you get out of it each time?) Um. Um. (Berrett: Can't you stay with it?) (Long silence. Ed.) (Berrett: How are you doing this seeing? You said "let me see...." and I was wondering how you are doing this "seeing".) Well, in a sense I am afraid to see because - I am feeling in my face. (Berrett: What might happen if we see you? What do you get?) Well, I get even redder - I am red all over - I understand you can get embarrassed from head to toe. (Laughingly; then long silence. Ed.) I have a feeling - of being in a corner, as it were. I don't want to think about my most embarrassing moment but I am afraid you are going to ask me what was my most embarrassing moment, and I do not want to think about it. (Berrett: What might happen? (Silence. Ed.) I am losing my embarrassment. (Berrett: You are continually losing the embarrassment - getting away, out of it.) (Long silence. Ed.) I have an awful feeling of all these faces looking at me. (Berrett: What do we see when we look at you?) (Long silence. Ed.) (Berrett: Pete, I would like to conduct a little experiment.) I am sure you would (laughter), you would like to embarrass me. (Berrett: I would

like you to have a dialogue between you and the group, but when the group talks you will talk for them; and then you, Pete, will talk back to the group.) I don't understand what you mean. (Berrett: I am not through yet! (laughter)

Pete: Neither am I! You mean I should talk to the group and then answer for the group? (Berrett: Yes.) I am changing to another feeling which I don't like. They all look nameless. Now let me see now: we are nameless, judging, looking on, looking at. You don't have any soul - no feeling. (Berrett: Do it this way: "I am the group" and then go on. Do this on an I-you basis. Go on: "I, the group, am nameless souls.")

Pete: We are not involved, I am not involved. I am just looking at you, reflective, studying. (Berrett: Now you, Pete, speak. Start "I, Pete, etc....") I don't like you to look this way. I would like you to respond, to speak. (Berrett: And how does the group respond?) I, the group, am going to remain silent. This is a horrible kind of thing, you know, because there is no dialogue really! There is no give and take, and this is what bothers me; but everyone is just silent and I am speaking, I am acting - there is no feedback. (Berrett: Now would you talk to the group again?) (Long silence. Ed.)

Pete: I will talk to you (directed at one person sitting back in his chair. Ed.) because you are in a position like this; you know, it makes me think of someone being high up, superior. (Berrett: "I am very cool.") I am very cool, looking down on you; I am not really empathic; I am very distant. I sound very distant. (Silence. Ed.) (Berrett: Would you continue with the dialogue?)

Pete: No I must...do something. I want to do something to stir you up and get a reaction out of you or a response of some sort. Smile! (Said in a loud voice. Ed.) The thing that I can't seem to stand is this nothing, no reaction whatsoever, no looks, no movement, no feeling, no response. (Berrett: Is this what troubles you, when you do this? When you don't respond? When you don't experience - nothing comes in?)

Pete: I know I am troubled with lack of response from the group; you see, I have to single out a person. Otherwise it gets to be an amorphous mass. (Berrett: Yes, there you are referring to the group; "the group is judging me".) Yes, but no! It is more than this judgment; it is a lack of anything; it is just a horrible feeling of being in among a group of statues. Yeah? I am all alone. (Berrett: How do you make us that?) How do I make you statues? (Long silence. Ed.) I make you statues!? But this is the way the thing is set up. (Berrett: Would you like to ask other people if they feel that way too?)

Pete: But I do not think that is fair. (Berrett: Because you are on a spot?) And you have got the situation set up so that I am responding, but of course I can break out of this by really asking somebody to respond. (Berrett: How do you stop yourself? This is what...) Yes, this is what - I know what the trouble is! Because I take the implicit rules that are set up here, as rules that are not really so; but I can break this by really contacting somebody in the group - but I do not have to abide by the rules. (Berrett: Well, how do you stop yourself?)

Pete: I stop myself by not making contact with somebody here, in some way, either by the eyes - but I don't really contact the individual, it just becomes an amorphous mass. (Berrett: And you have difficulty entering.) But I don't have difficulty entering if it is a one-to-one relationship, but only when it is in a

group situation. (Berrett: But when you had two women there - in your dream - you had a group too!) Um! It's the presence of a third party that disturbs me. I don't like it; I am all right on a one-to-one basis. (Berrett: Will you be the third party in your dream?) (Long silence. Ed.)

Pete: Oh! I see! The third party is really the interruptor. (Berrett: Ah, ah!) It's the one who really interrupts the proceedings. (Berrett: Okay; now you be the one to interrupt.) Ah, ah! all right! (Berrett: You got the message? Now you know how to work with the dream? I usually get at the part that the subject likes the least, and stay with it. Now I am giving you an explanation, I realize, for your benefit, Pete. Stay with whatever comes. And the person always presents himself in talking or in the dream, and I know it will relate back in some way to the existential self, to what is going on in the dream - to the gun in your dream. That was another point I could have picked up, and one you can work with. Be that gun, the first fragment.) (Long silence. Ed.)

Pete: Oh boy! now I am - okay! (Silence Ed.) (Berrett: What's going on, Pete? Stay with yourself.) (Laughingly) I am staying with the embarrassment! (Berrett: All right, stay with this.) (Silence. Ed.)

Pete: Oh...it is really my interrupting my parents having intercourse. That's where the embarrassment....(Berrett: Can you talk to them right now - while they are having intercourse?) No, I can't! I really - this is really too much. No!

Berrett: (In response to undecipherable comment from a group member. Ed.) No, not to be brazen - this is going against the embarrassment - then you would just defeat your purpose. I would rather that you stay with it and not be the smart alleck. (Long silence. Ed.)

Pete: Hm,Hm! All the analytical interpretations I can think of are coming to my mind. I could not see any connection between the two parts of the dream and now I can... (Berrett: Every dream is a continuous story if you listen to it - another way, the same theme.) It isn't funny! With all my sophisticated knowledge, yet I should still feel something like that! (Silence. Ed.) (Berrett: What are you doing right now?) I am embarrassed you know; because I have such a Freudian interpretation of something which I know really that I should not have - I should be over that kind of feeling. (Silence. Ed.) Um, Um! This is hard for me to say really - I am really having trouble (laughingly). It is really a question of sophisticated interpretation that my father - (Berrett: Now can you let yourself endure your own sadism?)

Pete: No, no! It is not that. (Berrett: Go back to the gun, and let yourself enjoy being the gun.) I think you are wrong. It isn't sadism - the interpretation I put on it isn't sadistic. (Berrett: You shouldn't be sadistic?) No, because it isn't sadistic. It is like a child's interpretation of this thing - it isn't sadistic. (Berrett: It sounds like you are intellectualizing.)

Pete: Well there I think it is all right. (Berrett: And that is how you get away from it.) No, I disagree with you I think this is where some intellectual insight is all right - (brief silence. Ed.) (Berrett: How do you feel, if you know you are right?)

Pete: I am fine. I really am! (Berrett: Got a closure?) Yes. (Berrett: Fine.)

Pete: Thank you.



Berrett: If you like we can have some postmortems, although I would prefer going on with another dream if possible.

Haronian: I would just like to remind you, Pete, of the situation at the convention with Gene Sagan and your feelings in the group at that time, of not reaching and the need to reach. I had a feeling of there being a similarity here in the group tonight - in your feelings about the group here and your feelings at that meeting.

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Frances: I had a dream last week; I woke up screaming, and I have never done that before in my life. I forget the details but I was walking along with a girl and somehow a mouse came along and bit me on the toe. But today I was in the kitchen in the office and a mouse came out and ran over my toe, and boy! did I let out a scream! I am scared of mice, of course. (Berrett: How do you feel right now?) Oh, all right, but I was a little unnerved when it happened. (Berrett: Are you aware of how you are sitting?) Well, I might sit more ladylike. (laughter) (Berrett: Would you give us a lecture on how it is to be a lady - how a lady should act?)

Frances: Well, if I sat with my legs like this it would be more ladylike. Oh, but you wanted me to give a lecture? (Berrett: Instead of a lecture come and sit in this chair and behave or talk as a lady should talk.) Is all this connected with the mouse?!

Streitfeld: She takes a circuitous route, but she'll get there!

Berrett: Sit here, and talk as a lady should talk, and then how Frances wants to talk - have a dialogue. This is a little bit of role playing.

(Little was decipherable on the tape over the laughter of the group as Frances acted an affected woman. Ed.)

Berrett: Now you go back to the other chair and you be "not proper."

Frances: (In loud laughing voice. Ed.) When that mouse came along I jumped up a mile; and I screamed. (Berrett: Come back here again and handle the mouse in a proper way.) What, there is a proper way for a lady to handle a mouse?! (Berrett: Demonstrate!)

Frances: Not me; with a mouse around I couldn't act like that! (Berrett: Be a proper lady.)

Frances: (In a high affected voice. Ed.) Little mousy, stay there now. It's a nice mousy...don't you step on me. (Then in normal voice. Ed.) But I don't think a lady would say "little mousy" though. What would she say? (Berrett: What should she say?) Go away where you belong! (Berrett: Um, um, um. And now, the other role.)

Frances: Well, I will tell you that first role really took everything out of me - when I was jumping up and down there. Well, I am glad I am not going into that kitchen again. A cup of coffee wasn't worth it! (Berrett: Frances, would you play the mouse?)

Frances: Oh no! I couldn't - try and picture myself as a mouse?! (Berrett: Yes and doing all those things that you put on to the mouse as doing. (Silence. Ed.) What are you doing right now? (Further silence. Ed.)

Frances: You are right - that mouse was more scared than I was, with me hollering, etc. but I tell you, when they bite, they really bite! (Berrett: Be the mouse.) With fangs - I think they have; it is their way of defense. (Berrett: Will you be that, with that way of defense?) But it is not necessary to bite! (Berrett: Now you are saying the "should" again. You are back in that role. Be the mouse.)

Frances: Well, if I were a mouse I would not go around biting people. (Berrett: But what would you do as a mouse?) I would look for something to eat - cheese. (Berrett: What are you doing now - looking for something to eat?) No, not right now, because I just ate. (Berrett: What do you feel right now?)

Frances: I am laughing right now. Oh, I wouldn't want to be a mouse! (Berrett: Were you aware of that sigh?) Because I didn't want to be a mouse. (Berrett: Experience being the mouse.)

Frances: The poor thing - they are setting a trap for it. (Berrett: Setting a trap for you, the poor mouse? If all you want is cheese, food - what do you feel right now?) Oh nothing; if I were a mouse I would have it coming to me. (Berrett: You deserve that kind of treatment?) Yes, if I bit somebody. (Berrett: And this mouse bites people still?)

Frances: The mouse in my dream but not the one in the kitchen. (Berrett: Could you close your eyes and bite a few people's toes? (after a silence. Ed.) What's going on right now?) I am trying to figure out how a mouse would bite. I have to have...to bite an ear. Yes, I can see that. (Berrett: How do you feel as you bite people - their toes?) Now there is a good question! (Berrett: Are you aware of what you are doing with your toes?) Yes. Because I am shaking the mouse off. (Berrett: All right, go ahead.)

Frances: I think I am back to the role of the lady again...am I still in the biting role? (Berrett: Okay, take it from there.) Okay, I am doing that. (Berrett: Keep on biting a few more toes.) No! (Berrett: Keep on biting even though you don't like it.)

Frances: Oh, am I in the mouse role? I keep forgetting which role I am in. Now, if I were in a mouse role I most certainly would not go around biting toes or anything else. (Berrett: What would you do?) I would just be a nice mouse and I would go and have food, and keep out of the way and that sort of thing. (Berrett: And the mouse in your dreams?) Well, it wasn't that kind of mouse. (Berrett: So you be that kind of mouse.)

Frances: But I don't want to be that kind of mouse. (Berrett: What is the risk?) It is not very nice. (Berrett: This is the theme we are back on - the dialogue. You are what you are. (Silence. Ed.) What do you feel right now?

Frances: I am trying to figure just what you said. (Berrett: What is going on? How do you do this?) I am what I am; I know that. But how does the mouse prove that. (A few words undecipherable ending in "agitated". Ed.) (Berrett: Do you feel agitated?)

Frances: No more than usual. (Berrett: Your usual agitation?) No more than my usual agitation, yes. (Berrett: Could you allow yourself to exaggerate your feelings?) What I am feeling right now? (Berrett: Yes.)

Frances: No, there is nothing to exaggerate; I am just trying to figure out what you are saying. (Berrett: How do I look to you right now; what are you seeing?) A lovely person, alert, nice eyes, etc. (Berrett: What do you feel?) Okay. Of course, all these words - I am very conscious of my toes, conscious of the biting now, and drawing attention to these areas. (Berrett: And how do you feel?) Fine. Am I not supposed to? (Berrett: You are what you are!)

Frances: I am trying to accomodate you. (Berrett: By saying the nice things?) No; I don't know what you are all expecting. If you want me to be agitated I could be agitated. (Berrett: So you are like a chameleon; you can go either which way. Now could you go on with the dream?)

Frances: Well that was all I could remember; it was last week. I still don't remember the details and what brought it to mind was that mouse at the office today; and also because the dream was unusual; I have never woken screaming. (Berrett: Could you tell us the dream again?)

Frances: It seems that I was walking down the street and I was talking with somebody. I forget the details and how this mouse came along but all that I remember is that it came along. (Berrett: Show us.) We were walking, and what I was doing on the ground I don't know, but apparently - it was like - I am imagining this as I think of the dream - I must have been on a scooter or something or maybe I had dropped something, and I was picking it up because I remember that I was very close to the ground, and there was something - it was like it was a dog or something, but this thing changed into a mouse. Maybe it was a dog that was walking along with me, I don't know. And I reached over to pet it and all of a sudden it turned into a mouse.

Berrett: Now can you be this dog and turn into a mouse?

Frances: I am not sure that it was a dog. (Berrett: Or whatever pet that was. Now walk along the street as this dog, cat or whatever and then turn into a mouse. Do it in the first person - "I, the cat, etc." Will you do that?) At this time of the day I don't feel like biting toes. (Berrett: What would you prefer to bite?)

Frances: Nothing, I am not a biting person. (Berrett: If you were a biting person what would you like to bite?) Well, it wouldn't be toes, I'll tell you..... I get your point now!! I really am a biting person! I never realised it! (Laughter) (Berrett: Can you hear the difference in your voice now?) I never realised I bit so hard!

Berrett: To do a little interpreting, you condemn yourself for it at some level. (Frances: I do?) I don't know; you can throw it out if you like. But you are not quite comfortable in this - the mouse that scares, the biting mouse.

Frances: I am not comfortable as a biting mouse, but as a biter! What Marilyn just said then as a postscript is true. Recently I said something which I didn't think was really derogatory but felt that it might be; and I did not feel comfortable, for if I can't say something good about a person better not speak, but I made a biting remark! That is exactly what it was. And it just came to me then.

## DISCUSSION

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Berrett: I am just fascinated by the way we do our dream work - you get everything in the dream, the whole existence, the whole reality of a person.

Colton: But do you interpret more than what is uncovered in the conscious effort of the patient?

Berrett: You solve. When I said "this is an interpretation" I did it with tongue in cheek, because everything that comes from the person is awareness; his discovery is much more meaningful than if I gave him an interpretation. His discovery is the "ah! ha! experience" that we refer to. And as to interpretations - some are good, some are not good; some you try on; you work with them.

Frances: That was what I was waiting for - an interpretation; but I can see now it was more meaningful.

Streitfeld: The very fact that Marilyn added this postscript was of some help.

Frances: Yes, because up until then - (Streitfeld: It came at the right moment.)

Berrett: At the right moment, but you might add - if the timing is right. With Frances the discovery was almost there. It is a bit like tying a knot - getting all the ends together.

Pete: You didn't give me the interpretation; it just came from within me.

Berrett: As I said in my little lecture: how microscopic this is; you get to the core quickly and the essence of the personality.

Hilton: What do you mean by the "essence" of the personality?

Berrett: The basic structure. (Hilton: The basic structure of personality patterns?) Patterning, type and orientation.

Haronian: What is the role of the group? How do you see our role? You do not want us to talk?

Berrett: A little - if you feel very strongly; but generally I do not want you to talk.

Mrs. Hilton: This is usually done in group therapy?

Berrett: Yes. Fritz Perls says that his best therapy is done in what he calls "the workshop". It is different from the group in that you go along and experience along with the person who is on the spot; and also - and I didn't do it much here, for you are all strangers - with the working group you will get up and use the group as a projection screen; like I did with Pete - having the group talk. Actually none of us looked that cold for I looked around and did not see the group that way.

Haronian: He kept his glasses off! (Cooper: We were all throwing love at you, Pete!)

Berrett: Yes, Pete actually had a very supportive group here. And when I asked him to talk to the group the projections came out. In the workshop the group is better there because almost what you never get in the individual session you start getting in a group, and people gain confidence and support and start exposing themselves more and more - which they would not do ordinarily.

Taylor: So there is some support coming from the group in the long run?

Berrett: There is; even in this kind of closely organized one without the interruption going on, as there usually is.

Mrs. Malamud: Isn't it lost where there is interruption going on?

Berrett: Yes, it is lost, because then there are so many "therapists". I am very strict about this; each one has a different approach. They may be right, but then you all go around in circles, because there are people in Gestalt who also have this approach, but I have found it is not as effective as Fritz's control which I follow.

Mrs. Hilton: May I ask if you have found a difference in speed of recovery between an individual consultation or in a group.

Berrett: I prefer the group, although there are many people who will not go into the group; and if I take them in - in a state of panic, a state of emergency - I take them individually for a few sessions, and then they go back into the group; but I let them sit until they are ready themselves.

Mrs. Hilton: And you find no difference in the length of time?

Berrett: No, it depends how sick they are. I have a very sick group that I work with in a "half-way house"; and I had seen them every day for 12 days, every single morning, and I could not get much expression for six days but on the seventh day they started getting at each other's feelings, and I just let this bedlam go on, with each one attacking one by one for seven days. They are schizophrenic and all pretty sick people - young people - and by the end of the 12th day there was a big change and they could start working in this way, talking about their feelings, and experiencing.

Streitfeld: I have an intuitive feeling that what you are really doing - and it doesn't make too much difference about the content - is shuffling back and forth, trying to get the person to shuffle back and forth, the polarities. (Berrett: That's right.) That is all there is to it. Marilyn will be off at times in what she says but she is just trying to get you to go back and forth between opposites - whatever they are - until there is a breakthrough and you become more integrated. (Berrett: A gestalt.) Yes, a gestalt, a whole. Because, and I was talking about this last time, the essence of a neurosis or psychosis is that you get stuck in one side or the other and you do not really keep moving.

Berrett: Yes; and I had Frances go between the "nice lady" and the other one - her polarities.

Frances: Well, I do not feel any holier or unholy than I was before, but I do feel that I have gained an insight on this particular dream, but as regards us feeling holier. (Berrett: But we meant more whole, better integrated.) Yes, but

I don't think I have gained that; but I have gained insight.

Mickans: Do you work with each part of the dream?

Berrett: It depends on how much the person is ready to experience. This is the first experience - how much you can allow. You can take the objects or the various people - the objects in the dream are important. If you can relate to and experience yourself as a bar or a pole or a hunk of shit - these shit dreams are so prevalent. There was one in one of our groups; a woman who thought she had accomplished so much with three different kinds or structured hunks of shit - each came out better structured than the other so she felt very good. But she would never go into each one - just say "See what I accomplished! I am better each time"; and it took a lot of work, almost an hour to get her to experience herself as shit.

Colton: Do members of the group help with interpretation or suggest interpretation? (Berrett: No.) Do you work with normal people? (Berrett: They are all normals in the workshop - relatively normal, but I also work with sick people too.) I am interested why you don't allow interpretation.

Berrett: I am following Fritz's rules closely, and the interpretations I find are just logical deductions, rationalizations mainly. Until the person can come to it himself, you are just beating around the bush; so I prefer not to allow them to beat up the person with their interpretations, which I have heard in groups so many times; and I resent this strongly. When everyone has a chance to air out their aggressions they don't benefit - anything but the catalytic experience, and without any integration. That is my objection, although I haven't heard Fritz say this.

Streitfeld: I would like to follow this a little longer. Frances has an insight now; let us say hypothetically that she was in another group with another experience,

Berrett: I would like to work further with her dream; tonight and tomorrow will be a build up on this, a sequence will come through - of the biting - more meaningful, and she will go to lower levels. If the biting goes to other stages there is growth, and the dream will show that. You will pass the biting stage if you go on. You know, the Freudian interpretation.

Streitfeld: Yes, but she has an insight now, she could have another experience in the next group and she could have another insight. This might be a deeper one. (Berrett: It usually is.) I am just wondering if the integrative process takes place all by itself.

Berrett: What I love about this method is that you become your own therapist. You get the essence of how to work in the workshop. I get up in the morning or during the night and there is a dream; I will stay there with the dream, i.e., experience it during the night and finish it and then I can go back and sleep peacefully, and get an entirely different dream which shows a completion of the other. (Cooper: Can you give us an illustration.) Yes, I just came back from Big Sur where I worked with Fritz. There are times when I am unsure and will put on a phoniness, and he was trying to get me to face this for quite some time. When I wouldn't accept something, when I showed a phoniness that he picked up, I rejected him; and sure enough, I dreamt that night and in the dream out came three phony characters. And I came in the next day and I could act out the three phony roles, ones I would use to cover some feeling, and this was beautifully demonstrated.

Cooper: The dreamer or the dreaming part of you seeks then to complete (Berrett: Yes.) This is what we are interested in. (Berrett: The movement is going on. In very disturbed people too I see this taking place; it is so beautiful, and what Assagioli describes in the book as the higher Self, this all starts coming in as I keep working with dreams continuously - you don't even have to develop or trace it to levels, it is all like the person unfolding.

Lazure: How does your thought of the inner core of the personality compare with the concept of the self in psychosynthesis as presented by Assagioli?

Berrett: As I tried to tell you, it is the same thing. We don't separate it though; we don't - in the Jungian terminology - break it apart, but you can see this taking place - what you call the "superconscious". If you watch Fritz you will see this happen at times and he is very much down on earth.

Taylor: He wouldn't like the terminology or put it that way, but it happens all the same, it unfolds. (Berrett: Yes. I prefer not to use the terminology; it is hampering. Maslow talks of the peak experience, but I have seen manics who will claim "Oh! I have now had the peak experience!"; manic - reactions which you could see were not this true peak. It's so different; but they are working so hard to get what they have read about - especially with this young group, these beatniks who work so hard with all the drugs and everything to feel this, when actually they are detaching and getting further and further away. This is what I find taking place.)

Cooper: The problem is to get them to get their feet on the ground. (Berrett: Yes.) This is one polarity, but you must come back to the other.

Streitfeld: I am still on this insight business; you say the awareness and the insights keep getting deeper: does this mean that there is a translation in terms of actual behavior?

Berrett: Yes. There is no separation, you know that. (Streitfeld: Oh yes there is!) There isn't. (Streitfeld: There can be an awareness where you don't do anything about it.) (Cooper: Impotent insight!)

Berrett: Then it is an intellectual awareness. (Streitfeld: No, I would not agree with that. It is not just an intellectual awareness.) Stay with the dreams!

Haronians: You keep emphasizing the importance of the dreams. (Berrett: Yes, they are your reality; you can't bluff there.) And, as you point out, once you get the technique you can analyze your own dreams.

Berrett: Yes, and as Fritz says, maturation is where you no longer need the therapist, or any environmental support. You are self-supporting.

Colton: I don't see how you can wake up so that you remember the dream. What do you do? (Cooper: Practice! it will develop.) Do you say to yourself "I am going to do it" - I have said this to myself and it doesn't work.

Berrett: No, but I go to sleep with a feeling that something just isn't right and I can't get it, so I will say "I will go to sleep and forget it"; and there it comes in a dream, and when I wake up I finish it off. Sometimes I get up with a

feeling - and have it all day - that I haven't been able to fully experience it; I feel uncomfortable all day and I will take the part until finally it comes.

Cooper: Progoff stumbled on some of this when he was completing dreams with his patients; he would have the dreamer complete it, visualization and so on.

Berrett: This is what we do a lot of - in the existential sense you write your own script.

Haronian: Obviously many of us will have trouble remembering dreams, and I wondered if Fritz had used the Directed Daydream technique instead. (Berrett: Yes, anything that is available - emotions, expressions, everything, anything you present; which I tried to show with the awareness continuum.)

Cooper: You don't have to be hampered by Leuner's "Twelve situations"; go ahead and use whatever is available.

Streitfeld: This continuum of awareness refers to? (Berrett: To whatever you experience - the here and now; how you experience in the now; what you experience.)

Colton: I gather from what you say about working this way that you might feel that sensitivity training would work in opposition to this.

Berrett: No, and real good sensitivity training, which I have done at Big Sur, actually enhances this - they fit together. I have had lots of sensitivity training for years, through various body techniques; and I spent some time in Denmark with Alexander's school there. I am amazed just how much more sensitive you can become - e.g., the tension in the muscles that had been knotted up or not used all my life, and how I had been hampered in not being really on my feet. I believe good sensitivity training is very important - the type that Bill Schutz' paper tells us about is another approach. If no one produced a dream I would use the whole group in a similar type of experience; I would go to that if nothing is forthcoming.

Cooper: How do you relate this to the business of the peeling away of the "layers of the onion" brought up at the last meeting? (Taylor: Yes, the getting through the concentric layers of the self to get at the core.)

Berrett: But every layer is still the "onion self".

Cooper: It is a continuous process - even after you have achieved nirvana or whatever. (Berrett: Nirvana is wholeness.) We continue to peel the onion!

Berrett: This is the excitement of life; it would be horrible if we had it all made and settled. It is constant growth - never ending growth. Take Fritz, he is 74 and he still finds new approaches. I am sure I don't do everything quite his way; some my own way; but it is very exciting to see a man after 50 years of clinical experience continually growing.

Cooper: It is the same with Assagioli. Here he is in his 70s and he is going, going.

Sargoy: There is an article in this week's "Nation" on awareness groups in California and they mentioned Fritz Perls and some woman who said: "He still kisses better than any other man"!



Berrett: Yes, when he kisses he is really there. (Cooper: And the polarities seem to get further and further apart.) That's right and when he isn't there, believe me, he isn't there! (Cooper: Yes, and you would not be able to contact him when he is at the other polarity.) And then he is very cruel; I can tell you that from bitter experience.

Cooper: It is a shame there has to be the two sides of the coin - rather than complete perfection. (Berrett: That is the human being. In Anna Freud's new book she says "Beware of the child that is always nice.")

Haronian: You spoke earlier of the implosive and the explosive layers or stages and getting past the implosive layer; and you gave us a brief idea of the theoretical notion. I wonder if it would not be helpful to review that now in the light of what has happened here.

Berrett: Pete's embarrassment, the staying with the embarrassment, would be the entering and experiencing of this implosive layer. The more that he can allow himself to go into this, some explosion would come then, some experience; and when he can explode the implicit becomes explicit.

Streitfeld: "Explosive" is a rather misleading word. It is an opening that takes place, not necessarily an explosion. You are closed and then you have an opening.

Berrett: Whenever you see the patient's boredom it is a beautiful sign, or when they say in the group "I am taking too much time". You just stay with that, right then and there, wherever they are and then they come through this and there is quite a change in the whole circulation - (Cooper: And our tendency as therapists is to avoid this too - if it hurts the person we say "all right, we will come back to it a little bit later.") Yes, the therapist is frightened himself and therefore he doesn't let a person go through such experiences.

Haronian: That is why, as I watched you drawing - necessarily - a great deal of anger from each person whom you worked with, I wondered what effect this had on you.

Berrett: I like it. As a therapist I am a projection screen and catalyst.

Streitfeld: Do you have any feelings about the type of person this gestalt method does not work with?

Berrett: Well you saw <sup>that</sup> with some it was harder. The more resistance, in time, usually permits awareness of experiences. (Streitfeld: Not harder, but where they are not reached.) Where they are working hard at driving you crazy, and this is their defense.

Streitfeld: I happen to know a number of persons that it doesn't work with.

Cooper: With a compulsive it would be very difficult.

Berrett: Yes, with a person who has - and I differ with Fritz on this - a continuous sneer. I think that the sneer is very important. I sneer because I am damn scared and embarrassed. (Taylor: He claims that you couldn't make any progress with anyone if the sneer is still there?) Yes, that's right, but I disagree with him. I love to work with the sneer - maybe because I was a sneering person myself, and so I can work with them.

Cooper: Assagioli says that the one he dislikes is the pseudo-intellectual.

Berrett: Yes, but with this method you stop all intellectualization right off. They are rehearsing, calculating, but you take away this weapon and the patient really has to face himself. (Haronian: But there are certain rules, and some people don't accept them!) Then in that case it's out, I can't work with them. And for those people - I have one who is hell bent; he talks and no sentence fits with another; but I am sure that he works at driving me crazy. I presented this to him: "You drove yourself crazy for a good purpose; you are driving your father crazy in paying these bills here; and now you are trying to drive me crazy." He was just so startled because it took away his intellectualization for a while; then he went right back again. (Cooper: My old professor of psychiatry used to say "You refer those cases to other doctors!") This is a defense which is very hard to break.

Aaronson: There is a method - just don't listen to what he says! (Berrett: That is just what I do.)

Streitfeld: I am thinking of someone who has had a lot of gestalt therapy; and it seems to me that it is possible to get explosive experiences - or whatever you want to call them - and still the individual cannot integrate them.

Berrett: That is what happens in your type of work, I think. I find that in using the methods of body work, that you can get the explosive experiences and not integrate them. It has come like almost too soon to know how to handle them - the opening, the ventilating, the tensions.

Streitfeld: I agree about that, but I am thinking of another type: of a person who can get insight, and you get them in each group, and yet somehow he does not bring them together into a network that makes something.

Berrett: I know what you mean and I think this is a complying person. He tries to show you that he is a good boy when he gets something. (Cooper: He is a real 'group attender'.) That's right, he is that type of person. He is hard to reach. (Cooper: These people often attend groups; they are there but where are they?)

Berrett: I do visual rehabilitation and improvement of a specific type under medical supervision. I got into gestalt therapy because I was training people to improve vision, and I noticed the continuum of improvement - about 10% really did well and with 10% at the other end nothing happened, and in between there were various degrees of improvement. I got to see what was going on in the person and could note the scotomas in the personality; and that is how I got into Gestalt therapy. My main interest is still visual work; I do this on a basis of coordination of eye-mind-feeling and relaxation, when you become aware of when you are not relaxing, and what are you doing with your eyes. I must say that Fritz at 65 was the best patient I ever had - myopic and in one eye almost no vision, which was growing worse; and within two or three sessions he could experience normal sight. In time it has held and he is almost 75 now. Then he told me "take your techniques far away", and pushed me aside and said "I know what is going on now." He began feeling what he had been doing that he could not see. He has taught me a great deal. Before I just did visual training, Bates method; but I have since taken it much further. I did my dissertation in this area, showing the structures of the personality which actually exist in various visual defects; what the person is expressing - another manifestation. So this is how I got into gestalt therapy - looking for another tool.

Haronian: This sounds fascinating; can you tell us any more about the relation between types of physical defects and personality?

Berrett: You can read my dissertation. (Haronian: Where can I get it?) At Yeshiva University, School of Education. I finished it last March but it is now available.

Taylor: Did Huxley make any reference to that in the book he wrote years ago - before he got on to the LSD business?

Berrett: Yes; I myself was cross eyed - this was way back - with horrible headaches. When I came to relate what was happening through my analysis - way before Fritz - I could associate it with my visual difficulties; and I knew I wanted to learn more about what the person is doing with his eyes. I look at myopia or hyperopia as structural change; if you keep pressing your elbow long enough all these muscles will change and you will get a structural change too. So I look at it as that kind of an expression; therefore you do have a structural malformation. (Cooper: What was the title of the paper?) "Psychological correlates of myopia compared to hyperopia and ametropia." (undecipherable question about astigmatism. Ed.)

Astigmatism is a big name that means very little. I have worked with it. I worked under medical supervision with very serious conditions, and very minor ones too. (Taylor: Glaucoma?) Yes, with continuous medical supervision and examination. (Cooper: They are compulsives!) Very! I have one in the group now for psychotherapy who I can get to normal - I am working out three days a week so I haven't much time to do eye work - but every time she feels neglected then up goes the pressure again. It is almost as if I'll never get rid of her.

Cooper: They are literally "bug-eyed"; they are trying to see. (Berrett: And to avoid the rage.)

Mrs. Hilton: What about cataracts? (Berrett: Well that may be poor circulation, and the resulting tissue changes, the opaqueness.) And they cannot be helped by this method?

Berrett: Well, I have seen an arrest of the process, if the person is cooperative. Generally, if I can reach it in the beginning I can stop it from growing worse, by just increasing circulation techniques, relaxation and that sort of thing.

Cooper: Research shows that within three to six months of development you can bring about a reversal, but once you reach a certain critical point then it becomes hopeless

Berrett: Yes, if you get them at the beginning when the first opaque spot is obvious. I have been doing this work under medical supervision for 18 years and I have had people in the same cataract state for long periods without advancement.

Colton: What of a detached retina? (Berrett: Oh I stay away from that; that is dangerous, that is a tissue break.)

Cooper: It is actually floating inside, and they try to pin it down with laser beams - spot welding! They have been only occasionally successful. The retina is a very complicated structure, and it is probably due in some way to some of the deficiencies - such as vitamin deficiency. It may be in some food product that we don't recognize and possibly in time there comes the end point.

Berrett: Or due to excessive pressure - continuous beating down within in some way, or controlling.