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Malamud and Machover: Toward Self-Understanding. Group Techniques in Self-Confrontation

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With the present era of the Roman liturgical reform at an end, Catholics stand at the threshold of an era of creative development for the liturgy in new cultural contexts. The psalms that spread from Jerusalem to the Near East, then to Rome and throughout the world are deeply rooted in the human heart and responsive to man's basic religious spirit. Thus, when properly understood they should prove to be a highly relevant expression of those attitudes and aspirations that are genuinely Asian and African. Only gratitude to Father Sabourin for his invaluable work can be the sentiment of seminary professors, preachers and teachers, catechists and liturgists and all who wish ready access to the Word of God as it is enshrined in the perennial and universal songs of God's people.

P. J. CALDERONE, S.J.

SELF-CONFRONTATION: A METHODOLOGY

TOWARD SELF-UNDERSTANDING: Group Techniques in Self-Confrontation.
By Daniel I. Malamud and Solomon Machover. Springfield, Illinois:
Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1965. xii, 269 pp.

In an age which places a premium on human relations, and at a time when the pace of life is producing anxious individuals, techniques by which dynamic self-insight may be achieved should be welcomed by all. The authors' purpose, in writing this book, was mainly to provide an empirical account of a method of self-confrontation designed to stimulate intense, personal-emotional involvement in order to sharpen one's perceptiveness, examine one's biases and effectively deal with one's various defense mechanisms. More specifically, the self-confrontation approach is concerned with such questions as: can adults be "taught" in a planned course to understand themselves better in ways which made a difference in their lives? What planned group procedures are available for promoting growth in self-understanding? What concepts and principles should make up the content of this course? What are some possible roles of the leader in this course? What typical opportunities and anxiety-producing situations arise and how may the leader best deal with them?

Part I describes in detail two clinic Workshops, supplementing its narrative with critical commentary and the participants' own evaluation of their effectiveness. Overtones of many personality theorists appear in the critical commentary of this section, e.g., psychoanalytic, with its belief that unconscious phenomena are real and meaningful and that childhood experiences have a crucial bearing on personality development. Rogers' Client-Centered therapy emerges with the emphasis on self-

discovery. Since the workshop leader can set the pace of interaction among the members, he also functions as a behavior therapist; the structuring approach with which each workshop commences brings the basic tenets of Reality Therapy to the forefront.

The "how to" of a self-confrontation method is presented in Part II, which comprises chapters, V-VIII. For those who are timid about participating in a workshop of this type, the authors provide encouraging guidelines. In other words, the structuring process stresses positive extension of self-awareness; it is not meant to solve personal problems then and there. In self-analysis, members are stimulated by one another. Leader notes certain patterns of responses which repeat themselves and considers the origins of and motivational factors underlying these response patterns. The leader's function as proposed in chapter V, is to guide and sensitize members' attitudes toward himself and other participants. The authors admit that "in any creative endeavor, the leader's personality becomes inevitably verymuch involved in Workshop transactions" (p. 195). The assumption seems to be that all leaders of these workshops should have the necessary experience, ego-strength and maturity to deal with and to provoke members since the authors believe conflicts are necessary for a successful workshop. In referring to conflict and the necessity of generating an optimal level of anxiety, a basic drawback of the method appears: no two individuals are alike; therefore, what is stimulating for one or anxiety-producing for another is questionable.

The book has many positive qualities to recommend it: (1) It has an eclectic theoretical foundation which promotes its applicability to a wide audience, e.g., students, professional groups (especially appropriate in the training of mental health specialists), religious communities, the Catholic Family Movement, etc. (2) The systematic transcription of previous workshops encourages comparison and adaptation. (3) The more than sixty group experiments suggested in chapter VI, grouped according to "formative influences in childhood", "personal characteristics and processes" and "interpersonal relations" are gamelike so that normally guarded behaviors, feelings, and ideas will be tapped. Although the experiments seem to be culture free, the actual implementation may go against the grain of typical Filipino dialogues. (4) To allay the doubts of would-be participants, chapter VII clearly asserts that the self-confrontation approach is not a form of psychotherapy for the mentally ill; rather, it is an education process for even the most "normal" because it aims at a deeper analysis of one's covert functioning.

The terse discussion of "Related Approaches" (Chapter VIII) to better mental health leaves much to be desired as does the list of references. However, the mature reader would be stimulated to question his degree of integration and his ability to relate to others in terms of life experiences, not momentary crises. It is a provocative book for

an age which demands ever increasing responsiveness to people and situations.

MAUREEN MCCARTHY

PERSONALISM AND CONCRETE FREEDOM

LA NOTION DE LA LIBERTÉ PARTICIPÉE DANS LA PHILOSOPHIE DE LOUIS LAVELLE. By Émérita Quito: Studia Friurgencia, Nouvelle Série No. 49. Fribourg, Suisse: Editions Universitaires, 1969, xii, 115 pp.

It must be seen as an important event that this "modeste travail" was accomplished. The author has expressed as her hope that it will call attention to a philosopher who is being neglected too much at present. And, we can add, she appears to be the first one who has tried to remedy that situation in the Philippines. One cannot but agree with the author that Louis Lavelle (1883-1951) has not yet received the attention he deserves.

We meet here one of the instigators of the philosophical movement, known as the "Philosophy of Spirit." Although this very name may give rise to suspicion when, for instance, one is set on ideas of secularization, further acquaintance with the goals and achievements of the movement can convince all that its message is worth listening to. One thinks here especially of the contribution which a Platonic and an Augustinian trend of philosophy could present to a world which critically looks at the usefulness of a Christianized Aristotelianism in its midst.

The theme of this study is the question of freedom, a problem which in the eyes of Lavelle himself is a central one. For he confesses that "the secret of the world lies in the relation between God's freedom and man's freedom." In this way the study aims at the same time at a crucial human problem and at the heart of Lavelle's philosophy. Both Lavelle and Dra. Quito are aware of the enigma of man's freedom when he is called a "created creator." The reader finds himself taken up with the difficulties of keeping balance. Colin Smith in his *Contemporary French Philosophy* uses a fitting metaphor when he says that Louis Lavelle dangerously walks a long tight-rope between the recognition of a sole Creator and a free activity on the part of man.

This work, as other studies done about the same philosopher, proves again that one cannot take up one topic without placing it in the context of Lavelle's entire metaphysical account. This required, in the present case, that almost half of the study was devoted to the treatment of intricate subjects, such as, "Univocity of Being," "Being and Act," and