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Dwelling and the 'therapeutic community'

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THE PHILADELPHIA ASSOCIATION is probably best known for its work in the founding of therapeutic-community households. The first of these, Kingsley Hall, was set up in 1965; since then there have been a further eighteen. A recent publication of the association claims that 'the experience of the past twenty years has demonstrated that episodes of personal crisis, of seemingly inescapable distress and confusion, and of stark madness, may for many people best be negotiated in the context of such dwellings'. In this paper I ask: what is a dwelling? And what might the nature of dwelling tell us about the way in which our households lay claim to be therapeutic?

THE PLIGHT OF DWELLING

The phenomenological movement, whose central themes are so much to do with origins, with first things, arrives with Bachelard, Heidegger and Levinas in quite explicit discussion of dwelling. Of these thinkers, it is Heidegger who most obviously demands serious attention from those whose field of practice is psychotherapeutic. As a point of departure for our discussion here, we may consider some of the concluding remarks from Heidegger's essay, 'Building dwelling thinking'.

> We are attempting to trace in thought the nature of dwelling. The next step on this path would be the question: what is the state of dwelling in our precarious age? On all sides we hear talk about the housing shortage, and with good reason. Nor is there just talk: there is action too. We try to fill the need by providing houses, by promoting the building of houses, planning the

whole architectural enterprise. However hard and bitter, however hampering and threatening the lack of houses remains, the *real plight of dwelling* does not merely lie in lack of houses. The real plight of dwelling lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that *they must ever learn to dwell*. What if man's homelessness consists in this, that man does still not think of the *real* plight of dwelling as *the* plight. (Heidegger, 1971, p. 161)

We may note first of all that for Heidegger, homelessness extends to 'thinking': our very thinking is 'homeless'. The fact, and the seriousness of this homelessness, may be obscured by the intricacy and cleverness of our thinking, and by the ingeniousness of its products. But the thinking which is ingenious and which produces 'results' need not by any means be a thinking which dwells; on the contrary it is precisely this thinking which becomes bewitched with its own successes and rushes on. In this rushing, what it is 'to think' is considered no more worthy of thought than what it is 'to dwell', since everywhere we see the evidence which assures us that we already know. Heidegger invites us to ponder over the possibility that we may not; and inevitably, therefore, his thinking of dwelling proceeds in a fashion which may not be familiar.

Heidegger refers to the 'plight of dwelling'. Yet he makes it clear that this plight is not the same as the housing shortage, and that the construction of houses, however valuable a work this may be, carries with it no assurance that this 'plight of dwelling' will be any way lessened.

In today's housing shortage even this much is reassuring and to the good; residential buildings do indeed provide shelter; today's houses may even be well planned, easy to keep, attractively cheap, open to air, light, and sun, but – do the houses in themselves hold and guarantee that *dwelling* occurs in them? (p. 146)

Heidegger suggests that we may in some respects fail to realize what it means 'to dwell', since the provision of all the seeming requirements is not sufficient to ensure that 'dwelling' in fact takes place. Thus it is that man's plight – man's plight of dwelling – consists in his ever having 'to search anew' for the nature of dwelling. Ever searching anew is a restlessness. It is not content

with what it has hitherto found, or perhaps what is found is simultaneously lost. If man is always searching anew for his dwelling, he has forgotten, or perhaps, precisely by virtue of having the nature of a being who dwells, *forgets* – what it means to dwell. The plight of dwelling may be a form of forgetfulness. Man dwells forgetfully. Accordingly, learning to dwell may not consist at all in acquiring further skills or competence, but rather will take the form of recollection.

How will this recollection come about? How do we recall what it is, to dwell? If we are to give thought to dwelling, we must think in a fashion which befits dwelling or belongs with dwelling. Such a thinking *stays with* that which calls upon us to think, or moves us to think; it is a meditative thinking rather than a calculative thinking which, with eyes fixed upon results, strays and wanders from its source. Such a thinking may itself already be a dwelling, for 'dwelling itself is always a staying with things'.

But staying with is not merely a matter of being around things, reducible to the objective co-ordinates of space and time, any more than dwelling is the topological relation of being within a habitation. Nor must we assume that the 'staying with' of dwelling is primarily something that we do, that is, an activity. According to Heidegger, it is rather because man's dwelling is a staying that he is 'free' to come and go, stay or leave, do this or that. Staying or leaving will in either case be included within the 'stay' of dwelling. If dwelling *were* something that we do, then perhaps the situation might not arise where dwelling, despite everything, remains in such a plight, continues to be associated with such restlessness; for could not procedures be worked out, especially with all the resources – skills, materials information – available to us, such that we might finally be able to dwell better.

Our dwelling is not of our doing – it is of our being. Heidegger turns to the Old English and High German word *buan*, to dwell, noting that the word survives as *bin* in *ich bin*. *Ich bin*, I am, says Heidegger, also means *I dwell*. Here, dwelling is not inhabitation. *Dasein*, that 'being' whose essential being resides in its comportment towards being and towards the question of what it is, to be, is now in later Heidegger characterized as a being who dwells; whose way of being is a dwelling of being. And we may now return to the question which was raised earlier, which Heidegger refers to as the

'plight' of dwelling, a plight which is shown in man's restlessness, his ever having to learn to dwell. Now it seems he must learn 'to be', or learn what it is, to be, whilst all the time he already is. It is indeed a plight – not amenable to solution by any course of action – because of the 'already'.

If we already dwell, and yet are required to learn in some fashion about the nature of dwelling, then we must turn, perhaps, to what we already know, and to what is closest. What is most close, and therefore at risk of becoming most closed, is the ordinary, the everyday, the commonplace. In being led to the commonplace we may arrive at what is most familiar; what, precisely by virtue of its familiarity, yet awaits recognition.

> The coursing can lead us into what belongs to us, into the domain where we already dwell. Then why, one may ask, must we first travel a course towards it? Answer: because we are there, where we already are, in such a way that we are at the same time not there, in so far as we still have not properly appropriated what belongs to our essence . . . We still do not sufficiently dwell where we really (*eigentlich*) already are. (Heidegger, in Fell, 1979, p. 258)

LINGERING

The word 'dwell' comes from the Old English *dwellan*, meaning to linger, to wander. It provides a good example of the antithetical senses of a primal word. *Dwellan* is akin to 'OE *dwalian*, OFris *dwalia*, to wander, to be in error, OE *dwalia*, error, OFris *dwalinge*, OE *dwolung*, doubt, ON *dvelja*, to linger, delay, tarry, retard . . . '

The *Oxford English Dictionary* traces 'dwell' to *dwellan*, meaning to lead astray, hinder or delay; also, intransitively, to go astray, err, be delayed or tarry. It lists seven principal meanings of the word:

1. Lead into error (obsolete).
2. Hinder, delay.
3. To tarry, delay.
4. To abide or continue for a while in a place, state or condition.
5. To spend time upon, linger over.
6. To continue in existence, to last, to persist, to remain.
7. To have one's abode, to reside, 'live'.

These meanings may quite conveniently be approached under the two main headings of lingering and wandering.

Lingering has the same root as 'long'. It is to stretch out, prolong, to stay, to tarry, to put off . . . Dwelling is in the first instance staying, and a staying with. We recall Heidegger: dwelling itself is always a staying with things. We may think of where we stay, amongst other things, as where we *stand*; for the attitudinal and ethical connotations of stance are fairly clear. Stance speaks, too, both of our 'rootedness' and of the sense in which the notion of rootedness does not quite apply to humans. We stand on the earth, which sustains us and provides us with our daily bread. But at the same time we stand out, or apart from the world; we ex-ist. We exist 'understandingly', stand in the *world*.

Thinking of dwelling as a staying, a tarrying, abiding (for the temporality of 'stance' compare Italian *stanza*, a pause, hence a verse) brings to mind Heidegger's repeated utterance that it is *mortals* who dwell. His poetic discussions of dwelling are resonant with the echoes of earlier discussions of *Dasein* and temporality, being-towards-death, time and authenticity in *Being and Time*. Whilst his discussion of *space* and dwelling is most important, it is the emphasis upon the temporality of dwelling which is likely, first, to strike Heidegger's reader.

> Mortals dwell in that they initiate their own nature – their being capable of death as death – into the use and practice of this capacity, so that they may have a good death. To initiate mortals into the nature of death in no way means to make death, as empty Nothing, the goal. Nor does it mean to darken dwelling by blindly staring towards the end. (Heidegger, 1971, p. 151)

> They (human beings) are called mortals because they can die. To die means to be capable of death *as* death. Only man dies, and indeed continually, so long as he remains upon earth. (p. 150)

'All people that on earth do dwell' – so goes the hymn. Dwelling-lingering evokes (for me) a sense of sojourn, of passage. We may choose an image from the Icelandic sagas of the momentary flight of a bird through the flickering lights of a banqueting hall; a

moment of appearance bounded by the darkness of the whence and the whether. Heidegger finds in the word 'dwelling' a particular interrogative power; for it is *our own* dwelling which is called into question. Dwelling-lingering sharpens the edge of this question; for the darkness does not simply *surround* the banqueting hall, framing it, on the outside, but is always there with the very essence of the light.

> The presently occurring does not lie like a cut-off piece between the absent. When the presently occurring once stands in view, everything occurs together, one brings the other along with itself, one lets the other go its way. (Heidegger, in Fell, 1979, p. 234)

To say that *Dasein* is 'towards death' or that 'mortals dwell' is to speak of that temporal relation whereby human beings may be said to 'have time'. Only *because* man's life is a staying and a passing, because man *is* as a mortal, can he linger and have time for. His dwelling *is* the mattering of time. Man's dwelling does not occur 'in' time, so much as it is an advent of time. Having time for is not grounded in objective time, and is not some allocation of time's segments, but is a freeing or opening up of time's fullness, a possibility which is granted to man and which is expressed in his standing so close to time that the nature of his being is – dwelling.

We might now flesh out this discussion a little by pointing out that the word lingering is etymologically rather close to *longing* and *belonging*. Abiding, we are *held* by the threads of belonging. This is not a possessive belonging, in the sense that my goods belong to me, or the slave belongs to his master. Neither is it a categorial belonging, in the sense that I might be said to belong to a statistical sample, or to a 'set' of the population. It refers rather to an existential belonging, a belonging in which one's very singularity is grounded, a belonging which is most profoundly interpersonal.

This familiar sense of belonging is brought out when we speak of two people belonging to one another, or children belonging with their parents. When a person speaks of belonging, in the context of his friends or family, his neighbourhood or his people, he indicates a world to which he is drawn, where he feels familiar and at home.

Belonging can also suggest a 'fitting', rather like being in one's element. It is not, of course, a matter of an activity or a doing. I cannot simply decide to belong somewhere, or with someone. However devotedly T.E. Lawrence surrendered himself to its customs, he could never, finally, belong to the Arab world. My sense of belonging to or with others can be articulated in terms of what they mean to me, what I mean to them. The infant's sense of belonging, and consequent world, opens and unfolds according to what he means to his parents, what they mean to one another, and what they come to mean to him. If finally they mean 'nothing' to one another what sense can he make of his own origins? Where does he come from? Where does he belong?

We will of course see the world differently according to the sense of belonging that we have. It is very clear, for example, that the child who has very little sense of belonging, or who does not feel at home with or know where he stands with his family, may find himself unable to assume the world as his birthright; the world does not open for him as it might for a happy and secure child.

The psychiatric patient is – in different ways, with different degrees of severity or chronicity – disarticulated from interpersonal belonging. The madman – the *unheimlich* – belongs to no one; and hence his vulnerability to institutional predatoriness. For some people this sort of disarticulation may simply take the form of a chronic loneliness, a life of quiet desperation. Others may find their desperation less containable and may show, for example, 'psychiatric symptoms' of one sort or another, which may merely invoke the model of a broken thing to be repaired. Such individuals may find their way to therapeutic communities; and where they do, the question of whether or not they come to feel in the course of time less lonely, depressed and disarticulated must depend to a very great extent upon the degree to which they have been able to articulate into a structure of belonging. And it is here that the prevailing psychologistic epistemologies can be quite misleading. For openings between people are not created by psychological techniques, but by what one might call *manners*: gestures, actions, words (which may of course be more or less honest, more or less contrived). These gestures do not arise out of nowhere, but out of a living context, or intentional matrix. The intentional matrix

which is of interest here is that of a community of people living together.

WANDERING

Precisely because man dwells, is mortal (that is, has time for), his staying is at the same time a leaving. It is a leaving because dwelling is only a stay and because in time everything occurs together: we are always on our way. Leaving is an allowing, a letting the other go its way; yet letting is also hindering ('without let or hindrance'). It is in this simultaneity of hindering and allowing, loving and leaving, that we can see the essential *postponement*, and errancy, of staying. The prolonging of staying, whereby staying tends to become staid, is a forgetting of the time; and a forgetting of the time of our staying, which is dwelling. But this prolonging or putting off is also *in keeping with* dwelling. To stay is at the same time to stray; lingering leads in to error, or wanders.

Wander comes from the same word as 'wind'. To wander is: to take a winding course; to turn, to turn about; to change, to bend; to err, to be in error; to wend (past participle 'wended', went). Wandering is a 'going on one's way', which is a wending, a going on one's way of indirection. The movement of wandering includes that of a turning, or winding, and a turning upon oneself. The flexibility and suppleness suggested by the word is brought out in the noun 'wand', a slender, pliant stick used, for example, in basket-making, wattled buildings, and weaving. The verb *wand* (Scottish and dialect) means to wattle, interweave, plait. Wanding is weaving. At the same time, the 'pointedness' of wand is brought out in its meaning as a 'straight, slender stick', a light walking-stick, a stick used as a pointer. A wand was also a rod or staff borne as a sign of office; a sceptre. All of these various inflections of meaning, and at the same time the magical properties of the wand, are very nicely brought together in the image of the Hermetic staff, or caduceus.

The movement of wandering may be exquisitely paradoxical in the fashion in which it is both aimless and pointed, free and unfree. The wanderer turns upon his vertiginous spirallings and re-turns. It is a theme within countless mythologies for the treasure to be arrived at only in the course of extended wanderings.

What is perhaps the best-known poem in the English language begins with the words 'I wandered . . .'. To put this down to poetic licence is to beg the question: why does this 'showing', this 'wealth' of which the poet speaks *belong with* wandering? Wordsworth's 'recollection in tranquillity', in 'vacant or in pensive mood' is itself a wandering, a wondering. *Reverie* is a wandering. (See, for example, Bachelard, 1958, 1969.)

The importance of wandering is very well brought out in Freud's discussion of free-association. One of Freud's most important and far-reaching 'discoveries', it was from the beginning referred to as the 'technique' of free-association. A technique suggests an instrument supplied by the analyst. This notion of free-association as an instrument for investigating the mind has been criticized by Heaton:

> Let us turn back to Freud's practice and see if he actually used free association in the way he thought he did when he was writing his theoretical works. In the famous 'Aliquis' case at the beginning of his *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, he tells his friends, 'I must ask you to tell me, candidly and uncritically, whatever comes into your mind if you direct your attention to the forgotten word without any definite aim.' To be asked to be candid and uncritical is not to be asked to undergo a technical process but to take some moral stance towards what one says. Similarly to do something with no definite aim is hardly a technical matter – it is nearer play.
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> Furthermore, Freud makes comments, well-aimed questions and shrewd observations to the person free-associating: again this is not the innocent application of a blind technique which produces knowledge but requires insight and knowledge of people on Freud's part. Also, Freud reported many cases of people who forgot names, who made slips of the tongue and themselves free-associated without having heard of this particular technique. (Heaton, 1982a, p. 134)

Freud's decision to abandon hypnosis as a means of 'access' to the patient was largely a consequence of his patients' insistence upon following their own way, letting their speaking take its own course.

> His account of how he adopted the technique of free association, for example, is touching in its simplicity. A patient appears to have stoutly resisted Freud's interference with the flow of the clinical material. 'I now saw that I had gained nothing from this interruption and that I cannot evade listening to her stories in every detail to the very end.' At another point the same patient 'said in a definitely grumbling tone that I was not to keep on asking her where this or that came from, but to let her tell me what she had to say'. As Freud quietly put it, 'I fell in with this . . . ' Freud found that he had to be more patient in his therapy, and instead of starting out from the pressing symptoms and aiming to clear them up he left it to the patient to choose the subject of the day's work. The couch was a useful remnant from Freud's use of hypnosis, however, since it permitted both analyst and patient to relax and free-associate . . . (Roazen, 1976, p. 99)

Freud writes that his earlier methods of 'pressing and encouraging'

> gave place to another method which was in one sense its opposite. Instead of urging the patient to say something upon some particular subject, I now asked him to abandon himself to a process of *free association*, i.e. to say whatever came into his head, while ceasing to give any conscious direction to his thoughts. (Freud, 1936, pp. 71–2)

Freud now encourages his patients to let their thoughts *wander*, and he proposes in effect to *accompany* his patients in their wanderings. The particular wanderings to which he addressed himself were strayings and errings; for his work was with people who had lost their way. But Freud did not propose to his patients that they 'abandon' their wandering, in favour of some 'better way of life'. On the contrary, he proposed that they stay with their wandering, linger upon it and follow its movement, in that very situation of their being together. Freud writes that 'we must bear in mind that free association is not really free'.

> The patient remains under the influence of the analytic situation even though he is not directing his mental activities on to a particular subject. We shall be justified in assuming that nothing will not occur to him that has not some reference to that situation. (1936, pp. 72–3)

What is binding about that situation is for example the commitment to say everything which comes to mind. But the patient's being 'bound' in meeting the requirements of the situation is precisely a staying. This staying does not place limits upon freedom, but, as staying, grants leave to wander.

I have referred to Heidegger in making the claim that to be is to dwell – and have opened up something of the meaning of what it is to dwell by referring to the etymology of the word, which speaks of dwelling as a lingering and a wandering. What is important is the manner in which these two belong together.

Lingering, or staying, is an opening, or holding open. Staying is a spatio-temporal opening, clearing, or keeping – a freeing and preserving, a gathering together of what is already belonging or perhaps fitting. We 'understand' the world in staying; we stay, for example, in language, which tells us, according to the manner of our staying, of the nature of things.

Wandering, too, opens and holds open. Wandering extends the stay, leads it out, outstays and stays out, over-reaches, takes leave, takes liberties. Wandering takes funny turns, arrives with, or at, the unexpected, and the unspeakable. Wandering finally brings it all back home.

Dwelling is both lingering and wandering: lingering and wandering belong within the unitariness of dwelling. Staying stays, wandering changes – in each case, the same. Lingering has time for wandering, staying safeguards wandering's extravagancies. Lingering protects wandering, wandering nourishes lingering. Lingering stays with the wandering, wandering prolongs the lingering, as Scheherazade in *The Thousand and One Nights* prolongs her life each night, for yet one more day, by telling her story. Wandering spins a yarn which staying remains to hear, to gather the threads.

It is in our nature to stay, to stand, to stand out, to remain where we are, to take a place, to hold our ground, to inhere, rest and shelter. It is in our nature at the same time to fall and fall out, to wander and stumble, to err, to lose the thread, become distracted, to surrender, let go, turn and return. Dwelling is the between of lingering and wandering, turning and returning, gathering and

dispersing, coming and going, loving and leaving; that between from which the world is born.

HOMELESSNESS

How, then, do these reflections on dwelling inform us as to the practice or discipline which most befits a therapeutic community? We may indicate, first of all, some senses in which their claim to be informative may be misunderstood. By proposing that human beings dwell I am not, for example, making an empirical claim which is proved to be false by the existence of nomads, hoboes, hunter-gatherers or people who sail round the world in small yachts. I do not propose to set therapeutic-community practice on a revived course by claiming to have discovered a 'new model of man'. Neither do I propose to embellish or augment existing therapeutic-community practices in some fashion, by reminding the reader through invocation, through rhetoric, of the importance of 'home comforts' in our life, or of considerations to do with the aesthetics of the institution. Nor, it must be emphasized, is 'dwelling' to be thought of as providing either the first brick or the final keystone of an alternative theoretical framework, whose elaboration culminates in a new 'household' model of therapeutic-community treatment. On the contrary, a step towards some recollection of dwelling may set us on our way towards a radical departure precisely from this structure of alternative treatments.

'Dwelling' reminds us of the question of *being*. Here, however, I choose to bring into view what might be termed an *epistemology* of dwelling. By this, I refer to a *way* of being with one another and knowing one's way in the world which is *being at home*. The relevance of this I hope is evident; for it seems that individuals who find their way to therapeutic communities do so precisely because they do *not* enjoy that sure-footedness in being, that freedom to move and be moved, that 'knowing one's way about', that sense of orientation which is of the essence of being at home. I propose that the various alienated, disarticulated spaces and places in the world at which individuals may arrive, existential *positions* whose negotiation may prove sufficiently problematic as to occasion the seeking of therapeutic help in the form of a supportive

community, may quite instructively be embraced within the notion of 'homelessness'. This term helps substantialize, and open up, in more concreteness what was earlier referred to as interpersonal disarticulation.

Thus, the meaning of 'homelessness' has come to extend far beyond the position of not having a roof over one's head. Our ordinary language itself suggests that the domain of home reaches beyond the third skin which shelters us. We refer, first of all, to being at home *in the world*. We refer, furthermore, to a person being at home in what he is doing, being at home in language; to being at home with oneself, and being at home with another. Something of what we may have in mind when we use these terms is suggested by the notion of being 'untogether' or again, lacking that sureness in the world which is ontological security. Again, something of the disorientedness of homelessness may be articulated through such inflections as 'being out of touch', 'beside oneself', 'not knowing which way to turn', and so on. Many of these common idioms are strikingly spatial: homelessness, we might say, is being 'spaced out' as distinct from being 'homed in'. When we speak of being 'at home' we suggest a domain where we belong, and which is in some way our own. Here, the notion of *inhabitation* is useful. Writing of the human subject's enfoldment within the stuff of the world, Merleau-Ponty speaks of the 'flesh of the world'. Inhabitation very much implies such an enwovenness within the fabric of things. The obsolete verb 'habit' meant to wear and to dwell; the first huts were made of skin, or hides. To inhabit is to have and to hold; to be-have and to be held.

According to the degree and manner in which I am 'at home' where I find myself, in what I am doing, my mode of inhabitation of space will vary enormously. Thus will space itself open or close, expand or contract. Space is not some ether which surrounds and envelops us, but a field of openings and depths held or subtended by vectors of intentionality. The example of a sportsman upon his field of play, or a dancer upon the floor, may illustrate quite well that lived spatiality, that freedom of movement, which belongs with 'being at home'. The way in which we may 'be at home' and move in the world of our desire, where we are able equally to move and speak in sureness of our ground, and where we stand with one another, may contrast very vividly with the way in which we tend

to move when we are not sure of our ground, when we do not know where we stand with others, where we do not feel at home.

Some situations quite clearly do not lend themselves to that free inhabitation which is symbolized by the player upon the field of play. Space now becomes 'occupied' instead of lived, taken up instead of opened up. Institutional spaces of one sort or another provide examples of inhabited spaces which do not invite people to come out of themselves.

What I am here calling 'homelessness' has more traditionally been alluded to within psychiatric discourse as 'alienation'; until comparatively recent times, indeed, psychiatrists were termed 'alienists'. But how far do therapeutic communities succeed in evoking a world in which a person might come to 'understand' or recognize himself as other than alien? How far do they succeed in evoking or recalling an ordinary or familiar world, or a world of intimacy, within which alienation might come to recognize its own strangeness? A person who moves towards a therapeutic community typically does not feel ordinary – for he has lost his way. That is his alienation – but it is an alienation which, we might say, is essentially human, since it is by straying that we find our way. Must we not say, however, that a *community* has lost its way when the most ordinary or commonplace things have become forgotten – ordinariness which is the very stuff of our finding our way in the world.

If a person turns from the loneliness and despair of his alienation towards a community of fellow beings, turns in his estrangement towards the possibility of some re-articulation into the generative matrix of community life – does this turning not suggest the notion of a *homecoming* rather than that of a cure? It is not through the neo-medicalism of 'community as doctor' nor through some carefully contrived anti-psychiatric posturing, but through the opening of dwelling, as hospitality, that the epistemology of psychological treatment becomes transcended, showing itself as one articulation of its own impoverished groundedness, its *own* homelessness.

ORDER AND THE ORDINARY

It is my argument that these considerations have important bearing upon the manner in which a therapeutic community might

more creatively be thought of, set up, and guided. My thinking here departs quite radically for example from that of Crocket, for whom the concept of the therapeutic community is 'fairly clear cut':

> We bring a group of people together, first by organizing suitable accommodation, then persuading (or compelling) them to come there, after which we make use of the ensuing internal transactions for therapeutic purposes. (Crocket, 1979, p. 138)

It departs likewise from that of Kirk and Millard, who, in an article entitled 'Personal growth in the therapeutic community', write:

> The authors view the residential institution as an open system exchanging materials with its environment and having a human throughput. They suggest that what makes the institution is the interplay between resources and throughput (that is, the activities through which an intake is required, processed and transformed into an output). The stage of residence or throughput is broken up into 'conversion factors' which require the provision of both human and physical resources. The task of the institution as a whole is understood in terms of the relationship of the activities of the three systems of intake, throughput to each other, and to the environment. (Kirk and Millard, 1979, p. 115)

Here we see how therapeutic communities respond by techniques and tinkerings. Their inhabitants, typically, are referred to as 'consumers'. They 'partake as residents in the therapeutic process'. The community is a 'treatment modality', it approximates to the ideal of a 'twenty-four-hour treatment environment'. These forms of therapeutic concern are examples (and may remain more stubbornly so the more psychologically sophisticated and forward thinking they become) of de-based concern, to the extent that they wander from the commonplace, from a human sheltering whose threshold is immediate and recognizable, from the sureness of home ground. By placing my emphasis upon dwelling, and proposing as a theoretical practice the opening up of dwelling, rather than the implementing of formal methods and techniques in which it is presupposed, I propose no more than the putting of first things first. I argue for a reversal of that movement whereby we arrive at the absurdity of the tail wagging the dog.

My emphasis is upon the therapeutic community as a place where people dwell; where they unpack and get on with it. The household provides the foremost illustration of a place of dwelling. It is made up of the people who live there, with one another, where living is the way we 'go on being'. The members of a household get up, go to bed, go to work or stay at home, enjoy life's pleasures, endure its drudgeries, meet its challenges, and so on. And in this there is no difference between a therapeutic-community household and any other household in the street. In each case, the people who live there do what they want to do, as they want to, they pursue whatsoever they are drawn to in whatever fashion they like, with whomsoever they want, according to their tastes and circumstances. They generally get on with their own business as well as they are able, according to the various constraints, demands and obligations which govern their lives.

Where we might want to make a distinction between such a *therapeutic* household and any other in the street, this will not be spelled out in terms of the methods and techniques which it employs, but in terms of its style, its way, its openness to the issues which arise in the course of its members living together and coming to acknowledge what they mean to one another. According to its ambience and spirit, its concerns and the textures within which they are interwoven, different facilitating conditions may be generated, more or less conducive or enabling of its members to find themselves at home with one another. What I now wish to suggest is that these facilitating conditions are not by any means orderable, or amenable to being made to order. Here I question for example whether the distinctions one finds being made between different organizational structures, different methods of imposing order upon a therapeutic community, are not of less importance than another distinction we might make between different sorts of order, different orders.

There is, for example, the sort of order that one can institute by following a plan. It might be termed an administrative or organizational ordering. Tidying my desk might be a very simple example. I have in mind an idea or picture of what constitutes a sufficiently tidied desk, and then I simply arrange or move the objects on it until the top of the desk corresponds to the required state. A social administrator provides a more complex example, or any organizer

or bureaucrat who takes his patch or area to be 'in order' when his desk is clear. The notion of 'law and order' understands order in roughly this same fashion: implementation of the law is the means to remove disorder and thereby maintain 'order'.

It seems to be widely assumed that the sort of order which pertains mostly to the successful running of a therapeutic community is of an administrative or organizational nature. Structure, therefore, is imposed, procedures instituted, programmes implemented. Rules and organizational structures, therefore, assumed to be only a more precise articulation or formal elaboration of the sorts of rules which govern life in the community at large, come to be taken for granted in therapeutic communities, providing as they do a 'reality oriented' preparation for life outside. The alternative, it is assumed, is that the (therapeutically harmful) situation will arise which is an 'absence of structure'.

It is hard to imagine what this 'absence of structure' might be in the context of a community, which is precisely structured according, for example, to its habits and rituals, the bonds of communality, the features of a common ground. At any rate, we need to be reminded, surely, that order which is brought about by formal structuring, ordering or arranging is by no means the only sort of order which may be recognized in human affairs. There is, for example, that order ('organic' possibly, as distinct from 'organizational') which *takes shape* in the course of people going about their business, or finding their own way with one another.

Some of these orders of everyday life are well illustrated by the notion of the *ordinary*; and certainly ordinariness resists being imposed by order. It is surely one of the deep ironies of neurotic life that the attempt to achieve ordinariness must be self-defeating. It is precisely its ordinariness which we might have in mind when we speak of a household being in order. We refer to the manner in which it goes about its daily business, and the ordinary things about which this going is contextualized. The structure of the house is not so much *imposed* as shaped or opened according to the abiding concerns and priorities which its members have. Like an individual, a household evolves a way, a style; and in the opening up and maintaining of this way we may think, for example, of its rhythms, its rituals and traditions, and the momentum of its

habits. In some senses it might be instructive to see a household being structured in a manner akin to music; for within any household will be found themes and variations, harmonies and disharmonies, points and counterpoints, accords and discords, phased in and out of rhythm. According to his response or responsiveness to the phasings of this music, a person who belongs to the household will be articulated or geared into, or attuned to, what is going on.

Let us see if something of this organic-organizational distinction can be made more clear by referring to different orders of *time*. When therapeutic communities proceed on the assumption that disturbing people are particularly in need of firm organization, then statements like this are to be expected:

> One of the crucial issues that therapeutic communities have to deal with is the problem of structuring the day. (Grunberg, 1979, p. 249)

One way of coping with this problem is to break the day down into such a 'daily round of organized activities' as the following:

7.30–8.30	Breakfast
8.30–9.45	Community meetings
9.45–10.15	Tea
10.15–11.15	Doctors' groups
11.15–12.00	Workshops
12.00–12.30	Lunch
12.30–13.00	Ward meetings
13.00–16.00	Workshops or therapeutic interviews
16.00–16.30	Tea
16.30–18.30	Free time
18.30–20.30	Unit social
20.30–21.00	Prepare for bed
21.00–07.00	Sleep (Rapoport, 1960, p. 80)

This list is commented upon as follows:

> Treatment potentialities are seen in every aspect of this pattern . . . treatment is meant to be all-pervasive, and the rehabilitation effect of treatment is meant to be enhanced by creating a pattern of activities that is like that of the average person outside. (p. 80)

It is of course true that most people in Western cultures are quite familiar with the presses and demands of timetables, appointments to be kept, and so on; they articulate their lives quite readily into the structures of conventional time. But conventional time (serial time, chronological time) is not the last word in time. It differs, surely, from *my* time, that is, the time which I live. Chronological time is usually thought of in terms of its seriality of units, everywhere the same, and the constant rate at which they pass. We tend to characterize lived time, on the other hand, by reference to its openings and closings, cycles and phases, flowerings and fruitions. The time 'to every purpose' can be right or wrong, ready or not yet ready, premature or too late. Lived time is characterized first of all by its rhythms, its ebbings and flowings (the etymology brings together the words time and tide), its arisings and unfoldings, upwellings and advents. Where we might be said to be living, either temporally or chronically, in a modality of 'chronological time' we might typically be found 'watching the clock', 'clocking in and out', 'filling time', 'killing time', going through the motions. 'Biding' our time is rather different; it is a staying with, an abiding, rather than a mere enduring. Notions which we might more readily associate with lived time are those such as spontaneity, readiness, and possibility.

We are sometimes inclined to think of lived time as simply being the 'subjective experience' of real, or objective time. Careful reflection makes this a position difficult to justify. Many philosophers have pointed out the unsatisfactoriness of the notion of a 'pure time' which flows like a stream, indicating for example that this metaphor itself presupposes time. We have seen that in Heidegger man is so essentially 'temporal' that his being is a dwelling. In Merleau-Ponty, we ourselves are 'the upsurge of time'. Perhaps the extraordinarily intimate relation between human being and time shows itself nowhere more clearly than in the particular temporalities of people who are 'mentally ill'. How could it be otherwise, for a being who dwells, than that to be 'homeless' is also to be out of time? What psychiatric disorders are not closures and enclosures of time? Typical neurotic complaints are to do with repetition, hopelessness, with the inability to be spontaneous, and with various forms of inaccessibility to one another of past,

present and future. We recognize typical features of lived time, such as are associated with the manic, the depressed, the obsessive, and so on. Freud, of course, drew attention to the relationship between sexuality and time, and to the timelessness of the unconscious; indeed his greatest insights are very much to do with the temporal structures of emotional suffering.

How is a therapist – or a community – able to help someone *remember* time – remember his own future, awaken to that time which is his own advent or upsurge into the world? How can a community help someone who is 'out of time', who has lost track of his time, whom time passes over, or whose time is the unending hell of eternal repetition? We might say that such a person 'needs' time, or that a community must 'have time for' its members, if time is to be opened up.

This calls for an entirely different conception of time from that which is accounted for by the activities of the house timetable. To be sure, every moment of the day there is structured as a 'having time for' the patient. Not a single second is wasted. But by no means does having time for refer to chronological time which is meted out. We can have a lot of time for someone we hardly ever see, and we can spend all day with someone for whom we have very little time. Having time for does not just mean putting in the hours and minutes. Rather than indicating that members of a community have time for one another, the timetable which I have illustrated suggests that here there is *no* time for one another's *own* time. Such a structuring forecloses the possibility of authentic time, because all time is contained within the parameters of an overall directive or plan, all time is used as efficiently as could be, in the service of a pre-ordained project, expressly designed for the patient's good. Every moment of the day is accounted for, free time being just another house activity.

The day has been divided into units, and into activities accorded to each unit, and time is narrowed or constricted to a seriality of events. There is no temporal ground for time to take seed, since all time has been used up. These slicings of the day into purposive activities cut across or disarticulate what might be called the 'temporal wholeness' of a community, and ensure that the potency of its time, its power or capacity to open time's backwaters,

remember time, will not be realized. A wholeness is not a uniformity. People may need time to remember, or 'get it together', but different times may have different fecundities for different people. Some people may need nothing so much as the reassurance of the sureness of the ordinary, the coming and going, the openings and closings of the everyday. Some people may want to do everything at once, others may need to do nothing, or to lie fallow. Some people may need time to 'give', others to take, some to work, others to refrain from working; to everything there is indeed a season. Some people may wish to stay up all night and sleep all day, or stay up day and night, or sleep day and night.

If a community can open itself to, and have the time for, all these times, and include them within its own rhythms of comings and goings, gatherings and dispersings as people go about their business, then it might find itself freed from the absurdities of 'structured versus unstructured' time, and having found itself on its way towards a living of that time which is of the essence.

RICHARD

Richard was a young man of twenty-three when he first found his way to a Philadelphia Association household. He had been in and out of mental hospital since leaving school, having on different occasions been diagnosed as schizophrenic, or suffering from a severe and chronic depressive illness. Outside hospital he had lived for periods on his own; and succeeded in holding on to short-term and casual jobs; he had also stayed for a period in a therapeutic community run by a large voluntary organization. He displayed many of the features of the classic 'revolving door' syndrome. He had undergone intensive and extensive treatments of ECT and heavy medication, without any lasting signs of improvement. He had now come to feel that these treatments had damaged his brain, and his capacity to think, and that any further treatment was without question going to be the last straw. There is some reason to believe that he was in line for psychosurgery.

He had found his way to the house through the help of a social worker who had taken some interest in him over the years. Following an invitation to visit, he arrived from hospital one evening, by

ambulance. The two nurses who accompanied him declined to come in: not for them the epistemological shift. The company inside consisted in the ten or so people who were living in the house at the time, the house psychotherapist, and one other visitor. The gathering took place around the large kitchen table, upon which was a fair amount of day's clutter, and upon which also would be served a regular supply of cups of tea.

Richard looked quite wretched. He had very little to say for himself beyond saying that he wanted to 'withdraw', to 'think'. He maintained that he had been trying one way or another to withdraw over the past few years, but never had been allowed to go through with this. Rather unusually, Richard was accepted into the house on the basis of this one meeting, and moved in a few days later. He pottered about the house for a couple of days, but gradually retreated to his attic bedroom.

He was to spend the next two years in bed, virtually without moving. He would have been described in hospitalese in the following sort of terms: withdrawn, negativistic, bodily obsessed, incontinent of urine and faeces, lacking in affect . . .

There were occasions during these two years, particularly towards the end, when he would speak with whomever engaged him in conversation. From these brief conversations, and from the jottings which he would from time to time leave beside his bed, others in the house managed to glean some rudimentary idea as to what he was on about. It all seemed to pivot upon his wish to withdraw. He wanted to be left utterly alone and uninterrupted, so as to be in a position to find his 'self'. Throughout his life, he felt, he had been little more than what others had expected of him. Now he felt himself to be engaged in some last-ditch attempt to retrieve, from the silent depths of his solitude, that which there might just be left of his *own* self.

He claimed that his life was utterly in balance, on the edge, and that, in order to survive, he had to remain absolutely still. He insisted on being left completely alone. He required absolute silence while he 'thought'. Every sound represented an agonizing distraction. Every move he made was agonizingly critical. Every word that he spoke was at risk of his life.

In his more articulate writings he described something of the delicate balance he was trying to maintain:

> I desperately need to put all my energy into facing my anxieties full in the face and battling against any retreats into distractions such as 'displaced anxieties' which prevent me from coping with my real activities, make me lose my grip on reality and put me in a state of panic. Noise is a particular threat to me as it is an external distraction I cannot fight, preventing me from thinking and furthering my moments of panic. A loud bang in the night shatters my vision leaving me in a terrifying darkness for about two hours while I work my way back to clear vision.

How could this house help Richard? Not, at any rate by 'helping' – having to be seen to be engaged in some sort of proprietary activity such that the possibilities of attentive non-intervention are unquestioningly pre-empted. Rather, the response of the house is to gesture the opening of a conversation. It is to open or extend a conversation which is abiding, going on, being lived. It gestures the hospitality of dwelling.

But there is already a complexity to this particular situation. The position which Richard takes up within the house is somewhat ironic. He proposes to withdraw from the very community towards which, in his helplessness, he is drawn. He asks for nothing so much as to be left alone. It is at least a paradoxical request. Does the house acquiesce to it by ignoring him? It is difficult to ignore someone whose presence is so palpable. Do people tiptoe past his bedroom door out of consideration for his rather extraordinary sensitivity to noise? Or is this merely playing in to some grandiosity? At what point might others find it appropriate to step in? Do they wait until the smell from his room becomes no longer bearable? Should the house let him starve to death? At one time he was down to five or six stones, wasted and emaciated, stinking, covered with bed sores, crawling with bugs. When is enough enough?

How is Richard's request to be interpreted? Such matters as this, which are far from straightforward, would (along with the more prosaic things) engender conversation around the table. Because of the intricacies and intimacies of these issues, to do with what people mean to one another, and the latencies, undercurrents and unspoken themes with which they were interwoven, the regular attendance of the house psychotherapist was crucial to the keeping open of this conversation. On the crossroads of this common place

dwelling – within which he is both at the centre and outside, the therapist plays the part of hermetic intermediary, through whose mediation the boundaries of relationship emerge, and through whose words, in what they show, a guidance is offered through those enigmas which arise at the limits of what may be spelled out.

There were numerous conversations where matters to do with Richard were discussed. Around the table at which he never sat, Richard occupied a rather important position, a fact of which he was doubtless aware. People showed quite different degrees of interest in having anything actively to do with him, but for the most part there was a general agreement as to the sort of approach which was best. This was to interfere as little as possible, but at the same time to assume – in the absence of any instruction to the contrary – a freedom to interpret Richard's request to be left alone rather openly, and certainly not to the letter. Two people in particular made it their business to keep an eye on him; they left food by his bedside, which in minute quantities he would eat, and they kept him from becoming too filthy. They encouraged some minimal movement of his limbs, and also gave him periodic baths, carrying him silent, limp, and with an expression of long-suffering agony on his face, to and from the bathroom.

There would be difficult decisions to make. What, for example, does the house do in August, when almost everyone is planning to go away to the cottage in Wales? Richard is consulted; he doesn't want to go, he wants to be left alone. But the one or two people who are left behind certainly don't want to look after Richard. So he comes along, bundled into the back of the Volkswagen van with his shitty mattress and stinking blankets. The cottage is in fact no more than a large converted barn, so now there is *absolutely no* chance of Richard getting any quiet at all. One very solitary member of the house has already pitched her tent in the nearby field, and, ever on the margins, flits between field and barn. But now there is *another* tent in the field – in the opposite corner of the field – and here Richard spends his days screaming at the sheep, because now *they* are interfering with his 'thinking'.

Richard's situation was for a long time a very serious one indeed; he was probably quite right in feeling that his life was very delicately poised. The household, too, walked a very fine line with him.

But the fact that it finally worked out well was partly because the house didn't take it all *that* seriously: in many ways his stay in the house was a source of much amusement, of which he was well aware. It was without doubt most important to his eventual re-articulation or recovery that, despite his pleas to be left alone, he found himself in a place where life, in some degree of vitality and quirkiness and not just in the sombre earnestness of 'helping', carried on around him. Beyond what is going on, there is nothing.