

Comment on "Perls With Gloria Re-reviewed"

ALBERT ELLIS

Let me comment briefly on Dolliver's (1991) article, "Perls With Gloria Re-reviewed: Gestalt Techniques and Perls's Practice," so that I can perhaps shed a little more light on what actually happened to Gloria in Perls's filmed session with her and in the interview she had with Everett Shostrom, the producer of the film, after she had finished her sessions with Perls, Rogers, and myself.

I wasn't permitted to watch Rogers's or Perls's sessions with Gloria, so that I wouldn't be influenced by what had occurred with them during my final session of the three we had with her. But I saw Gloria right after her interview with Perls, and she seemed quite upset and volunteered to tell me that she was depressed as a result of it and that she got very little help from it. This is pretty much the same thing that she reported 13 years later, when she said that she felt "small, belittled, unimportant, confused—lacking wholeness. In a sense then, I felt a bit of myself destroyed at the end of that session" (Gloria, 1980, p. 141).

Because Gloria reported similar feelings to me immediately after her filmed session with Perls, I was surprised to see that in the filmed interview with Shostrom she much more favorably reported, "Where I am right now, Dr. Perls could be the most valuable to me. So he isn't quite as coddling, but I think I could really get a lot from him . . ." (Shostrom, 1965).

These contradictory statements seemed strange to me at the time I first saw the filmed interview with Shostrom, and they still

do. What I learned, however, after the film had been shot was that Gloria, before the filming, was a client of Shostrom for 4 years, and that during that time his major form of therapy was Gestalt therapy (which he later abandoned in favor of bioenergetics). My view, therefore, is that Shostrom was, to say the least, prejudiced in favor of Perls and Gestalt therapy at the time of the filming, that he led Gloria to say things in the filmed interview that she did not really mean, and that he gave her little chance to state her real feelings. If I am right about this, viewers of the film had better take her filmed statements about the session with Perls with a great degree of skepticism. I agree with Dolliver (1991) that "Perls was an unreliable guide to Gloria about her perception of the world" (p. 304) and would add that Shostrom's guidance of her in his interview was also equally unreliable.

REFERENCES

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Albert Ellis is president of the Institute for Rational-Emotive Therapy, New York, New York. Correspondence regarding this article should be sent to Albert Ellis, Institute for Rational-Emotive Therapy, 45 East 65th Street, New York, NY 10021.