

Forward to Transformation Through Insight

by Will Schutz

Claudio Naranjo is singular. His worldly exploration of a variety of fields from a variety of countries has enriched our understanding of psychological events by helping to break us out of our provincialism. One of these contributions I had the opportunity to observe while we were both at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California during the late 1960s and early 70s when Claudio discovered a man named Oscar Ichazo in Arica, Chile, and persuaded a large and relatively distinguished group of people to follow him to Arica and experience Oscar for themselves. The influence of the Arica training was major in the human potential movement and Claudio deserves much credit for introducing it. His fertile brain and expertise in many fields has made Claudio a uniquely valuable contributor.

There is another valuable uniqueness about Claudio. He is one of the few people who have a simultaneous interest in both scientific and clinical approaches to human phenomena, and in the integration of the two. In this book he combines the theoretical model of the Enneagram with the wealth of his clinical experience with Gestalt therapy to enrich the theory. To insert a personal note, in my own work I have gone through an evolution in the use of categories for classifying people. On the one hand, they are valuable for pointing out syndromes of behaviors that occur together and often they suggest developmental reasons for this to occur. Readers usually can find themselves primarily in one of these categories and receive some personal insight from this. However, they often find that not all of the traits described in the “type” are familiar to them, and some traits from some types other than their own seem to fit themselves. Further, sometimes readers feel that if they are of one type they may have difficulty acquiring a characteristic of another type. These complexities have led me to advise people to use typologies as opportunities for personal awareness and to watch carefully their reactions to the description of their type and learn from those reactions more about how they feel about themselves. Further, if they want to acquire traits of a different type they have the ability to do that if they will focus themselves on figuring out how to do it. In other words, I suggest they use the typology as a way to strengthen their own self-knowledge and not see it as a terminal classification they are limited to. I also suggest to them that traits in their type that they cannot identify themselves with may (or may not) be those they are denying. I have not checked this use of the typology with Claudio, so it may well be he agrees with what I have found. If not, readers are left with the interesting role of deciding for themselves how best to use this rich material.

I am sure the reader will find a rare feast in this book, another of Claudio’s seminal contributions.