

Carl Rogers

Second Edition

Brian Thorne



Carl

Rogers

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Rogers

Second Edition

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'I can trust my experience'

Carl Rogers

For Natalie in love and gratitude for her commitment to honouring and extending the work of her father

For Christine whose non-possessive love continues to sustain and irradiate my life

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Preface to Second Edition

It may seem a somewhat strange enterprise to revise a book about a man who had died more than five years before the appearance of the first edition. Clearly Carl Rogers himself cannot have generated fresh theories or initiated new practices in the intervening period and it may well be asked what of further interest there is to say. For me, however, a second edition is timely for a number of reasons and, at the very least, it serves as an additional tribute to an outstanding human being in the centenary year of his birth. It is also perhaps relevant that the enduring power of Rogers' work is clearly indicated by the numerous conferences, seminars and celebrations (in many parts of the world) that took place throughout 2002 in acknowledgement of his continuing influence not only on psychotherapy and counselling but on many allied fields of human endeavour.

The most pressing case for the appropriateness of a second edition is provided, however, by the current state of the world and by the formidable challenge which it offers to Rogers' hopeful view of the evolution of humanity. As dark clouds loom over the Middle East and as the current American administration in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 rattles more than sabres in its determination to oust Saddam Hussein, it seems that we do well to hear again the voice of a man who passionately believed in the capacity of humankind to transcend itself and who dedicated much of the final period of his life to the pursuit of world peace. In the narrower world of psychotherapy and counselling, too, Rogers' convictions are badly needed. He was always profoundly distrustful of 'experts' and reserved some of his sharpest criticisms for those 'helping professionals' who believed that they knew better than their clients and had the arrogance to diagnose, analyse and prescribe without taking the trouble to enter the client's inner world. Rogers would have been amused at the generous references to empathy nowadays by practitioners from many different traditions but he is unlikely to have been fooled into believing that the word carries the same resonance or even the same meaning as it does for the person-centred practitioner. We know, too, that he would have been alarmed by the increasing emphasis on accreditation, registration and the exclusive

professionalism of the therapist. His would have been a voice raised in caution against the tightening straitjacket of government controls and the insidious power of the medical insurance companies. In a world, too, where in the face of militant Islamic fundamentalism, the Christian churches seem to have little to offer, Rogers stands out as a therapist and scholar who was convinced that the future challenge lay in the embracing of the spiritual and the transcendent not only as an essential part of many therapeutic processes but as the path of reconciliation between warring faiths and cultures. In brief, this second edition is inspired by the conviction that, in the centenary year of his birth, Rogers is even more a man for our times whose prophetic insights we ignore at our peril.

*Brian Thorne
Norwich 2002*

Preface to First Edition

Carl Rogers enabled countless people throughout the world to be themselves with confidence. His impact has been enormous through his voluminous writings, through the school of counselling and psychotherapy which he founded and through the indirect influence of his work on many areas of professional activity where the quality of human relationships is central. And yet he was always suspicious of those who sought power and he eschewed every attempt to make him into a guru figure. He believed deeply in the capacity of every individual to find his or her own way forward and, as a result, he not infrequently adopted a self-effacing attitude which for the less discerning concealed his greatness. The best facilitator, he maintained, was the one who enabled others to feel that they had done it themselves, whatever 'it' might be.

This small book attempts to convey the essence of Rogers' theoretical ideas about the nature of human beings and about what happens in effective therapeutic relationships. It also gives an insight into Rogers' actual way of working with people in therapy and draws out the practical implications of what is, in effect, a functional philosophy of human growth and relationships. Rogers, gentle and courteous as he usually was, made enemies because his ideas and way of being tend to threaten those whose self-esteem is dependent on their professional expertise or their capacity to impose a particular perception of reality on others. Both among fellow psychologists and those from other disciplines he was sometimes seen as naive, utopian and perversely misguided in his optimistic view of human potential. Some of his critics undoubtedly raise serious questions about the validity of his approach and in Chapter 4 I attempt to explore the more telling of these objections and to refute them where possible. Rogers himself, however, never claimed that he had established the absolute truth about anything; indeed he was committed to a ceaseless process of learning and held to the temporariness of all knowledge. For him the mark of the mature person was a fearless openness to both inner and outer experience, however disturbing this might prove to previously held convictions.

I was privileged to know Rogers during the last ten years of his life and to work with him on a number of occasions in different parts of the world. The biographical chapter with which the book opens owes little, however, to my direct involvement with him. Most of the content is distilled from Rogers' own writings, from Howard Kirschenbaum's outstanding biography, *On Becoming Carl Rogers* (1979) and from the summary of Rogers' life provided by David Cain, editor of the *Person-Centered Review*, in Vol. 2 No. 4 (1987b) of the journal which served the person-centred community well in the immediate years after Rogers' death in February 1987. I trust these two men will forgive my plundering of their dedicated research into Rogers' life and work.

In one respect this book may perhaps claim some originality. Unlike many of my colleagues in the field of person-centred or client-centred therapy, I see in Rogers and his work the re-emergence of a spiritual tradition which has its origins in the early writers of the Old Testament and continues through Jesus, the earliest Christian theologians and many of the great medieval writers, not least Dame Julian of Norwich, much loved and honoured in the city where I live and work. This tradition is acutely conscious of the divine indwelling within the created universe and in each human being. It bears witness to the unconditionality of the love which is poured out by God on his creation and to the capacity of human beings to internalize that love and then to give it expression in their relating. Rogers died an agnostic but in his later years his openness to experience compelled him to acknowledge the existence of a dimension to which he attached such adjectives as mystical, spiritual and transcendental. In many ways he often provides the channel into spiritual experience for secular men and women who have long since rejected the idea of God and the trappings of institutional religion and he does so by enabling them to discover the infinite worth and uniqueness of their own being. Yet with this recognition of personal value there comes an accompanying sense of interconnectedness with other human beings and with the whole of the created order. In short, Rogers does not provide, as some have suggested, the mirror for Narcissus but the assurance and acceptance of individual uniqueness and the invitation to communion. Given a different theology in his childhood and adolescence, it is not over-fanciful to suppose that Rogers might himself have become a much-loved pastor and theologian whose life could have transformed the face of the Church. An underlying theme in this book, however, is that God moves in a mysterious way and that client-centred therapy and the person-centred approach

will continue to contribute to the psychological and spiritual well-being of humanity to a degree which would have been impossible if Rogers had not turned his back on Christianity and the Church in order to find a greater freedom.

Many people have encouraged me in the writing of the book but I am particularly indebted to my colleagues at the University of East Anglia, the Norwich Centre and Person-Centred Therapy (Britain) for their support and the stimulation they have offered, often in the midst of frenetic lives characterized by an ever-escalating clientele. I am grateful to the University for granting me a brief period of study leave in the summer of 1991 and to my Norwich Centre partners for convincing me that I should not feel guilty about writing books instead of seeing yet more clients in order to ensure the Centre's financial security. To Maria Bowen, Rogers' close friend and colleague at the Center for Studies of the Person in La Jolla, my debt is inestimable for she not only encouraged me in the project but also provided me with invaluable material from her own long experience of sharing in Rogers' work and aspirations. I only hope the result will serve to make Rogers' immense contribution more accessible to those to whom he is little more than a name in psychology textbooks. I hope, too, that in a small way it will help to ensure the continuing health and development of person-centred therapy in a world which all too often seems to sacrifice persons on the altars of efficiency, expediency or the latest version of the market economy.

*Brian Thorne
Norwich 1991*

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I wish to acknowledge the exemplary support afforded to me, as always, by Alison Poyner and her colleagues at Sage. Such encouragement is vital to those who continue to endure the increasing freneticism of life in Britain's hard-pressed universities. My thanks, too, to the secretarial staff of the Norwich Centre and especially to Megan Craven who has borne the brunt of the word-processing labours.

I am particularly grateful to Yvonne Bates, editor of *Ipnosis*, and to the contributors to the summer issue 2002 of this splendid new journal which contained a 'celebration' of the life and work of Carl Rogers. Their reflections have made a significant contribution to the final chapter of this present volume.

The Life of Carl Rogers

Childhood and Adolescence

Carl Ransom Rogers was born on 8 January 1902 in a suburb of Chicago called Oak Park. He was the fourth of six children, five of whom were boys, and the family could trace its roots far back into United States history. Rogers' father, Walter, was a graduate of the University of Wisconsin at a time when college education was not widespread, and when Carl was born he had already established himself as an up and coming businessman in the engineering field. Carl's mother, Julia, had also attended college for two years and, like her husband, she came from a family which had first crossed the Atlantic in the seventeenth century and had made notable contributions to the community and to the development of the new country over more than 300 years. Carl Rogers was not, then, a European immigrant like so many of his well-known contemporaries in the world of American psychology but a genuine product of Midwestern America. The pioneering and pragmatic spirit of his ancestors was a significant part of his inheritance.

Rogers was later to describe his home as a place marked by close family ties and permeated by a religious and ethical atmosphere which was strict and brooked no compromise (Rogers, 1961: 6). Undoubtedly he was loved but the almost excessive attention to the children's welfare exhibited by Walter and Julia Rogers was accompanied by a subtle and affectionate control which was based on an almost fundamentalist approach to Christianity and on the worship of the virtue of hard work. It was a basic assumption in the Rogers household that the family was different from other people and consequently they observed standards of behaviour appropriate to those who were of the 'elect' of God. No drinking of alcohol was permitted, no dancing or theatre visits, no card games and, indeed, little social life of any kind. Instead there was an emphasis on a close-knit family life and on the necessity for productive work at all times.

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Carl's health as a boy was not good and he was perceived by the rest of the family as a child who was prone to be over-sensitive. This sometimes led to teasing banter which could verge on cruelty and exacerbated a tendency on Carl's part to retreat into himself and into his own fantasy world. He often spoke of himself as a lonely child who was permitted few opportunities to make friends outside the family and who sought consolation in books, which he read incessantly. When he began formal schooling he was already reading at a standard several years in advance of his age and this ability further distanced him from his contemporaries. Even at this early stage of his life it is possible to see the beginnings of the disciplined and conscientious scholar who nonetheless yearned for an intimacy of which the family culture deprived him.

In 1914 the family moved to a large farm thirty miles to the west of Chicago. Reflecting on the move later, Rogers saw it as motivated by two different factors. In the first place, his father, now a successful and prosperous businessman, wanted a farm for a hobby but Carl came to believe that the second and more important reason was a desire on the part of his parents to protect their growing adolescent children from the 'temptations' of suburban city life (Rogers, 1961: 6). The social isolation thus continued for Carl throughout his secondary schooling and he ruefully admits that he went through high school with only two dates to his credit. Life on the farm, however, enabled him to develop interests which were to have significance in his later professional life. The lonely, somewhat introverted adolescent became totally fascinated by the great night-flying moths which inhabited the woods around the farm. Gradually he became an authority on these exotic creatures, read about them extensively and, most significantly, began himself to breed the moths in captivity, reared the caterpillars and watched over the cocoons during the long winter months. In this adolescent enthusiasm it is not difficult to see the emerging scientist who was learning what it means to wait patiently for nature to reveal her secrets. The scientific bent was further encouraged by Walter Rogers' determination to operate his new farm on as scientific a basis as possible. He challenged his sons to set up small independent ventures of their own and, as a result, they learned to manage flocks of chickens and to rear many varieties of farm livestock from infancy. Carl through this activity became an assiduous student of scientific agriculture and learned through his reading of a voluminous tome called *Feeds and Feeding* by Morison what was entailed in setting up valid experiments. It was here that he first understood what was meant by experimental and control groups and became familiar with randomizing procedures. In short, he acquired

a knowledge of and a great respect for scientific methodology and realized from first-hand experience how difficult it is to test a hypothesis. He also discovered that with his moths and agricultural experiments he could experience intense pleasure and satisfaction and could, to some extent at least, forget the deeper yearning for human intimacy.

Student Days

New Freedom

With such a background it is scarcely surprising that when, following the family tradition, Rogers became a student at the University of Wisconsin, he should enrol in the field of scientific agriculture. His ambition at this stage was to manage a farm in the most modern and scientific fashion possible. In fact he was embarking upon a period of profound personal change and development. He shared a room with his brother, Ross, at the YMCA dormitory and in his first year he became a member of a Sunday morning group of agricultural students led by Professor George Humphrey. The impact of this group was enormous for a number of reasons. It is evident that Humphrey was unusual in so far as he encouraged the group to make its own decisions and refused to adopt a conventional leadership role. Rogers himself was later to describe the experience in glowing terms and referred to Humphrey's behaviour as 'an excellent example of facilitative leadership' (in Burton, 1972: 36). The difference in style and intention from the benign but controlling influence of Rogers' parents could scarcely have been greater and he was deeply affected by the liberation of thought and feeling that followed. What is more, he was enabled for the first time to develop close and intimate relationships with young people from outside the immediate family circle and this, too, opened up for him a whole new world of exciting possibilities. The upsurge of intellectual and emotional energy needed a new channel and Rogers' emerging idealism soon led him to focus on his Christian commitment. Before the end of his sophomore year he felt firmly convinced that he was called to be a Christian minister and he accordingly changed his major from agriculture to history in the belief that the latter would provide him with a more appropriate background for religious work. For a young man whose best subjects at school had been science and English and who received straight A grades in almost all his courses, the transition presented no intellectual difficulties. More significant was the nature of the religious transformation which was taking place. The dogmatic and moralistic Christianity of Rogers'

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home environment was giving way to an altogether more personal involvement based on a changing perception of the nature of Christ. It is scarcely an exaggeration to deduce from a reading of Rogers' diaries and letters of this time that the judgemental and awesome God of the Old Testament was gradually being replaced in Rogers' experience by a vibrantly human Jesus who offered a new intimacy and extended the possibility of a personal freedom which would have been inconceivable in the context of the evangelical fundamentalism with which Rogers had grown up.

Journey to China

In the midst of this sea-change of religious perception Rogers was chosen as one of only a dozen students from the United States to attend a World Student Christian Federation conference in Peking, China. This tour was to last more than six months and was a watershed in Rogers' spiritual and intellectual development. We have a detailed record of his experience for he assiduously maintained a 'China diary' and wrote lengthy letters throughout the trip both to his family and to Helen Elliott, a girl he had known since childhood and whom he now regarded as his 'sweetheart'. The situation could hardly have been more conducive to the development of a young man's personal autonomy for there was not only the stimulus of foreign travel and the experience of a totally different culture but also the constant company of an international group of highly intelligent and creative young people. Rogers was forced to stretch his thinking in almost all directions and was also brought poignantly to face the power of national feelings and bitterness in a period only a few years after the end of World War I. Most significantly he came to recognize that it was possible for sincere and honest people to hold very different religious beliefs and perceptions.

Looking back on the whole experience Rogers realized that it was for him the perfect context in which to break free of the religious thinking of his parents and to achieve spiritual, intellectual and emotional independence. Throughout he was sustained by his new and deeply personal relationship with Christ and by the fact that he was, through letters, becoming increasingly intimate with Helen. Not the least astonishing aspect of this period was Rogers' faithful recording of his new feelings and ideas in immensely detailed letters to his family. It would seem that he was compelled to be honest and that this blinded him temporarily to the effect that such letters would inevitably have on his parents, who were deeply distressed and even scandalized by their son's embracing of what they must have considered a dangerous and perverse theology. To add to this, they could make no immediate reply, and by the time their negative

reactions caught up with him Rogers was fully established in his new outlook. As he later admitted, it was through this process that, with the minimum of pain to himself, he broke with intellectual and religious ties which could have proved formidably strong. It is possible to see in this fascinating journey to the East the early indicators of much that was to characterize Rogers' later life and work. As he experienced the depth of group life so it became possible for him to understand and to value individual differences. What is more the acceptance he found in the group, the increasing security of the relationship with Helen and his changing perception of the nature of God enabled him to maintain an authenticity which was crucial to his escape from the shackles of the narrow parental view of reality. The interweaving of the later core conditions of empathy, acceptance and genuineness is not difficult to trace.

Marriage

The China tour took its toll on Rogers' physical health and something of the stress it engendered is revealed by the fact that shortly after his return he was diagnosed as having a duodenal ulcer. He was hospitalized for a few weeks and then returned home for further treatment and a period of convalescence. If the changes that had taken place had not been radical it is easy to imagine that this period of vulnerability could have posed a real threat to Rogers' newly won autonomy. It is a mark of his determination that this should not happen that, as soon as he was fit enough, he took a job at a lumberyard and registered for a correspondence course in introductory psychology where the principal text was by William James. The time of his recuperation also provided an admirable opportunity for deepening his relationship with Helen, who was an art student at the University of Wisconsin. He bought his first car (a used Model T Ford) and frequently drove twenty-five miles over rough roads in order to be with the girl whom he described in words which leave little doubt that he was falling ever more deeply in love. In time, his feelings were reciprocated and the day arrived when, in his own words, 'the most wonderful miracle in the world took place' and Helen told him that she loved him. They were engaged on 22 October 1922; Rogers considered the event to be one of the peak experiences of his life and described himself as 'ecstatically happy'. They were married in August 1924 only two months after Rogers graduated in history from the University of Wisconsin. The marriage took place despite the urgings from the parents of both families to postpone the event until they were more firmly established in their respective careers. Rogers had been accepted by Union Theological Seminary in New York, the most

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liberal in the country at that time, and soon after their marriage the young couple piled the totality of their worldly possessions into a second-hand Model T coupé that Rogers had bought for 450 dollars and set out for New York.

From Theology to Psychology

When Rogers began his studies at Union he was still intent on becoming a Christian minister and during the summer of his first year, as part of his seminary training, he acted as the pastor of a small church in Vermont. His offerings were apparently scholarly enough but he found it quite beyond him to preach for longer than twenty minutes – this in the days when sermons of forty minutes or an hour were not uncommon. The reluctance to impose his view on others and his distaste for telling others what they should do or believe is already evident in this somewhat amusing shortcoming of the fledgling seminarian.

Rogers never regretted the two years he spent at Union. He met some exceptional teachers and participated fully in the life of an institution which was remarkably progressive in its attitudes to learning and to student demands and aspirations. Despite this, Rogers and some of his fellow students grew restless at what they considered to be the imparting of ideas *ex cathedra* and made the remarkable request of the administration that they should be permitted to set up a seminar, for credit, with no instructors, where the agenda should be composed entirely of their own questions. Even more remarkably their request was granted, although the Seminary administration did insist that a young instructor should sit in on their meetings even if he took no active part in the proceedings. For Rogers, as for the others involved, this 'leaderless' seminar proved to be deeply clarifying and broke much new ground. So disturbing was the outcome that most of the participants, in facing honestly the questions which they raised, thought themselves right out of religious work. Once again Rogers was thrown into creative confusion. He later wrote that increasingly he came to realize that, deeply as he was committed to the constructive improvement of life for society and for individuals, he could not stay in a field where he would be *required* to believe in a specific religious doctrine. The thought of *having* to profess a set of beliefs in order to remain in one's profession struck Rogers as something to which he applied an adjective of great emotional force. Such a prospect, he said, was 'horrible' (Rogers, 1961: 8).

Rogers' restlessness with his religious studies was already evident during his second year at Union and he found an outlet by taking several courses at the neighbouring Teachers' College of

Columbia University. By simply walking across the road he found himself following a course in clinical psychology under the guidance of Leta Stetter Hollingworth, of whom he significantly remarked that she combined the qualities of a warm human being with those of a competent research worker. It was thanks to Hollingworth that he had his first experience of working with disturbed children. Equally important was his contact with William Heard Kilpatrick who was a former student of John Dewey and expounded Dewey's views on progressive education with great power and persuasiveness. When, therefore, thanks to the processes of the leaderless seminar, Rogers came finally to acknowledge that he could no longer remain in a religious milieu it was not difficult to decide where to go. Instead of making frequent visits to Teachers' College, he once more crossed the road and asked for permanent residence. In this decision, as in so much else, he was fully supported by Helen whose continuing influence on his life and career was to prove incalculable. The graduate who had set out to become a Christian minister now embarked on the career of psychologist and it says much for the health and flexibility of the American higher education system of that time that the transition was accomplished with the minimum of bureaucratic difficulty.

In the same year that Rogers began to study for his degree in clinical and educational psychology at Teachers' College, he became a father for the first time. David Rogers was born on 17 March 1926 and it is amusing to record that Carl and Helen initially set out to raise their first-born son according to the book of Watsonian behaviourism. Rogers was later to write that it was fortunate for them all that Helen had enough common sense to make a good mother in the face of all the seemingly erudite but essentially damaging psychological knowledge (in Burton, 1972: 44). David was later to distinguish himself as a doctor, medical researcher and university teacher as well as becoming a prominent activist on behalf of those largely neglected by the medical system.

At Teachers' College Rogers found that the predominating point of view was characterized by a rigorous scientific approach allied to a coldly objective statistical methodology. This appealed at some level to the scientific part of his personality and his own doctoral work consisted of developing a test for measuring the personality adjustment of nine-thirteen-year-old children (a test which proved immensely popular and was still selling well in the 1970s). The interest in working with children led Rogers to apply successfully for a Fellowship at the Institute of Child Guidance and for the academic year 1927-28 he had the opportunity to experience an entirely different milieu from that of Teachers' College. The Institute was largely

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committed to psychoanalytic theory and methods and Rogers found himself surrounded by clinical practitioners whose orientation was radically different from that of most of his tutors at Teachers'. It would seem that Rogers drew considerable benefit from this contrast of approaches for, in the event, he felt comfortable with neither but was able to draw from both. Fascinatingly, the personality test that emerged from his doctoral studies satisfied the scientific objectivity of his examiners at Teachers' College and was also deemed useful as a clinical instrument at the Institute. Already we see in this test his concern to tap into the subjective experiencing of his client, for the children taking the test were enabled to explore their attitudes to themselves, their contemporaries and their families and to do this through the context of their daydreams and fantasy life.

The Rochester Years

Rogers' inability or unwillingness to throw in his lot with any of the prevailing psychological 'orthodoxies' of the time is an indication of the independence of spirit which also characterized the choice of his first professional post as a psychologist. In the spring of 1928 he accepted a position with the Child Study Department of the Rochester Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. It was poorly paid and seemed to have little in the way of career prospects. Indeed, it would cut him off from the intellectual stimulus of university life and commit him to an unfashionable area of work. Yet for Rogers the choice seems to have been largely intuitive and spontaneous. The post offered the prospect of work which he enjoyed and for which his training equipped him. For him this was enough and, characteristically, he followed his instinct and trusted his own inner sense of conviction about the rightness of the move. This mode of operating is not without significance for someone who was later to place such emphasis on the person's trust in his or her own internal 'locus of evaluation' when making decisions or evaluating situations of emotional complexity. In this instance, too, it was not perhaps irrelevant that Rogers himself was shortly to become a father for the second time, his daughter, Natalie, being born within months of the family's arrival in Rochester. Children were increasingly central to his home as well as to his professional life.

Rogers later described the next twelve years in Rochester as exceedingly valuable ones. He was totally immersed in his work and dedicated himself unstintingly to the welfare of the mal-adjusted and often highly deprived children who were referred to

him for diagnosis and assistance. The fact that many of the children were badly damaged and had often been through the rigours of the courts and social work agencies meant that there was little time for testing out elaborate theories and hypotheses. Instead what was required was a method of responding to the children and their parents which actually worked and proved effective in meeting their needs. In such a pressurized situation Rogers soon discovered that even some of the most elegant theories he had previously embraced failed to stand up to the test of reality. More and more he began to realize that he could regard himself as a pioneer in his own right and that he could take the risk of formulating his own ideas based on the day-to-day experience of the encounters he was having with those seeking his help.

This essentially practical and pragmatic approach was reinforced by the enthusiasm and energy of some of the social workers working in Rogers' department. Notable among them was Elizabeth Davis who was a student of the Freudian heretic, Otto Rank, and had been trained at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work. Rogers was also much affected by the work of Rank's student, Jessie Taft. She and her colleague, Frederick Allen, became a major influence in Rogers' professional life and it was their version of Rank's ideas and practice which gradually permeated Rogers' own thinking and clinical behaviour. It was only many years later that Rogers openly acknowledged his indebtedness to Jessie Taft and spoke of being at this time 'infected with Rankian ideas'. His biographer, Howard Kirschenbaum, records how in an interview Rogers stated that it was at this time that he began 'to realize the possibilities of the individual being self directing'. Rogers went on to link the influence of Rank with his previous exposure to the ideas of Kilpatrick and John Dewey (Kirschenbaum, 1979: 95). It was probably at Rochester that Rogers came to believe in the individual's capacity to find his or her own way forward and this belief, it seems, was primarily founded on his clinical experience but buttressed by his understanding of Rank's work as it was transmitted to him by the words and example of Jessie Taft and her colleagues. It was also in the later years at Rochester that he finally accepted the comparative ineffectiveness therapeutically of interpreting a client's behaviour. It was at this time that the now famous incident occurred when Rogers finally gave up on a delinquent youngster's mother who had constantly refused to accept his gentle interpretations of her behaviour towards her son only to be asked a moment or two later by the same woman if he actually took on adults for counselling. When he said he did she then began her story all over again in her own

way and talked about her despair and her marital relationship, which was in serious trouble. For Rogers this proved conclusively that it is the client who knows how to proceed and not the therapist and that the therapist's task is to rely upon the client for the direction of therapeutic movement.

While he was still at Rochester Rogers wrote his first major book, *The Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child*, which was published in 1939. The book attempted to give something of an overview of the field of child guidance during that period but its interest now lies more in the insight it provides into Rogers' own personal and professional growth. As Kirschenbaum points out, the book contained the seeds of much of what was to follow in the years ahead and he draws attention particularly to the sections that consider the role of the therapist and the place of scientific research (Kirschenbaum, 1979: 96).

Having considered the different types of therapy with which he had worked at Rochester, Rogers concluded that to some extent they converged in the attitude of the therapist. He went on to identify four basic attributes of all therapists and listed these as:

- 1 *objectivity*, in which he included a 'capacity for sympathy which will not be overdone, a genuinely receptive and interested attitude, a deep understanding which will find it impossible to pass moral judgements or be shocked and horrified'
- 2 *a respect for the individual*: 'the aim is to leave the major responsibilities in the hands of the child as an individual going towards independence'
- 3 *understanding of the self*, to which he allied the therapist's ability to be self-accepting as well as self-aware
- 4 *psychological knowledge*, by which he meant 'a thorough basis of knowledge of human behaviour and of its physical, social and psychological determinants' (Rogers, 1939).

It is significant that for Rogers at this time the first three of these attributes far outweighed the fourth in importance. Knowledge allied to a brilliant intellect was no guarantee of therapeutic effectiveness and he is clear that it is in the realm of 'attitudes, emotions and insights' that the therapist's essential capacity is determined. Once again we can see the roots of empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence, the three concepts which were to become Rogers' most important and radical contribution to the understanding of helping relationships (Rogers, 1939: 279-84).

Rogers' concern with the importance of scientific research was by no means a commonly held point of view at this time.

Kirschenbaum suggests that for many practitioners the time was not yet ripe for research because therapy was still in its infancy. Others, again, including the persuasive Jessie Taft, were doubtful that science could usefully be applied to therapy at all. Rogers strongly disagreed with these views although he confessed that for him it was a 'horrible thought' that the day might come when therapeutic processes could actually be measured. Nonetheless he insisted that it was the psychologist's duty to prevent therapy from taking off into a kind of mystical stratosphere and that it should be firmly anchored in the domain of scientific enquiry and thus be brought down to earth (Kirschenbaum, 1979: 98). The use of the adjective 'horrible' reminds us of Rogers' previous revulsion at the thought of being trapped in a profession (the Christian ministry) because he had to give allegiance to a certain belief structure. It would seem that, committed scientist that he was, Rogers still feared another kind of trap; the possibility that everything might one day be explicable in scientific terms. It was as if he believed that the psychologist should certainly attempt to bring this about but that it would be a tragic day if he actually succeeded. This commitment to scientific enquiry allied to a basic ambivalence about its ultimate efficacy constitutes a somewhat uneasy tension which persisted at some level throughout Rogers' life and continues to be observable among person-centred therapists since his death.

Rogers was sure that he owed his next post solely to the publication of *The Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child*. Without his ability to write quickly and persuasively in the occasional intervals in his frenetic clinical life, he might have continued for many years in Rochester, where he was eventually appointed director of the Guidance Center. As it was, he was startled and delighted to be offered a full professorship at Ohio State University and in December 1939 he, Helen, David and Natalie set out in a blizzard for their new home.

The Ohio State Professor

Rogers later commented that he heartily recommended starting in the academic world at the professorial level (Rogers, 1961: 13). For those less fortunate who had to work their way up through the ranks of university faculty there was always the need to keep in favour in order to ensure promotion. Rogers was not constrained in this way and from the outset of his time at Ohio State he was able to be exceptionally active and innovative. He lectured frequently, published numerous articles within his first year, served on countless

committees and established a practicum in counselling and psychotherapy which meant that supervised therapy was carried out on a university campus for the first time. Within this stimulating context and with the encouragement of his many and enthusiastic students it was not long before Rogers came to realize that his already extensive experience had brought him to the point where he was rapidly developing a distinctive viewpoint of his own which was demanding more extensive articulation. On 11 December 1940, before an invited audience at the University of Minnesota, he delivered a lecture entitled 'Newer concepts in psychotherapy' and he subsequently came to consider the date of this event as the birthday of client-centred therapy. Kirschenbaum in his biography of Rogers draws attention both to the content of this lecture and to the context in which it was delivered (Kirschenbaum, 1979: 112-13). The relevance of the latter lies in the light that it throws upon the personality of Rogers, although I am not sure that I concur with Kirschenbaum's assessment of the event.

The well-known counselling programme for student personnel workers at Minnesota had been developed under the leadership of Dean E.G. Williamson, who believed in a distinctly directive approach which included the use of psychological tests and focused advice-giving. It was to Williamson's students and associates that Rogers gave his lecture. Much of the paper was devoted to a detailed critique of the more traditional approaches to therapy and he was particularly harsh on the practice of advice-giving. To illustrate his thesis Rogers at one point quoted from the record of an interview conducted by an advice-giving counsellor, but neglected to tell his audience that the counsellor in question was none other than the chairman of the very meeting at which he was speaking. In short, Rogers had gone to the foremost citadel of directive therapy and there delivered a powerful attack on the 'home team's' theories and practice using the chairman's own performance as a principal target for his assault. Kirschenbaum describes this astonishing demonstration of personal and professional courage as Rogers 'naively' going to present his paper. Perhaps he is right, for it seems that Rogers was unprepared for the furore which his paper aroused but I find it difficult to believe that Rogers did not realize at some level that he was carrying out a revolutionary act. His later development shows him to have been a skilled political animal with a sure nose for the effective strategy, and although he preferred to be seen as a 'quiet revolutionary' I have little doubt that he went to Minnesota in December 1940 knowing that he had something of a time bomb in his briefcase.

Having launched his critique of the older methods of therapy, Rogers goes on in the paper to describe the 'newer practices'. He gives due credit to the influence of Rank, Jessie Taft and Frederick Allen and alludes, too, to the work of Karen Horney and to the emerging fields of play therapy and group therapy. He then stresses that the new approach is not interested in solving problems but rather in helping individuals to grow and develop so that they can have a more integrated response to life in general. Further key issues he explores include the emphasis on feelings and emotions rather than on cognitive aspects of a situation, the focus on the present rather than the past and the crucial experience of the therapeutic relationship itself as a major element in the growth of the client.

The reception of the paper, which varied from enthusiastic approval to somewhat aggressive criticism, convinced Rogers that he was saying something new and not simply summarizing or synthesizing the work of others. He embarked on a second book and in 1942 there appeared *Counseling and Psychotherapy: Newer Concepts in Practice*. It was in this book that the term 'client' first appeared and also the first complete published transcript of a course of therapy. The technological complexity which lay behind the accomplishment of the latter can be guessed at when it is remembered that at that time two recording machines were used containing 78 r.p.m. discs which had to be changed every three minutes.

The reaction to this second book was in many respects similar to that provoked by the Minnesota lecture. There were those who found it immensely attractive, and many graduate students at Ohio State often referred to it as 'The Bible'. On the larger psychological community, however, it seemed to make little impact and it was not, in fact, reviewed by any major professional journal. Rogers himself believed that the book was particularly threatening to those practitioners who found it difficult to accept that their clients might know more about their own inner psychological selves than their therapists did with all their professional experience and expertise. This was perhaps the first major example of the unacceptability of client-centred therapy to those who rely heavily upon their own expertise and professional status for a sense of self-worth. The history of the approach is liberally populated by hostile critics of this kind.

Rogers was to remain at Ohio State for only four years. During this brief period his reputation was greatly enhanced for he became known as a person of boundless energy with a thirst for innovation and a great love of students. This latter point is of immeasurable

importance because it partly explains the extraordinary impact of Rogers' influence in the years ahead. His attitude to students was consistently encouraging and respectful: he treated them as equals and often allowed them to evaluate their own work. The environment for learning which he created enabled them to gain rapidly in confidence and they, in turn, became his greatest supporters and associates. Rogers' undoubted gifts for relating to young people were perhaps instrumental in gaining him his next post. In 1945 he moved to the University of Chicago, having been invited there with the specific request that he should establish a Counseling Center.

The Chicago Years

Rogers spent twelve years at Chicago and certainly considered this period as the most creative part of his career up to that point. The Counseling Center rapidly established itself as an invaluable resource both for the students of the University and for people in the community. Rogers gathered around him a group of highly motivated and innovative colleagues and graduate students and, once more, created a context in which each individual could develop and flourish. The University administration had difficulty with his refusal to 'lead' the Center in the conventional way. True to his principles, he believed in the capacity of the group to find its own way forward and by refusing to exert his authority in the normal way he helped establish a truly democratic climate in which power-sharing became a daily reality. The years did not pass without difficulty, however, for democratic government does not necessarily result in unity or cohesiveness. There were often sharp conflicts and disagreements but Rogers did nothing to dampen these down: instead the open expression of feelings was encouraged and in this way the staff of the Center came to recognize that they were participating in an enterprise where they could exert influence and where their voices would not be ignored. Research flourished as never before and clinical innovations abounded. Rogers was deeply involved in therapeutic work and for two years at Chicago he underwent a period of great personal distress largely induced by a particularly demanding and highly disturbed female client. The personal crisis which resulted from this relationship threatened to undermine him completely and he later commented that it was fortunate for him that by this time he had trained therapists sufficiently well to enable him to receive the kind of help that he himself desperately needed. He emerged from this dark period able to accept himself and to give and receive love in a way which

had not previously been possible. It was as if the originator of client-centred therapy had finally achieved the state of being which his work had made possible for countless clients before him. It is not, perhaps, too fanciful to suggest that Carl Rogers was led to create client-centred therapy because he himself so badly needed the kind of healing it offered.

In 1951 Rogers' third major book, *Client-Centered Therapy*, appeared and immediately won a large and enthusiastic readership despite, again, the coolness of the psychological press. In many ways the book is a review of the activities of the Counseling Center. It explores the application of the client-centred approach not only to individual therapy but to play therapy, groupwork, leadership and administrative roles and to teaching and training. In his own eyes, however, the crowning point of Rogers' achievement to this point was the presentation to him in 1956 by the American Psychological Association of the Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award. Rogers saw this not only as a tangible reward for the numerous research studies which he and his colleagues had conducted into therapeutic process but also as a clear sign that his fellow psychologists were not simply embarrassed by him but were actually to some extent admiring of his work. He later commented that of all the honours he was to receive, this award in 1956 had the greatest personal meaning (Kirschenbaum, 1979: 222).

The award had been preceded in 1954 by the publication of *Psychotherapy and Personality Change*, which Rogers edited with Rosalind Dymond. This book consisted of a number of studies which were, on the whole, supportive of client-centred hypotheses and the psychology journals at last reacted favourably. There can be little doubt that Rogers' research endeavours during this period were to have a profound effect on the whole field of counselling and psychotherapy in the years ahead. From this time onwards it would become increasingly difficult for therapists to evade the stern test of research investigation. As in so many other areas, Rogers was largely responsible for stripping away the mystique from therapeutic relationships and making them accessible not only to scientific researchers but also to ordinary members of the public who might themselves want to consult a therapist one day. Understandably, this kind of activity did not endear Rogers to those who preferred to maintain the veil of secrecy and to hide behind complex theories of human personality. When, in 1957, Rogers felt confident enough to develop what he called 'The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change' he did so against the background not only of vast experience but

also of the most rigorous research known in the psychotherapeutic field up to that time (Rogers, 1957a). This, too, did not make him popular with those who had never conducted a research study in their lives and who continued to protest that so delicate a matter as a therapeutic relationship could never be explored adequately through such scientific methodology.

It is intriguing to speculate on what would have happened if Rogers had stayed at Chicago until his retirement. It is conceivable that many benefits would have accrued and that the future of client-centred therapy might have been well served. Certainly Rogers was never again to work with so stimulating and dedicated a group of colleagues and when, somewhat suddenly, he announced his intention of leaving in 1957 in order to take up a post at his old University, Wisconsin, there was almost universal dismay. Interestingly enough, Rogers felt sufficiently uncomfortable about the move to write a lengthy letter to the staff in an attempt to explain his decision (Kirschenbaum, 1979: 243–4).

This letter gives a fascinating insight into his personality and merits close analysis. By far the most important reason for the move, it seems, was Rogers' belief that his new post would give him the chance to make much 'greater impact'. The letter makes it clear that Rogers was much concerned to be influential in the whole field of mental health and saw himself as having important theories to convey. It is not going too far, I believe, to detect in him a crusading spirit which saw in the Wisconsin post an irresistible opportunity for spreading the message. The evangelical tradition of his childhood was still coursing in his veins, even if the cause was now somewhat changed. The particular attraction of Wisconsin was that Rogers would have the chance to work in both the departments of psychology and psychiatry. He had a vision of trainee psychologists and psychiatrists sitting in the same seminar and participating in the same research projects with him. The letter to his bewildered Chicago colleagues waxes lyrical on this aspect and goes so far as to suggest that he would also have the chance 'to influence the University in more general ways'. Almost shamefacedly he acknowledges the attraction of living 'in a beautiful spot', but this is dismissed as of minor importance compared to making 'a significant dent in a new situation during thirteen to fifteen years before I retire'. A most revealing postscript portrays Rogers as 'kin to the old frontiersmen', already half-way to the new location and keen to leave his old haunts behind him. He describes himself as the adventurer who thirsts for new terrain to conquer and new problems to overcome. It seems hardly likely that the Chicago team would have gained much comfort from the

letter however much Rogers protested that his own plans in no way altered his affection for them. There must have been many who saw Rogers, perhaps for the first time, as a man of driving ambition who was determined to be influential even if this meant leaving his friends and disappointing those who had relied on his support.

Disillusion in Wisconsin

The move to Wisconsin was in many ways a disaster. Rogers' vision of psychology and psychiatry holding hands was never fulfilled and he was quickly at loggerheads with many of his new colleagues, especially in the Psychology Department where a rule of veiled terror predominated so that graduate students were kept in place by a succession of examinations and the fear of failure. So great were the conflicts that in the end Rogers resigned from the department, although he continued to work with the Psychiatric Institute.

The Wisconsin years did, however, lead to one major research project. For some time Rogers had been keen to see if his hypothesis about the necessary and sufficient conditions of personality change would work with seriously disturbed people, and his position within the Department of Psychiatry provided the ideal opportunity to put this to the test. A project of great complexity was set up involving a large number of research workers to whom, in his usual style, Rogers delegated much responsibility and autonomy. The resulting process was far from satisfactory and there were many difficulties and conflicts. Rogers was later to describe the project as 'without doubt the most painful and anguished episode of my whole professional life' (in Burton, 1972: 62). Nor were the results of the study particularly exciting. There were no significant differences between the therapy group and the control group although high therapeutic conditions of congruence and empathy *did* correlate with client improvement. In brief, the project provided some solid support for Rogers' principal theories but the overall findings were modest in their persuasiveness.

It could justifiably be claimed that the powerful desire to be more influential which took Rogers to Wisconsin was in no way fulfilled by the daily work he did there. Yet it was his fifth book, *On Becoming a Person*, published in 1961 that, almost overnight, catapulted him into the limelight and brought him more fame and influence than he could ever have hoped for. The book broke free from the professional world of psychology and showed that client-centred principles had application in almost every facet of day-to-day living. The book does not draw particularly on Rogers' experiences at

Wisconsin but is an expression of his thought and feeling in such powerful and moving language that it established him as a communicator of the highest order. Educators, therapists, philosophers, scientists, artists and countless 'men and women in the street' were drawn to the book in their thousands and Rogers was overwhelmed by appreciative letters from persons in almost every walk of life. He went to Wisconsin to make an impact, and he notably failed. He wrote a book and discovered that he was suddenly influential beyond his wildest dreams. In 1963 he announced his decision to resign from the University. He no longer had need of the conventional academic environment and was finding it increasingly restrictive and alienating. The extraordinary success of *On Becoming a Person* gave him the confidence to set out on an altogether more risky path and to forego the security of established institutions. When Richard Farson, one of his former students, invited him in the summer of 1963 to join him and others at the recently created Western Behavioral Sciences Institute Rogers was forced to recognize that he was at a professional crossroads. After initial hesitation he accepted and set out for La Jolla in California to join WBSI, a non-profit-making organization concerned chiefly with humanistically oriented research in interpersonal relations. The 'frontiersman' was once more on the trail but this time the new terrain was particularly hazardous. In previous generations members of the Rogers clan might well have set out on such a venture with a bible in their pack. Rogers had the security of his own experience and reputation but it is doubtful if he would have found the courage if he, too, had not had a book in his suitcase. *On Becoming a Person* was at one and the same time both the challenge and the guide which Rogers needed to leave the university system behind him. In writing it for others he had once again provided himself with the resource he required.

The California Years

The Western Behavioral Sciences Institute

Rogers found the freedom from university life enormously exhilarating. He and Helen found a beautiful house with a spectacular view of the Pacific and he immediately settled down to work with enthusiasm in the new environment. Without the constraints of academic institutional life he was free to develop both professionally and personally in ways that startled many of his friends and even members of his own family. Most significantly, he became greatly involved in the encounter group movement and within a

year or two of arriving in La Jolla he was already seen throughout America as an elder statesman of the encounter culture. After the period at Wisconsin, with much of its focus on the seriously disturbed, it seemed that Rogers welcomed the opportunity to work with a more 'normal' population. He began to trust the wisdom of the small group with the same confidence that he had previously shown towards individual clients. At the same time he found it possible to use the group context for his own development and he became markedly more expressive of his own feelings and more prepared to risk being vulnerable in relationships. These changes in his own behaviour were accompanied by an increasing fascination with the application of client-centred principles in settings outside the therapy room. When, in 1970, *Carl Rogers on Encounter Groups* appeared it sold more than a quarter of a million copies and this followed on *Freedom to Learn: A View of What Education Might Become*, which was first published in 1969 and eventually sold more than 300,000 copies. Rogers was now a 'big name' and it seemed that the more he realized his ambition to become widely influential the more it was possible for him to extend the area of personal freedom and to be open and responsive to others in new ways and at a deeper level.

The Center for Studies of the Person

In 1968 Richard Farson left WBSI to take up a new position and this seems to have brought about changes in the administrative policy of the Institute which Rogers found uncongenial. He did not waste time fighting the changes but instead joined with others in the organization to form the Center for Studies of the Person, which still exists and of which Rogers remained a 'Resident Fellow' (his own chosen title) until his death. The Center soon had about forty members drawn from different disciplines and its affairs were conducted in such a way that each member was free to develop his or her own interests within the supportive environment of like-minded people, all of whom were deeply interested in persons and in the essential value of subjective experience. From this base Rogers was to continue an active professional life for a further twenty years and there is no doubt that, despite difficulties and conflicts, CSP provided him with a rich network of companionship and stimulus which enabled him to enjoy a particularly productive and energetic old age.

The Global Community

During this final period Rogers only spasmodically returned to the issues and challenges of individual therapy although he was

frequently happy to demonstrate his approach on film or to carry out therapeutic interviews during workshops and conferences. Increasingly, however, his interest was drawn to the concerns of everyday life and to the problems confronting the global community. *Becoming Partners*, published in 1972, was an attempt to explore the institution of marriage and its alternatives, and in 1977 he wrote *Carl Rogers on Personal Power* in which he gave expression to the political implications of his ideas for many aspects of life from the family to the wider arenas of education, business and national life. During this period, too, often with the encouragement of his daughter, Natalie, Rogers initiated a series of large group workshops where it was possible to apply the approach to groups of between 75 and 800 people. In this work he was often assisted by Natalie, who had earlier been supervised by Abraham Maslow while completing a Master's degree at Brandeis University despite the responsibilities of being a wife and the mother of three children. It was Natalie, too, together with Maria Bowen, who were powerfully influential in encouraging Rogers to venture once more into the spiritual and mystical terrain on which he had turned his back when he abandoned Christianity as a young man. Rogers first coined the term 'person-centred' to describe the large group experiences in which he, Natalie and Maria were centrally involved and he increasingly used the expression when his approach was employed in contexts other than that of counselling and psychotherapy.

Perhaps it was inevitable that his involvement first in small group work and then with large groups should eventually lead Rogers to consider the application of his approach to issues facing the world community. In the final years of his life he was much preoccupied with world peace and with the crossing of cultural and racial boundaries. In his seventies and eighties he continued to display astonishing vitality and travelled the world in order to make his ideas known, especially in those areas where tension and conflict were day-to-day realities. Northern Ireland, South Africa, Poland and Russia amongst others featured on his itinerary in these years and in each country he not only talked about his work but actively participated in workshops and seminars so that people in these countries could experience, however briefly, what it might mean to respond to each other in a person-centred way. His book, *A Way of Being*, published in 1980, contains amongst other papers on his changing views a powerful vision of the possible world of tomorrow. Helen, his wife for almost fifty-five years, died in the year prior to this book's publication and it was as if a combination of grief at her passing and of freedom from the responsibilities

of marriage prompted Rogers to become increasingly intrepid in his exploration of both spiritual and political issues. Towards the end of 1985 he fulfilled his cherished ambition of bringing together influential leaders of seventeen different countries in a residential conference on the 'Central American Challenge', which was held in Austria. This conference was the most outstanding example of his utter commitment in the final years of his life to the preservation of world peace and to the avoidance of nuclear conflict. It was entirely fitting that when Rogers died on 4 February 1987, after a fall, he had, unbeknown to him, just been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Spiritual Dimension

This introductory exploration of Rogers' life and work would be incomplete without one further discussion. It would seem that the young man who had set out to become a farmer and had then changed direction to become a Christian minister had moved a long way from his initial moorings by the time of his death as the world-renowned psychologist, therapist and peace worker. Yet I am tempted to believe that this was not altogether the case and that the clue to the essential continuity in his development as a person lies in the hiddenness of his spiritual pilgrimage. It is to this that I wish now to turn.

There can be no doubt that the young Rogers was a deeply religious man. His letters and diary entries in the period prior to and during the China trip show a certain theological turmoil but this is always allied to a powerful idealism and, increasingly, to a deep admiration for and attraction to the personality of Christ. Equally there is no doubt that once Rogers had made the decision to abandon his training for the Christian ministry he turned his back not only on the Christian church but on any overt belief in the Christian religion.

I have attempted to show elsewhere (Thorne, 1990) that this complete rejection of his Christian past can be explained, at least to some extent, by the perverse theology of the fundamentalistic evangelicalism of his childhood. Rogers' experience as a therapist and psychologist brought him increasingly to the conviction that human beings are essentially forward-moving organisms drawn to the fulfilment of their own creative natures and to the pursuit of truth and social responsiveness. Such a conviction stood in sharp contrast to the negative and guilt-inducing view of human nature enshrined in the severe interpretation of the doctrine of Original Sin which characterized the theology of the Rogers' household.

Within this perspective only the redeeming 'blood of the Lamb' could wipe away the foulness of sin and hold out for men and women the possibility of salvation. Without such an operation, demanding repentance and conversion, there could be little hope for an essentially corrupt and fallen human race. Such a view became increasingly unacceptable and distasteful to Rogers, for it ran counter to his experience as a therapist and to his understanding of the evolutionary processes in the created order. As a psychologist and as a scientist he found the concepts of sinfulness and fallenness with their inherent judgementalism, repugnant and ultimately life-denying and deeply injurious to the human spirit.

The inner perturbation and 'breakdown' during the Chicago years indicate that at the deepest level Rogers was by no means free of the insidious conditioning of his childhood and adolescence. During his own therapy after the near catastrophe with his psychotic female client he was brought face to face with the extent of his self-rejection and with the deep-seated belief in his own unworthiness. Once released from the grip of these convictions he was able to experience the self-acceptance and the deep capacity for intimacy that his own work had already made possible for countless clients. In the light of the deep wounds to his own psyche which were revealed at this time Rogers turned his back with apparent finality on the Christian faith and on every aspect of institutionalized religion. So deep were these wounds and so gradual the recovery that it was only in the final years of his life that Rogers was able once more to approach the world of spiritual reality. The death of his wife, Helen, in 1979 was the occasion for a resurgence of his interest in the invisible world and for a while he became immersed in the mysterious implications of psychic phenomena. It was at this time, too, that he began again to consider the possibility of some kind of life beyond death and to deepen his interest in certain aspects of Eastern religious experience.

In the final period of his life, however, it was in the therapeutic relationship itself that Rogers rediscovered the dimension which at a conscious level he had shut out when he abandoned Christianity. In the last description he published of a therapeutic encounter he was able to write: 'I realize that this account partakes of the mystical. Our experiences, it is clear, involve the transcendent, the indescribable, the spiritual. I am impelled to believe that I, like many others, have underestimated the importance of this mystical, spiritual dimension' (Rogers, 1986b: 200). It appears that once again, and for the final time, Rogers the therapist had discovered the truth of which Rogers the man had greatest need. He viewed the prospect of death with equanimity while celebrating life by entering into love

relationships with women which gave him intense pleasure and enrichment. For him the spiritual dimension of these final years was linked to an increasing capacity for intimacy and mutuality.

In many ways the milestones along the path of Rogers' often hidden spiritual pilgrimage can be seen in an interview given in 1990 by Elizabeth Sheerer, one of the original members of the Counseling Center at the University of Chicago. Her interviewer, Phillip Barrineau, asks towards the end of their conversation:

You've noted that the [person-centred] approach has gone into so many areas; are there areas or issues that have not been addressed in your estimation?

Elizabeth Sheerer's reply is exceptionally revealing:

Yes, I would like more attention to the spiritual part of the person. ... Of course, it's not missing in client-centered therapy but it's not addressed formally. It's not recognised formally. You don't get into therapy without getting in touch with the spiritual aspect of the person.

Phillip Barrineau: Do you have a theory about why it's not addressed formally?

Elizabeth Sheerer: Yes, I do. That's Carl. This was an area of difficulty for Carl. We learned early in the game not to talk about religion with Carl. That was a taboo subject because it was uncomfortable for him. ... I always had a notion that something happened while he was in China, that never was spoken of publicly or in print ... in the years that he was developing the theory, he just didn't want any part of formal religion or, as far as I could tell, any religion. But of course, his work is so profoundly influenced by his background in Christianity. I don't think he could have developed without that background. (Barrineau, 1990: 423-4)

Rogers' Major Theoretical Contributions

Theory from Experience

Rogers tended to be highly suspicious of theories. His early experience of theological doctrine and later of psychoanalytical and behaviouristic dogma led him to the conclusion that the premature application of theoretical models made it more difficult to trust the evidence of one's own perceptions and intuitions. Most importantly, he discovered in his early clinical work that a reliance on theory could lead to a situation where the therapist attempted to fit or mould a client into a preconceived cognitive structure rather than engaging with the client's world as he or she experienced it. There came a time, as we have seen, when Rogers dared to view himself as a pioneer who could legitimately lay aside previous theories, however elegantly and persuasively expressed, and devote his energy instead to relating deeply to his clients and discovering with them what worked.

In this decision to liberate himself from the constraints of previous theories and to trust the empirical validity of his own experience Rogers was already establishing a baseline of cardinal importance. In this he was encouraged by his understanding of the work of John Dewey and his followers and by the influence of Otto Rank as it was channelled to him through Jessie Taft and her colleagues. Essentially Rogers came to believe that what mattered was not some concept of objective reality, whatever that might be, but the way in which a given person perceives reality. In brief, the surest route to understanding a person's behaviour is to come to a knowledge of that person's subjective awareness of himself or herself and of the world in which he or she exists. Such an approach takes as its basic assumption that a person's subjective experience is worthy of the deepest respect even if to others it may appear bizarre or misguided. For Rogers the trusting of his own experience was therefore paralleled by his commitment to trusting the experience of his client. Any theory or therapeutic procedure that threatened to undermine this trust either in himself or in his client

became for Rogers an impediment to the therapeutic process and potentially destructive of a healthy therapeutic relationship.

The revolutionary nature of this point of view may not initially be apparent but it is clear that, at a stroke, it throws into question the notion of the therapist as an expert with special knowledge. For Rogers the expert role implied a relationship where the therapist is perceived as an authority figure and this immediately engendered a power imbalance. The issue of power is central to his understanding of the therapeutic relationship and during his Rochester days Rogers concluded that the therapist's theoretical knowledge could lead him to suppose that he actually knew more about the client's inner functioning than the client did. Once such a dangerous fantasy was established it became difficult, if not impossible, for the client to put trust in his or her own experiencing and in the validity of his or her own perceptions. And yet without such trust the client's subjective world would be unlikely to assume the supreme importance it merited in the therapeutic enterprise.

In his insistence on the centrality of subjective experience Rogers is in the mainstream of the phenomenological tradition, which holds to the belief that each of us behaves in accordance with our subjective awareness of ourselves and of the world we inhabit. Rogers' importance lies in his single-minded application of this belief to the task of therapy. In his clinical practice he increasingly became convinced that it is always the client who knows what hurts and in what direction he or she needs to proceed if healing is to take place. The therapist's function is to aid the client in the exploration and discovery of his or her own inner resources: it is not to impose, however gently, external solutions, strategies, interpretations or explanations.

It is clear that the confidence Rogers placed in a person's 'inner resources' could only spring from a basically optimistic view of human nature. In this optimism Rogers was again supported by the 'progressive' educators such as John Dewey and his disciple, William Heard Kilpatrick, who believed essentially that children knew what they needed to learn and how best to acquire the necessary knowledge. Such optimism stands in stark contrast, for example, to the view of Freud, who tended to be pessimistic about human nature and had grave doubts about the future of mankind. It is also contrary to the view that Rogers would have received through the brand of evangelical Christianity embraced by his family, although, interestingly, at Union he would have been influenced by other theological opinions which differed markedly from the 'totally corrupt' school of thought favoured in the Rogers household.

For Rogers the trust in subjective experience and the belief in the essential truthworthiness of human nature went hand in hand. He discovered in the early years of his clinical practice that when he was able to commit himself to a deep understanding of his client's subjective world and was perceived as doing so by the client, then almost invariably the client would begin to behave in ways which were positive and forward moving. It is not too simplistic to affirm that the whole conceptual framework of Rogers' ideas rests on his profound experience that human beings become increasingly trustworthy once they feel at a deep level that their subjective experience is both respected and progressively understood. Throughout five decades of professional work he did not deviate from this belief but, on the contrary, discovered more and more evidence to support it. It is to the development and elaboration of this basic conviction that we now turn. Throughout the rest of this chapter the corpus of Rogers' theoretical formulations will be treated as a total body of knowledge, although clearly such formulations developed and evolved over time and in practice certain dimensions received more focused attention at one time than at another.

The Actualizing Tendency

Rogers came to believe that there is only one single, basic human motive and to this he gave the name 'the actualizing tendency'. In common with the rest of the created order the human being, in Rogers' understanding, has an underlying and inherent tendency both to maintain itself and to move towards the constructive accomplishment of its potential. Just as a tulip instinctively moves towards becoming as complete and perfect a tulip as possible, so the human being moves towards growth and fulfilment and the accomplishment of the highest possible level of 'human-beingness'. The only constraints placed upon the actualizing tendency arise from the environment in which the person finds himself or herself. Just as the tulip is unlikely to flourish in poor soil and without proper care and watering, so, too, the growth of the human being will be stunted if the conditions for the encouragement of the actualizing tendency are unfavourable.

When we remember Rogers' adolescent years and his background in agricultural science it may not seem surprising that he was attracted to the simplicity of a principle which appears to have general validity throughout the natural order. The concept of the actualizing tendency, however, does not do full justice to the uniqueness of the human person and Rogers was always at pains

to point out that the specifics of human growth can and do vary widely from person to person. Actualization involves the differentiation of organs and functions and a development towards autonomy: in this way the process of actualization is keenly sensitive to the subtle complexity of human differences.

This basic actualizing tendency is the only motive to appear in the whole of Rogers' theoretical system. It is clear that it is only the *organism as a whole* which manifests this tendency and that Rogers was acutely aware that *parts* of the organism – particularly those concerned with self-perception – could fundamentally inhibit or distort the general tendency of the total organism. Actualization includes such motivational drives as need-reduction or tension-reduction and also incorporates what might be termed 'growth motivations' such as the seeking of creative challenges or the desire to learn, even if painful effort is involved. In his final exposition of client-centred therapy (Rogers and Sanford, 1989) Rogers openly acknowledged that the actualizing tendency is in no way unique to his own theoretical viewpoint. He notes that the concept runs through all of Maslow's writings and is reflected in the work of biologists such as Szent-Gyorgyi, who concludes that there is definitely a drive to perfection in all living matter. In this final paper, too, Rogers is clear that the hindrance to actualization can come from sub-parts of the human organism which have themselves been adversely affected by a whole range of environmental circumstances, both physical and psychological. He states that the actualizing tendency can even be stunted or stopped altogether. Sometimes, too, it is only able to exert itself in 'warped, bizarre or abnormal manifestations; and turns in socially destructive ways rather than constructive ways' (Rogers and Sanford, 1989: 1492).

The concept of the human organism as a unity and the belief that it is this unity which demonstrates the tendency to actualization are crucial to Rogers' understanding of the self and of the way in which the development of the self can serve the actualizing tendency or impede it. If the experience of the self and the total experience of the organism are relatively harmonious, then the actualizing tendency remains tolerably unified. If, however, self and organismic experience are discordant then the actualizing tendency will be frustrated to perhaps a damaging degree. For Rogers the tendency to actualize the self is essentially a 'subsystem' of the actualizing tendency and one which can become seriously at cross purposes with the inherent drive of the organism as a whole. It is to this 'subsystem' with its crucial significance for a human being's development that we now turn.

Self-actualization and the Concept of Self

In 1959 Rogers published a lengthy and detailed exposition of his theoretical position of which he was inordinately proud and which subsequently received little of the attention it undoubtedly merited (Rogers, 1959). The reasons for this neglect are difficult to understand for the article, which runs to seventy-two pages, throws immense light not only on all the major theoretical constructs but also on the history of their development. Indeed, when he came to discuss the concept of the self Rogers felt it appropriate to insert a 'digression on the case history of a construct' and these few pages provide a striking example of the process through which many of his central theories gradually took shape. He sums this up as 'clinical observation, initial conceptualization, initial crude research to test some of the hypotheses involved, further clinical observation, more rigorous formulation of the construct and its functional relationships, more refined operational definitions of the construct, more conclusive research' (Rogers, 1959: 203). It is difficult to imagine a way of working which could more clearly reflect the refusal to formulate theory until it had been through the repeated and painstaking tests of clinical experience, cognitive reflection and scientific research.

Rogers opens his digression by admitting that he began his professional work with the conviction that the self was a useless and meaningless term which had no place in the psychologist's vocabulary. As always, however, he subjected this conviction to the test of clinical experience and gradually discovered that, once clients were given the opportunity to express their concerns in their own words without interference from the therapist, they almost invariably tended to talk in terms of the self. There was often a profound dissatisfaction at their inability to give adequate expression to the self, or with their current evaluation of the self. They were apt to make remarks such as: 'I feel I'm not being my real self', 'I wonder who I really am', 'It feels good to just be myself here', 'I don't want anyone to know the real me'. Such statements obviously indicated that the self was a significant element in the client's experience and often a perplexing and distressing one. Furthermore, there often seemed to be an implied goal which was connected with the evolution of a 'real' self or the aspiration to an 'ideal' self. For many clients both states of being seemed equally impossible of attainment.

In clinical practice another aspect became apparent. It seemed that the concept of the self was subject to wild fluctuation and that the process of therapy had a not inconsiderable bearing on these fluctuations. It was not unusual for clients to experience themselves during therapy in a fairly positive light and to feel an increasing

confidence in the ability to tackle the problems with which life was confronting them. A few days later, however, they might well return to the therapist with a self-concept changed beyond all recognition and with feelings of worthlessness or immaturity in the ascendant. Rogers concluded from these changes and modifications in the self-concept that the self is not a fixed entity but a product of the person's response to experience which takes the form of a 'conceptual gestalt composed of perceptions of the characteristics of the "I" or "me" and the perceptions of the relationships of the "I" or "me" to others and to various aspects of life, together with the values attached to these perceptions' (Rogers, 1959: 200). Additionally, the 'gestalt' is fluid and changing but is nevertheless a specific entity at any given moment which can to some extent be defined in operational terms. More simply put, I am the self which I currently conceptualize myself as being. This conceptualization, however, is dependent not only on thousands of experiences and conditionings which constitute my past but also on the unpredictable events and interactions which may occur at any moment. It is possible for me to experience my 'self' as happy, confident and assured at one moment and despairing, inadequate and demoralized the next. Yet the event which may have brought about this startling transformation may be nothing more than the powerful comment of a fellow human being. In such an unreliable context as human existence it is scarcely surprising that for many people the process of self-actualization is fraught with complexity and anxiety. Small wonder, too, that so hazardous and unpredictable a process frequently finds itself at variance with the actualizing tendency of the organism as a whole. For those people who find their way to the therapist's door this clash between the struggle for self-actualization and the basic tendency of the human organism may well have reached a point of intolerable tension. The question which now arises is why for some people the striving for self-actualization should lead to such alienation from their organismic integrity.

Conditions of Worth

Rogers' optimistic view of human nature is reflected in his postulated characteristics of the human infant. He sees the individual during the period of early infancy as having an inherent tendency towards actualizing his or her organism and as perceiving his or her experience as reality. There is therefore no conflict between the interaction with reality and the basic actualizing tendency. Indeed the two may be seen as harmoniously interactive, for the infant

also engages in an organismic valuing process which has as its referent the actualizing tendency. In this way the infant has no difficulty in establishing which experiences are good for the organism and which are bad. The infant accordingly embraces positively valued experiences and avoids those which are negative and potentially damaging to the organism. Briefly put, the infant has both an inherent motivational system and a regulating system through the valuing process which ensures that the organism gets what it needs for its satisfaction.

The trouble begins, and for some it can be big trouble, when the actualizing tendency leads towards the differentiation that results in a part of the individual's experience becoming symbolized in an awareness of being. In other words, the infant begins to experience himself or herself as a self different and separate from other selves. Gradually, principally through relationship with significant others, the infant comes to have a concept of self which in its turn requires nurturing and protecting.

As the awareness, or consciousness, of self develops a new need emerges which is of extreme potency. This need was first formulated in 1954 by Rogers' associate, Standal, who defined it as the *need for positive regard* (Standal, 1954). Standal believed it to be a learned need but whether this is so or not is largely irrelevant for it appears to be universal and, in Rogers' words, 'pervasive and persistent' (Rogers, 1959: 223). The strength of this need cannot, in Rogers' view, be overestimated and its satisfaction quickly becomes of overriding concern for the developing child. Indeed, the need is so great that its satisfaction becomes more vital than experiences which favour the actualizing of the total organism. The fortunate child is the one whose need for positive regard is readily and consistently satisfied by the significant others in his or her life and who is not constantly having to 'ignore' organismic needs in the desperate search for positive regard.

Allied to the need for positive regard there develops over time the need for self-regard. We require at some level and in some way, however minimal, to feel good about ourselves and if this need is not met it is difficult to function in the world. Sadly, as Rogers and his colleagues discovered, those persons who have received only highly selective positive regard from significant others are hard pressed to maintain self-regard to any degree at all. The infant who is surrounded by critical and disapproving people or by those who constantly give ambiguous or conflicting signals becomes painfully confused. He or she is permanently anxious and is forever seeking ways of discovering how to win at least the occasional sign of love or affection. It is likely that some areas of

potential validation will be discovered and the individual may learn how to develop behaviours which earn a limited approval. It may be, for example, that a girl discovers that she can win parental favour if she reads books, never loses her temper and keeps her clothes spotlessly clean. Within this highly circumscribed framework she may win some positive regard, but the likelihood of this being converted into anything more than a fragile and precarious self-regard is slim especially as she knows that often she hates reading, feels violently angry inside and longs to roll in the mud. Our capacity to feel positive about ourselves is dependent upon the quality and consistency of the positive regard shown to us by others, and where this has been selective (as to some degree it must be for all of us) we are the victims of what Rogers described as *conditions of worth*. In other words, our self-regard becomes as selective if not more so than the regard bestowed on us by others. We have worth in our own eyes only on condition that we think, feel and behave in ways that others have told us are worthy of love and respect. For many people this whole sad process leads to an introjection of values which emanate from judgemental and punitive parents or other significant figures and bear little or no relationship to the needs of the human organism for actualization. On the contrary, the painful and bewildering quest for positive regard, where so little is to be found, results in a human being who is crippled by a sense of personal worthlessness (a total lack of self-regard) and who is utterly divorced from his or her organismic roots and the valuing process with which he or she was in contact before the consciousness of self emerged. The constant introjection of alien values has resulted in the internalization of conditions of worth, which makes authentic living well-nigh impossible.

As a result of the overwhelming need for positive regard it is evident that for many people there develops over time a marked discrepancy between the self as perceived and the actual experience of the total organism. Where such a discrepancy exists Rogers speaks of an incongruence between self and experience. This incongruence leads to a psychological vulnerability which will often render the person anxious and confused whenever an experience is perceived or in some way anticipated as being incongruent with the structure of the self and the current self-concept. The outcome of psychological vulnerability of this kind is a defensive response to experiences that in some way threaten the person's concept of self. The defensive behaviour can take a number of forms but, for Rogers, the responses of distortion or denial are perhaps the most common. It might be, for example that a child in its search for positive regard has introjected a whole range of beliefs, judgements

and attitudes (principally from the parents) many of which may run quite counter to its own organismic response to experience. The child is subject to many conditions of worth in so far as its experience of approval from the parents is conditional upon certain behaviours. In this situation a self-concept gradually takes shape which is aligned with the parental view of what is acceptable and admirable. The person may come to view himself or herself as, for example, patient, logical, calm and unprejudiced because such qualities are highly valued by the parents. Such a self-concept may win approval and render life tolerable but the person's self-regard will be dependent upon its maintenance. On those occasions when he or she senses the presence of inner feelings of intolerance or agitation the self-concept will be threatened. The defence of distortion comes into play if the person in such a situation attempts to view reality so that the threatening feelings can be dismissed as the outcome, for example, of holding high principles or as an appropriate response to outrageous behaviour by another person. Denial takes place when the person utterly rejects even the possibility of intolerance or agitation in himself or herself while to everyone else they are plain to see in words or behaviour. Where the self-concept is hedged around with so many conditions of worth that distortion or denial of this kind are brought into play there is clearly a measure of psychological disturbance present within the person. It is equally evident, however, that the disturbed person may have little or no awareness of the disturbance. Nor need he or she necessarily be perceived as disturbed by others for they, too, may have a vested interest in maintaining or even encouraging what is, in effect, a tragic but rigorous act of self-deception.

Locus of Evaluation

Those persons who in their search for positive regard have been forced to internalize numerous conditions of worth will have little faith in their own judgement. Furthermore, whatever face they succeed in showing to the world, they are likely to hold themselves in low esteem and to have no confidence in their capacity to make appropriate decisions or to choose satisfactory courses of action. In Rogers' terminology they will lack an internalized locus of evaluation. This somewhat inelegant term is used to indicate the source of evidence and judgement about values and meaning. The individual who has lost touch with the actualizing tendency because of distorted self-actualization will no longer be at the centre of the valuing process. He or she will not be able to trust the evidence

being supplied by his or her own senses and instead will constantly refer to the judgement of others in order to establish the value of an object or experience.

In many ways the level of dependence on an external locus of evaluation is a reliable criterion for determining the presence of psychological disturbance. Disturbed people constantly betray the lack of an internal locus and turn desperately to external authorities or find themselves trapped in a paralysis of indecision. Briefly summarized, Rogers conceptualized disturbance as a greater or lesser degree of alienation from the total organism prompted by the inadequate satisfaction of the fundamental need for positive regard from others and for the self-regard which is dependent on it. Those who are unlucky enough to be brought up amongst a number of significant others who are highly censorious or parsimonious in their approval will develop self-concepts that are usually negative and always falsely based, and will have little prospect of maintaining and nurturing the internal locus of evaluation of which they have need if they are to become autonomous persons in their own right.

The Fully Functioning Person

Rogers has sometimes been accused of neglecting personality theory and offering only a hazy view of human development. Such an accusation is misplaced. On the contrary, his theory, based solidly on clinical experience, is explicit and forceful. As so often with Rogers' formulations, the theory is relatively uncomplicated and rigorously avoids hypotheses which are by definition untestable because of their reliance on concepts of unconscious processes. The theory of personality which he presents is the outcome of his unswerving conviction that, given the right psychological conditions, the individual will discover both how and why he hurts. This discovery will bring with it an understanding of what it means to be truly human and how best to tap and cherish the resources both in the self and in others which can lead to functioning at the highest level. Indeed, Rogers believed that he often witnessed in his clients a movement towards a new way of being and that this closely mirrored the behaviour of psychologically healthy persons who have been fortunate enough to live in contexts that have facilitated the emergence of self-concepts which allow them to be in touch for at least part of the time with their deepest experiences and feelings. Such people demonstrate, as Rogers saw it, what it means to exhibit mature behaviour, a concept he defined in 1959 as the capacity to perceive realistically, to accept responsibility for one's own behaviour, to evaluate experience in terms of the

evidence coming from one's own senses, to change the evaluation of experience only on the basis of new evidence, to accept others as unique individuals different from oneself, to prize oneself and to prize others (Rogers, 1959: 207). Rogers further developed this concept of maturity into his view of the fully functioning person, and although such a person may constitute an unattainable ideal Rogers gathered the material for such a vision of human functioning, not from a romanticized Utopia but, as always, from his experience as a therapist. As he himself wrote: 'These views ... have an empirical or experiential foundation. I have learned what the good life seems to be by observing and participating in the struggle of disturbed and troubled people to achieve that life' (Rogers, 1961: 184).

The first and most striking characteristic of the 'fully functioning person' as Rogers describes him or her is an increasing openness to experience. Such individuals are able to listen to themselves and to others and to allow themselves to experience what is happening without feeling threatened. Secondly, they have an ability to live fully in the present and to be attentive to each moment as it is lived. In this way they demonstrate a preparedness to trust experience rather than fearing it. As a consequence experience becomes the moulding force for the emerging personality rather than having to be twisted or contorted in some way in order to fit a preconceived structure of reality or a heavily defended self-concept. The third characteristic is the organismic trusting which is so notably lacking in those who have constantly fallen victim to the adverse judgement of others. Fully functioning persons regard their organismic experiences, what feels right, as the most valid sources of information for deciding what to do or how to react in any given situation. They are much less inclined to look outside themselves for authoritative guides to behaviour or to defer to others when making decisions. Such organismic trusting is likely to lead to a sense of personal freedom and to a capacity to accept responsibility for determining one's own actions and their consequences. In Rogers' view the mature person experiences himself or herself as having a high degree of autonomy and does not feel imprisoned by fate or circumstances or even by genetic inheritance. There is rather a sense of being a free agent and this often results in a capacity to adjust or adapt to changing conditions and to produce creative ideas or to initiate imaginative projects. Characteristically, fully functioning persons are not trapped in conventional or conformist roles and yet at the same time they relate to society in a way that permits them to be fully involved rather than ostracized because of their apparent eccentricity or anarchic radicalism.

Rogers' view of human development and his concept of the fully functioning person both evolved from clinical practice and it is clear that they belong to a developmental or process theory of human nature. Rogers, in line with many existential thinkers, came to believe that human beings in some measure possess the capacity and have the natural tendency to reorganize and reconstruct their self-concepts in order to make them more congruent with the totality of their experience. Indeed it is this capacity which makes it possible for an individual to move away from a state of psychological maladjustment or disturbance towards a state of psychological adjustment. In the fully elaborated theory of therapy and personality referred to earlier, Rogers defined in precise terms what he understood by these concepts. Psychological maladjustment exists when the organism denies to awareness, or distorts in awareness, significant experiences, which consequently are not accurately symbolized or organized into the gestalt of the self-structure, thus creating an incongruence between self and experience' (Rogers, 1959: 204). Psychological adjustment, on the other hand, exists 'when the concept of the self is such that all experiences are or may be assimilated on a symbolic level into the gestalt of the self-structure. Optimal psychological adjustment is thus synonymous with complete congruence of self and experience, or complete openness to experience' (Rogers, 1959: 206).

It is this movement from the state of maladjustment towards the state of adjustment which Rogers perceived occurring in his therapeutic relationships and he frequently refers to it with a sense of awe. It was the excitement of being involved in what increasingly seemed to him both a miraculous and a predictable process which compelled him to seek an understanding of what it was about the relationship that made such a process possible. The scientist in him needed to know: furthermore it was only through such knowledge that the practice of therapy could move from a largely intuitive undertaking to one of purposeful endeavour. The order of events is significant. Rogers began by trusting his own experience and that of his clients and discovered that such trust initiated and maintained a process whereby the client moved towards a more creative way of being. Only then did the scientific researcher set about discovering the characteristics of this process and determining its essential components. These discoveries were to have a profound influence upon therapy in general and constitute perhaps Rogers' greatest contribution to our understanding of therapeutic relationships.

The Core Conditions

After more research studies than had ever been undertaken previously in the field of psychotherapy, Rogers was able in the detailed statement of 1959 to present his conclusions about the ingredients of the psychologically facilitative climate which promotes therapeutic change. In the posthumous article which he co-authored with Ruth Sanford (Rogers and Sanford, 1989) he remains faithful to the original formulation. It is, in fact, remarkably concise and, as in so many other instances, has earned for Rogers the accusation of naivety and oversimplification.

The first element concerns the client and certainly has about it the ring of the obvious. The client, Rogers maintains, is experiencing at least some level of incongruence which makes him anxious. This apparently self-evident condition presents a crucial criterion for establishing the readiness of the client for therapy. It stresses the necessity of at least some awareness on the client's part of discomfort and of a discrepancy, however minimal, between experience and self-concept. The therapist, by contrast, is congruent in the relationship and experiences harmony between the picture he has of himself, the way he expresses himself and the way he views himself and external reality. Secondly, the therapist embodies and conveys an attitude towards the client which can be described as acceptant and prizing. Thirdly, the therapist achieves an empathic understanding of the client's internal and external reality as if through the client's eyes. Finally, Rogers draws attention to another apparently self-evident condition. He states that it is necessary for the client to perceive, to some minimal degree, the congruence, the acceptance and understanding of the therapist. In this brief analysis of the psychologically facilitative relationship Rogers, emboldened by practice and research, offers a view of the therapeutic relationship which remains today as radical and disturbing as it did forty years ago. The 'core conditions' of congruence, acceptance and empathy are simple to state, much more difficult to describe and infinitely challenging to practise.

Congruence

Rogers came to believe that congruence or genuineness is the most fundamental of the attitudinal conditions that promote therapeutic growth. Congruence means that the therapist is what he or she is in the relationship without façade and without any attempt to assume or hide behind a professional role. Such congruence, however, is dependent upon the therapist's capacity to maintain a high level of self-awareness. He or she wishes to be constantly in touch

with what is being felt at an experiential or visceral (a favourite Rogers word) level and to hold these feelings clearly present in awareness so that they are available for direct communication to the client when this is appropriate. In this sense the therapist is transparent to the client and is able to own, and express if necessary, the thoughts, feelings and attitudes which are currently flowing within him or her. Achieving this condition is no easy task for it requires of the therapist a continuing openness to inner experience even if what is experienced poses a threat to the therapist's self-concept. In effect the therapist is challenged to maintain his or her genuineness by accurately symbolizing and including in the self-concept even those feelings and thoughts which are initially unwelcome and alien. Negative thoughts, feelings and attitudes need particularly to be acknowledged by the therapist and to be held available for expression just as much as positive ones, which can in any case often be inferred from behaviour and tone. Such a stress on realness is strikingly at odds with many of the traditional ideas of the therapeutic relationship and is also liable to frequent misunderstanding. It certainly does not mean that the therapist offloads on to the client all his or her own feelings and concerns; nor does it imply that the therapist impulsively blurts out any passing attitude or intuitive insight. It does mean, however, that the therapist is always at pains to be in touch with his or her own flow of experiencing and does not deny to awareness those aspects of experience which are uncomfortable or disturbing. Congruence demands a willingness to express and to *be*, without inhibition, any persistent feelings that exist in the relationship. It requires at all times that the therapist resist the temptation to seek refuge behind the mask of professionalism, the role of the expert or the mystique of therapeutic process.

Acceptance

The basic need for positive regard which Rogers believed to be universal in human beings and to be pervasive and persistent, has been poorly or rarely met in many persons who present themselves for therapy. It therefore becomes crucially important, in order that the individual may feel acceptance of self, to receive positive regard from the therapist. Rogers' concept of acceptance of which the term 'unconditional positive regard' is an elaboration, implies a caring by the therapist which is totally uncontaminated by judgements or evaluations of the thoughts, feelings or behaviour of the client. The therapist does not accept some aspects of the client and reject others. He or she experiences (and this cannot be

simulated) an outgoing, positive, non-possessive warmth for the client. Such acceptance extends to the full range of the client's feelings and attitudes, from hostility and indifference to love and joy. Curiously enough it seems that for some therapists it is more difficult to accept unconditionally a client's positive feelings than his or her negative ones. In his final statement (Rogers and Sanford, 1989), Rogers comments on this strange fact by suggesting that the kind of caring that the person-centred therapist aspires to achieve is a 'gullible' caring. Clients are to be accepted as they say they are and the therapist is to avoid the lurking suspicion that they may be otherwise. Such an attitude, Rogers remarks, is not a sign of the therapist's stupidity but rather the attitude which engenders trust and thus leads to deeper self-exploration and to the correction of false statements. Acceptance of this order is not easily accomplished for it requires of therapists a capacity, from deep within themselves, to accept persons as they are and not as they would wish them to be. Defensive, aggressive, vulnerable and conflicted persons require the healing energy of unconditional positive regard if they are to discover within themselves the enormous potentialities for growth with which they lost contact perhaps in the earliest days of their existence.

Empathy

Rogers wrote extensively about empathy and often suggested that of the three 'core conditions' it is the most trainable. His overriding concern with the client's subjective perceptual world made it imperative that the therapist could achieve as full an understanding as possible of the way in which clients view themselves and the world, for only through such understanding could he or she hope to facilitate the subtle changes in self-concept which make for positive development. Such an understanding involves on the therapist's part a willingness and an ability to enter the private perceptual world of the client without fear and to become thoroughly conversant with it. Rogers wrote of empathy:

It involves being sensitive, moment to moment, to the changing felt meanings which flow in this other person, to the fear or rage or tenderness or confusion or whatever, that he/she is experiencing. It means temporarily living in his/her life, moving about in it delicately without making judgements, sensing meaning of which he/she is scarcely aware, but not trying to uncover feelings of which the person is totally unaware, since this would be too threatening. It includes communicating your sensings of his/her world as you look with fresh and unfrightened eyes at elements of which the individual is fearful. It means frequently checking with him/her as to the accuracy of your sensings,

and being guided by the responses you receive. You are a confident companion to the person in his/her inner world. (Rogers, 1980: 142)

No therapist can be the 'confident companion' of which Rogers speaks in this moving passage unless he or she is secure enough in his or her own identity to enter the other's world without fear of getting lost in what may turn out to be bizarre or even frightening terrain. There is always what Rogers described as an 'as if' quality about empathy. The therapist enters the client's perceptual world 'as if' it is his or her own but without ever losing the capacity to return to his or her own moorings.

In 1986, shortly before his death, Rogers returned again to the subject of empathy. In an article comparing his use of empathy with that of the psychoanalyst, Heinz Kohut, he expressed his abhorrence of Kohut's apparently cold and impersonal use of empathy as a means of 'collecting information' about the patient's inner life. In contrast he reaffirmed in the strongest possible terms his own conviction that empathy is in itself a powerful healing agent. 'It is one of the most potent aspects of therapy', he wrote, 'because it releases, it confirms, it brings even the most frightened client into the human race. If a person can be understood, he or she belongs' (Rogers, 1986c: 129). It is difficult to imagine a more powerful statement of belief nor is it surprising that Rogers should often lament that so trainable a quality is totally neglected in the professional preparation of many therapists.

A Further 'Characteristic'

It was Rogers' contention – and he held firm to it for over forty years – that if the therapist proves able to offer a facilitative climate where congruence, acceptance and empathy are all present and the client perceives this to be so at some minimal level, then therapeutic movement will occur. For him, the three conditions were not only necessary for effective therapy but also sufficient. In such a climate, he argued, clients will gradually get in touch with their own resources for self-understanding and will prove capable of changing their self-concepts and taking over the direction of their lives. In the posthumous article referred to earlier (Rogers and Sanford, 1989), there is no deviation from this view of the necessary and sufficient conditions for therapeutic movement but, interestingly, the article contains no reference to an earlier article published two years before in which Rogers breaks new ground.

This article, referred to at the end of Chapter 1, acknowledges the existence of a mystical, spiritual dimension (Rogers, 1986b). In

the context of this dimension Rogers speaks tentatively of 'one more characteristic' and he does so immediately following a rapid review of the familiar core conditions. There can be no doubt that he viewed this 'characteristic' as in some way of comparable significance to the qualities of congruence, acceptance and empathy. The passage deserves to be quoted in full:

When I am at my best, as a group facilitator or a therapist, I discover another characteristic. I find that when I am closest to my inner, intuitive self, when I am somehow in touch with the unknown in me, when perhaps I am in a slightly altered state of consciousness in the relationship, then whatever I do seems to be full of healing. Then simply my *presence* is releasing and helpful. There is nothing I can do to force this experience, but when I can relax and be close to the transcendental core of me, then I may behave in strange and impulsive ways in the relationship, ways which I cannot justify rationally, which have nothing to do with my thought processes. But these strange behaviours turn out to be *right*, in some odd way. At those moments it seems that my inner spirit has reached out and touched the inner spirit of the other. Our relationship transcends itself and becomes a part of something larger. Profound growth and healing and energy are present. (Rogers 1986b: 198)

This is a statement which probably did not flow easily from Rogers' pen. In it he speaks of areas of reality to which only a few years previously he would have given little credence. It is perhaps understandable that he refrained from developing further a concept which he was unable to study empirically in the months before his death. I am persuaded, however, that had he lived, we might well have heard much more of the quality of 'presence' of which he speaks in this passage and that both the theory and practice of person-centred therapy might have undergone important revision as a consequence.

The Therapeutic Process

The presence of the core conditions sets in train a directional process which Rogers came to view as predictable and inevitable even if it does not always proceed at the same pace or cover the same psychological distance. Clients, after all, are the judges of the goals or objectives they wish to attain in their process development and not all will choose to cover the same terrain. For one it may be sufficient to be relieved of intolerable psychological pain while for another the eventual goal may be a level of functioning that far outstrips the original modest expectations which were present at the outset of therapy. Typically, however, when therapy goes well

clients will move from a position where their self-concept, usually poor at the entry into therapy and finding expression in behaviour which tends to reinforce the negative evaluation of self, will shift to a position where it more closely approaches the essential worth of the total organism. As the self-concept moves towards a more positive view so, too, clients' behaviour begins to reflect the improvement and to enhance further their perception of themselves.

Rogers was so confident of the potency of the core conditions that he often spoke in 'if ... then' terms. If the conditions exist, then the process follows. On several occasions he listed examples that typified the stages of the process as he frequently witnessed it in his own clients. His final exposition provides such a list and spells out the changes which are largely implicit in the process. Of critical significance is the client's increasing capacity to be congruent, for it is this change which makes it possible for him or her to be more open to experience and to take in more data more accurately (Rogers and Sanford, 1989: 1493). Congruence, too, leads to the locus of choice being progressively situated within so that the client becomes more confident, self-directing and self-empowered. Perhaps most significantly of all, values are determined by an organismic valuing process that can truly discriminate between positive and negative experiences, those which enhance the organism and those which do it harm. It is experiencing itself which comes to be regarded as a positive, constructive and useful guide even if that experiencing is painful or frustrating. Small wonder that such a trust in experiencing leads to a person who is mature, self-controlled and capable of relating effectively and intimately to others.

Conclusion

Rogers, as we saw earlier, arrived at theoretical formulations only after repeated experience and research studies had persuaded him that they had validity. It is striking that in nearly every instance the theories that emerged are concerned with the monitoring and clarification of processes. Rogers' overriding insistence on the primary importance of being open to experience meant that the kinds of question he pursued were of the 'what' and 'how' rather than the 'why' variety. He was concerned to discover the nature of inner experience and to track wherever possible what was happening within and between persons. What was being felt and how an interaction was being experienced were infinitely more important

to him than why such processes might be occurring. Concepts such as the actualizing tendency and self-actualization are merely attempts to offer explanations for the subjective processes which Rogers and his colleagues found themselves repeatedly experiencing when they were able to trust themselves and their clients to meet without preconceived notions about human nature and human development.

In the detailed theoretical exposition of 1959 Rogers emphasizes his belief in the fundamental predominance of the subjective. At one point he even goes so far as to state that although there may exist such a thing as objective truth we can, in fact, never know it. 'There is no such thing as Scientific Knowledge', he says, 'there are only individual perceptions of what appears to each person to be such knowledge' (Rogers, 1959: 192).

Such a cautious approach to the formulation of theory with its deep commitment to the valuing and understanding of subjective experience has many implications. Essentially Rogers was concerned to be as open as possible to his own and his client's experience within the process of the therapeutic relationship. This involved the greatest commitment to understanding the client's inner world from the client's point of view and not from his own. The basic data of therapy could thus be described as the subjective worlds of therapist and client as experienced by each within his or her own framework and the interaction of the two. The theory of psychotherapy and personality change which was eventually constructed arose from the experienced data of the encounter between two subjective worlds in the context of a basically vulnerable or anxious client seeking help from a basically integrated therapist. These experienced data Rogers described as the phenomena of therapy and his theory was an attempt to give order and clarification to the phenomena. The theory seeks to describe what happens and how it happens. The hypotheses which follow from this about the nature of human personality and the dynamics of human behaviour are a further attempt to make sense of the experienced data. They are tentative answers to the 'why' questions. In brief, Rogers' theory about the nature of the therapeutic relationship and the process of personality change within it lead to hypotheses about the nature of human personality and human behaviour. He does not state at the outset that human beings are by definition forward-moving creatures whose total organism manifests an actualizing tendency. Instead he makes the more modest claim that what is discovered by therapist and client in a helping relationship when both give value to subjective experience and perception strongly supports the hypothesis that the human organism shares

the same actualizing tendency as is observable in other parts of the natural order. He further hypothesizes that such a tendency is frequently obscured precisely because subjective experience is not valued and cherished in the way that therapeutic relationships at their best can make possible but is instead subjected to criticism and adverse judgements which lead to conditions of worth and a self-actualizing process at odds with the actualizing tendency of the total organism. The crucial issue is that the starting point is experience, by which Rogers came to mean 'all that is going on within the envelope of the organism at any given moment which is potentially available to awareness' (Rogers, 1959: 197).

Rogers on more than one occasion expressed profound regret at what he considered the scurvy treatment that Freud received from his more slavish followers. From his own reading of Freud's work he concluded that Freud was constantly open to new perceptions and experiences and saw his theories as creative but temporary constructs and never more than that. Freud's insecure disciples, however, seized upon the theories and rapidly converted them into dogma of alarming rigidity. For Rogers this not only did Freud a gross disservice, it also underlined the immense danger of any theory that makes it more difficult to be open to new experiences or, indeed, to perceive familiar experiences in new ways. Rogers believed that only one statement could be accurately applied to all theories: that at the time of its formulation every theory enshrines an unknown quantity of error and false inference. Like all truly great men Rogers was essentially humble before the mystery of experience, and in a memorable phrase hoped that he would not suffer the fate of Freud whose 'gossamer threads' of theory had been transformed by his followers into the 'woven chains of dogma' (Rogers, 1959: 191).

Rogers' Major Practical Contributions

In his editorial commentary to the special issue of the *Person-Centered Review* celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of client-centred therapy, David Cain commented: 'Rogers' impact ... on the fields of psychology, psychotherapy, education and human relations in general can be variously described as momentous, persuasive, indirect or elusive' (Cain, 1990: 357). It is true that many of Rogers' theoretical concepts have been absorbed into everyday psychological parlance without any acknowledgement of their origin (for example self-concept, positive regard) and much that was revolutionary in the early years of client-centred therapy is now apparently taken for granted by practitioners of many different therapeutic schools. It is this almost covert influence which leads some therapists to believe that person-centred therapy is what everyone does at the outset of a therapeutic relationship before embarking on the *real* therapy which, of course, bears an entirely different brand label.

Such a monumental misconception angered Rogers considerably for it provided tiresome evidence that there were many during his lifetime who saw his approach to therapy as consisting merely of certain relationship techniques rather than as a functional philosophy based upon radical convictions about the nature of the human being and of human development. On the other hand, there is a positive side to this widespread and somewhat perverse misunderstanding, for counselling and psychotherapy owe to Carl Rogers the almost universal acceptance of the cardinal importance of the therapeutic relationship as a primary healing agent in therapy. Yet the 'techniques' which are often cited as 'Rogerian' turn out to be nothing less than the art of listening and understanding. Incredible as it may seem, before Rogers and his colleagues embarked on their pioneering work, it was by no means common for therapists to relate closely to their clients let alone for them to listen attentively to what the client had to say and to attempt to understand his or her inner world. Such therapist behaviour was often seen as irrelevant to the diagnosis of mental

disturbance and its treatment. Furthermore the inference was that, as sick persons, patients needed to have things done to them even if what was 'done' was the persuasive use of advice or interpretation through the imposition of words. It was Rogers who first used the word 'client' and thereby conferred on the person in need both respect and a rightful share of power.

Relating, Listening, Understanding

The establishing of the 'core conditions' as necessary and sufficient for therapeutic movement had major practical implications for Rogers and his colleagues. It would be incorrect, however, to relate this to the evolution of *techniques* in client-centred therapy. The word 'technique' suggests an almost mechanical mode of behaviour, something the trainee therapist learns to do as a kind of automatic response to the client. But the core conditions become established not because of what the therapist does but as a result of the attitudes the therapist holds towards his or her client. In short, the therapist is concerned not with the perfecting of techniques but with the expression of attitudes within a given relationship.

Rogers believed that a human being deserves the deepest respect for what he or she *is* no matter how worthless or inadequate he or she may *feel* or how aberrant his or her behaviour. He also believed that it was the therapist's task to seek to understand as accurately as possible the client's inner world and to be without façade or guile or the comfort of the protective cloak of professional authority. This set of beliefs and attitudes determines the client-centred therapist's way of being with clients, but the actual mode of expression of such beliefs and attitudes will vary considerably from therapist to therapist and will mirror the range of personality differences and variations to be found in any practitioner group. In short, client-centred therapists may differ widely in therapeutic style despite the fact that they all subscribe to the same beliefs about human beings and the desirable characteristics of a therapeutic relationship.

The model of relating which client-centred therapy offers has become in the last twenty years a challenging reference point for therapists of almost all traditions. Some may wish to imitate it – even if only during the beginning stages of therapy through the application of responsive 'techniques' – others may wish to embrace certain aspects of it while rejecting others: some again may wish to reject it completely. Whatever the response, the relationship characterized by the core conditions serves as an inspiration, a dangerous heresy or irritant for therapists of different traditions throughout the world.

While it is true that the concept of congruence, with its emphasis on therapist genuineness and the relinquishing of professional power, has received a cool reception in most other therapeutic quarters, the converse is probably true of both empathy and unconditional positive regard in so far as these two attitudes often seem acceptable, at least in a modified form. Most therapists nowadays like to believe that they are acceptant of their clients and essentially non-judgemental and most pay at least lip-service to the desirability of empathic understanding. Indeed, it is not unusual for therapists schooled in other traditions to discover that responses springing from their acceptance and empathy are powerfully efficacious in bringing about change and for this, in turn, to herald a 'conversion' to a more thoroughgoing person-centred point of view. As a trainer of person-centred therapists I am struck, for example, by the number of would-be trainees who have become disenchanted with other therapeutic traditions and for whom the discovery of the power of acceptance or empathy or both has been the spur to seeking a new professional identity.

Demystifying Therapy

In some ways Rogers' commitment to the relationship as the principal healing agent in therapy is the logical outcome of his belief that to become fully human is a glorious undertaking and that therapists have much to lose by concealing their humanity behind a superior façade of psychological knowledge and expertise. From an early stage of his professional career he determined to rescue psychotherapy from those who, for their own reasons, wished to wrap it in mystery and to make it a domain where only those possessing the most prestigious qualifications in medicine, psychiatry or psychology could hope to practise. Rogers believed that therapy was such an important activity that it required opening up to the closest scrutiny and that far from trading on secrecy and mystification it should be revealed in all its observable dimensions. Only in this way, Rogers believed, could therapeutic relationships be subjected to the kind of evaluation which might lead to a fuller understanding of processes and hence to more effective work. Rogers, the person, and Rogers, the scientist, were united in the task of demystifying therapeutic relationships so that they could be studied and experienced as vibrant interactions between real human beings rather than as private, hermetic and essentially mysterious treatment processes between distressed patients and omniscient professionals.

Recording and Filming

One major outcome of this way of thinking was Rogers' pioneering work with the phonographic recording of therapeutic sessions and of whole therapeutic processes. Today, when audio-recording and videotaping have become commonplace, it is difficult to imagine a time when the notion of recording therapeutic interactions verbatim was seen as revolutionary. For many, such procedures constituted a trespassing into the holy of holies and when, later, Rogers allowed himself to be filmed with clients this was an even more threatening innovation for those therapists who preferred to draw a veil of complete secrecy over their therapeutic interactions often in defence of absolute confidentiality irrespective of a client's wishes.

When Rogers began recording interviews in the early 1940s the technical difficulties were formidable. Two phonographs were required so that when one record was being turned over or removed then the other machine could immediately begin recording so that not a single word of the interview was missed. By 1942 Rogers could write that he already had nearly a hundred interviews on record with accompanying typescripts of the therapeutic sessions involved. Then, as now, such recordings proved invaluable in many different ways. They gave a vivid immediate picture of client attitudes and powerfully illustrated such topics as client resistance and changes in self-perception. They were also effective in highlighting the facilitative responses of therapists and in identifying the inhibiting behaviours which tended to halt or impede the therapeutic process. Their value in the training of therapists proved inestimable and the process of supervision was enhanced beyond measure. It is no exaggeration to suggest that Rogers' introduction of recording technology into the counselling room not only engendered whole new areas for research and training methodology but also paved the way for the opening up of therapeutic processes to public scrutiny to the immense benefit of many clients and would-be clients. The not infrequent opportunities which millions of people have nowadays to observe therapy sessions on the television screen are a direct outcome of Rogers' innovative procedures of fifty years ago.

A further benefit of recordings is the preservation for posterity of many examples of Carl Rogers himself working with clients. The significance of this cannot be overemphasized, for there must be literally thousands of therapists working today, not only in the person-centred tradition, who have had the experience of listening to Rogers in dialogue with individual clients or of seeing him on the cinema or video screen. Rogers was courageous enough to put

himself 'on the line' in this way and the result of such courage and the power of the influence he exerted as a result are incalculable.

Most significantly, the existence of recordings and films means that the concepts of congruence, unconditional positive regard and empathy do not remain theoretical constructs, admirable only for their intellectual elegance and succinctness. On repeated occasions Rogers embodied the concepts on the tapes and films, which provide countless examples of what it means to be living out the person-centered approach as a functional philosophy. The experience of listening to or watching Carl Rogers being empathic, congruent and unconditionally accepting is unforgettable and it could be argued that the tapes and films he made which have been distributed to all corners of the globe have constituted one of the major contributions to the understanding and development of counselling psychology in the last thirty years.

Rogers and His Famous Clients

Herbert Bryan

It has been suggested (Kirschenbaum and Henderson, 1990a: 61) that no single volume did more to influence the practice of counselling and psychotherapy in the United States than Rogers' *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, published in 1942. Be this as it may, the outstanding feature of the book was the inclusion of the first recorded, fully transcribed and published psychotherapy case in history. Herbert Bryan is the first of Rogers' clients to be made famous throughout the world by their appearance in his books, on audio-recordings or on film. Unlike clients drawn from the case books of other well-known therapists, Herbert Bryan is not presented through the eyes of his therapist. He appears in his own words so that the reader can engage with him directly: Rogers, too, appears not through the filter of recollection but through the words and responses of the moment-to-moment relationship with his client. Nothing is hidden and Rogers in his commentary on their dialogue is utterly non-defensive about his own performance. He openly speaks of blunders, and two such instances taken from the first session with Herbert Bryan are particularly revealing. In both cases, Rogers chastises himself for interrupting his client's flow or recognition of feeling, something he does on each occasion by posing direct questions. He comments on his first intervention, which actually interrupted Mr Bryan when he was in full flow: 'Why did the counselor interrupt here? This seems to be a quite unnecessary directive question breaking into the flow of feeling.'

The second occasion shows Rogers as even more self-critical. Mr Bryan is exploring issues of motivation and energy and is wishing that his negative forces were not so much in the ascendancy. He is wondering how he can possibly change the 'balance of power' within himself. He says:

Well, to draw another analogy, I feel that I have so much energy, so much reservoir of energy – now, what I want to do is to get the negatives to desert to the positive side. Which will be a double-barrelled gain, you see, and will probably occur very rapidly once the ball gets rolling. But when the negatives are in power, why, of course, how can the ball begin to roll?

Rogers' response follows immediately: 'Can you, uh – not today, but one question that you may want to be thinking over is, what are these negative roles?'

In his commentary Rogers refers to his response as 'the second blunder of the hour'. The reason for this critical judgement is the same as before: 'the counselor departs from sound recognition of feeling'. Instead of some such response as 'you feel that someone else must start the ball rolling', he asks a direct question which goes deep into the client's situation. If Mr Bryan were fully aware of why his 'negative' side was in power, he would have little need of help. The counselor draws nothing but a 'confused and somewhat defensive answer'.

Rogers' concern to underline the inappropriateness of these two responses springs from the central importance he placed on accompanying rather than leading the client and on the empathic responsiveness which is required if the client is to be enabled to stay in touch with and to explore his or her feelings. Time and again in his recorded interviews Rogers demonstrates what is involved if the client's inner world is to be deeply understood by the therapist. Recognizing feelings and allowing them free expression is crucial to the empathic enterprise and certain therapist responses facilitate such a process whereas others impede it. Directive questions are seldom helpful whereas other modes of response encourage the process and enable the client to be more in touch with his experiencing. In another part of the interview, Mr Bryan is trying to describe a complex and elusive sensation.

H.B.: Well, I don't know if I can any more accurately describe the sensation. It's just a – a very impressive and painful weight as if an axe were pressing on the whole abdomen, pressing down, I can almost – I can almost sense the position and I feel that's oppressing me very radically, that is, that it goes

right down to the roots of my dynamic energy, so that no matter in what field I essay any sort of effort, I find the blocking.

C.R.: It really just cripples you as far as anything else is concerned.

H.B.: Yes, Mmmhm. And that even has a physical counterpart. When I walk, that is, when I'm feeling badly, I walk hunched over and sort of like I had a bellyache, which I actually do have, psychologically.

C.R.: Mmmhm. It just makes you more or less half a man, is that it? And only half able to do your work –

H.B.: Yes. It's just as if I had an axe in me literally, you might say. I feel it in my very core of energy – it's blocked and oppressed in that painful way. It's a deep-seated thing, because conversely when I get the release I feel a deep-seated flowing of energy.

C.R.: When you feel all right – you feel very much all right.

H.B.: Oh, yes, yes. Very dynamic – my mind works much more rapidly and everything's all right. Anything I try, I do successfully.

C.R.: And what you want is to find ways of increasing the amount of time that you have that dynamic self, is that it?

H.B.: Oh, yes. Be that way all the time. I don't see any reason why I couldn't be. The whole thing is psychological and I want to get at it. (Rogers, 1942: 265–87)

In this sequence Rogers, with apparently effortless ease, is doing precisely what he criticizes himself for *not* doing on the other two occasions. He is recognizing feeling in Mr Bryan and allowing the feeling to be deepened and differentiated. He shows himself as the sensitive companion and not as the somewhat authoritative interrogator. In such a climate Mr Bryan is released into showing something of the 'dynamic self' which he would like to be all the time. This brief example of empathic responsiveness can be replicated on innumerable occasions from recorded interviews that Rogers made and there was a period when empathy came almost to be defined as the capacity to reflect feelings. Indeed, in a letter to Rogers, John Shlien of Harvard could write in 1986: 'It [reflection of feeling] is an instrument of artistic virtuosity in the hands of a sincere, intelligent, empathic listener. It made possible the development of client-centred therapy, when the philosophy alone could not have.'

Significantly, Rogers himself was much less happy with the term 'reflection of feeling' and it was his very unhappiness which prompted Shlien to offer his spirited defence of the concept. Rogers remained unconvinced, but Shlien's enthusiasm brought him to what he termed a 'double insight'. In the *Person-Centered Review* of November 1986 he wrote:

From my point of view as a therapist, I am *not* trying to 'reflect feelings'. I am trying to determine whether my understanding of the client's inner world is correct – whether I am seeing it as he or she is experiencing it at this moment. Each response of mine contains the unspoken question, 'Is this the way it is in you? Am I catching just the colour and texture and flavor of the personal meaning you are experiencing right now? If not, I wish to bring my perception in line with yours.' On the other hand, I know from the client's point of view we are holding up a mirror to his or her current experiencing. The feelings and personal meanings seem sharper when seen through the eyes of another, when they are reflected.

So I suggest that these therapist responses be labeled not 'Reflections of feeling', but 'Testing Understandings', or 'Checking Perceptions'. Such terms would, I believe, be more accurate. They would be helpful in the training of therapists. They would supply a sound motivation in responding, a questioning desire rather than an intent to 'reflect'. (Rogers, 1986d: 375–7)

Whether we term therapist responses of this kind 'Reflections of Feeling' or 'Testing Understandings' is immaterial. Their significance lies in the fact that they typify what it meant for Rogers to translate the notion of empathy into therapeutic practice. They demonstrate the sensitive artistry of a therapist who realized that the inner world of another cannot be grasped without, on the therapist's part, both the questioning desire and the capacity to facilitate the flow and expression of feeling. In the relationship with Herbert Bryan, as in so many others recorded later, Rogers shows what is involved in entering the perceptual world of another person and acknowledges that the task can easily be undermined by the therapist's impatience or inability to resist the urge to lead or direct.

It is interesting that in the discussion quoted above Rogers draws attention to the usefulness of a term such as 'Testing Understandings' as far as the training of therapists is concerned. Rogers was in many ways an incurable educator; he hoped to influence therapeutic practice through his recordings and films and realized that such material could serve an important function in training programmes. His disillusionment with much therapist training was well known and he was particularly horrified by the

often total lack of emphasis on the development of a trainee's empathic abilities. It is difficult to imagine, however, that anyone could hear Rogers in action or read a transcript of a therapy session in which he was involved without becoming deeply aware of the powerful efficacy of empathic responsiveness. Rogers also showed that empathy demands of the therapist a willingness to marshal the full range of emotional and cognitive abilities both to understand the client and to convey that understanding. Rogers' recordings provide compelling evidence of empathy in operation and, as such, their influence on the therapeutic practice of others is incalculable.

Gloria

In 1964 Rogers was filmed in a half-hour interview with Gloria, an attractive thirty-year-old divorcee. It was an astonishing encounter, for in this brief space of time, Rogers succeeded in exemplifying almost all the key elements of client-centred therapy. The power of the interview is reflected by the fact that Gloria continued to maintain intermittent contact with Rogers until her death many years later. She rates as one of the most renowned clients in the history of psychotherapy and her contribution to the understanding and practice of client-centred therapy throughout the world is considerable. Her state of readiness for therapy was such that Rogers was able in the space of a mere half-hour not only to establish the climate for growth characterized by the presence of the core conditions but also to accompany Gloria to the point where she experienced her own feelings in the moment and entered deeply into a person-to-person relationship. The Gloria film contributes a major and incontrovertible piece of evidence for the effectiveness of client-centred therapy; it is also an astonishing demonstration of what in practical and experiential terms it means to be acceptant, empathic and congruent in a therapeutic relationship.

There is, of course, no substitute for the actual experience of watching the film of Rogers at work with Gloria. In almost all ways film is an ideal medium for conveying the elusive nature of the implementation of attitudes. Clearly, too, Rogers demonstrates what it means for *him* to be acceptant, empathic and congruent and the film provides, in this respect, a record of one man's particular style of being in a therapeutic relationship. Nonetheless, there is a universal validity about the interaction for it presents with memorable poignancy what it means to participate in the creation of a 'climate for growth'. In addition, Gloria's concerns are such that she serves as a powerful example of the anguish that arises when

the essential actualizing tendency of the organism finds itself in conflict with the need to actualize the self and to preserve a self-concept worthy of respect and approval.

The depth of this anguish is revealed in the opening minutes of the interview, when Gloria tells Rogers of her acute difficulties in adjusting to a single life. Her natural striving to meet her needs through sexual expression is in direct conflict with her concept of herself as a person with 'proper' sexual behaviour who never lies. The conflict reaches its climax as she finds herself lying to her nine-year-old daughter about her sexual behaviour because she does not wish the child to be adversely affected by her permissive lifestyle.

The guilt feelings in Gloria are uppermost at the outset, and throughout the interview she struggles to come to terms with the person she is and to achieve the kind of self-acceptance which will enable her to be honest with herself and with her daughter. At first she externalizes the problem by focusing on the potential effect of her behaviour on her daughter and asking Rogers for his guidance. As the interview proceeds, however, she finds the courage to face her own incongruence (the bifurcation of the actualizing tendency), to live her feelings in the moment and to recognize that her basis for evaluation must be inside herself. The process moves with astonishing rapidity and is characterized by a deepening intensity of feeling and by an openness to each other of therapist and client which often moves audiences watching the film to the verge of tears.

Throughout the interview Rogers repeatedly shows the empathic responsiveness which informs all his therapeutic work, but in some ways the film conveys with even greater effectiveness the quality of his acceptance and the utter genuineness of his presence. For Gloria, who is tormented by guilt feelings and who vainly seeks an authority outside herself, Rogers' acceptance and complete lack of 'professional' façade are critically important. His warm and sensitive accompanying of her feelings, the total absence of negative judgement and his willingness to reveal himself as a person enable her to find the courage to explore her inner world ever more deeply and to discover her own 'locus of evaluation'. Two extracts from the interview serve to illuminate the intensity of Rogers' 'companionship' of the client with particular force. The first is taken from the opening minutes of the interview, the second from near the end.

With the focus very much on the relationship with her daughter, Pammy, Gloria is struggling with how her daughter would react if she really knew the truth about her mother's sexual behaviour. Rogers gently sums up her dilemma:

Rogers: ... If she really knew you, would she, could she accept you?

Gloria: This is what I don't know, I don't want her to turn away from me. I don't even know how I feel about it because there are times when I feel so guilty like when I have a man over, I even try to make a special set-up so that if I were ever alone with him, the children would never catch me in that sort of thing. Because I'm real leery about it. Any yet I also know that I have these desires.

Rogers: And so it is quite clear that it isn't only her problem or the relationship with her, it's in you as well.

Gloria: In my guilt. I feel guilty so often.

Rogers: 'What can I accept myself as doing?' And you realize that with these sort of subterfuges, so as to make sure that you're not caught or something, you realize that you are acting from guilt, is that it?

Gloria: Yes, and I don't like the ... I would like to feel comfortable with whatever I do. If I choose not to tell Pammy the truth, to feel comfortable that she can handle it, and I don't. I want to be honest, and yet I feel there are some areas that I don't even accept.

Rogers: And if you can't accept them in yourself, how could you possibly be comfortable in telling them to her?

Gloria: Right.

Rogers: And yet, as you say, you do have these desires and you do have your feelings, but you don't feel good about them.

Gloria: Right. I have a feeling that you are just going to sit there and let me stew in it and I want more. I want you to help me get rid of my guilt feelings. If I can get rid of my guilt feelings about lying or going to bed with a single man, any of that, just so I can feel more comfortable.

Rogers: And I guess I'd like to say, 'No, I don't want to let you stew in your feelings', but on the other hand, I also feel that this is the kind of very private thing that I couldn't possibly answer *for* you. But I sure as anything will try to help you work toward your own answer. I don't know know whether that makes any sense to you, but I mean it. (Shostrom, 1965)

In this passage Rogers enables Gloria to face the conflict in herself and shares in her pain. He does not ignore her direct request for help but, as he expresses concern and understanding of her

dilemma, he affirms his belief in her ability to discover her own way forward and promises to help her find the answers within herself. His deep desire to be with her radiates from his whole being and there is no recourse to professional language or to clever analysis. 'I sure as anything will try to help you work toward your own answer' is a passionate statement of intent from a man who believes equally passionately in his client's capacity to find her own way through life.

Towards the end of the interview Gloria is speaking of 'utopian' moments when she feels 'right' about herself and is able to trust the feelings that rise up in her as accurate guides to behaviour. Rogers is clearly moved by her recognition of organismic harmony:

Rogers: I sense that in those utopian moments you really feel kind of whole. You feel all in one piece...

Gloria: Yes, it gives me a choked up feeling when you say that because I don't get that as often as I'd like. I like that whole feeling. That's real precious to me.

Rogers: I expect none of us get it as often as we'd like, but I really do understand it. [*pause. Tears come to her eyes.*] That really does touch you doesn't it?

Gloria: Yes, and you know what else I was just thinking? I – a dumb thing – that all of a sudden while I was talking to you I thought, 'Gee, how nice I can talk to you and I want you to approve of me and I respect you, but I miss that my father couldn't talk to me like you are.' I mean, I'd like to say, 'Gee, I'd like you for my father'. I don't even know why that came to me.

Rogers: You look to me like a pretty nice daughter. But you really do miss the fact that you couldn't be open with your own dad. (Shostrom, 1965)

This passage has achieved a certain notoriety and much nonsense has been talked about Rogers' inability to 'work with the transference'. The very mention of such a concept shows a failure to recognize entirely what has happened in the relationship. So deep is the trust that Gloria has developed in her therapist that she is able to move into an intensity of feeling which reveals Rogers to her as the father she never had. Rogers, for his part, does not attempt to evade or reject the intensity. On the contrary, he reciprocates by attending closely to the feeling inside himself: 'You look to me like a pretty nice daughter.' This response further cements the relationship and in the closing minutes of the interview Gloria is able to reflect upon her feelings for her father and upon her deep

sadness at his inability to offer her the love and understanding she craves. Gently, Rogers acknowledges the depth of her hurt:

Rogers: You feel that 'I am permanently cheated'.

Gloria: This is why I like substitutes. Like I like talking to you and I like men that I can respect. Doctors, and I keep sort of underneath a feeling like we are real close, you know, sort of like a substitute father.

Rogers: I don't feel that's pretending.

Gloria: Well, you are not really my father.

Rogers: No, I meant about the real close business.

Gloria: Well, see, I sort of feel that's pretending, too, because I can't expect you to feel very close to me. You don't know me that well.

Rogers: All I know is what I'm feeling, and that is I feel close to you in this moment. (Shostrom, 1965).

This closing passage shows Rogers at his most transparent and illustrates his refusal to be anything other than himself in the moment. Clearly he could have acknowledged the obvious truth of Gloria's comment that he is not her father and that they are both acquaintances of half an hour. Instead, despite the fact that the interview is at an end, he affirms the closeness and the affection which he feels for Gloria. He offers her the truth of his own experiencing and in that moment he eschews all 'professionalism' in the interests of the authenticity which is, for him, the cornerstone of the person-centred therapist's true professionalism founded not on psychological expertise but on the capacity to be fully human.

Jan

More than twenty years after the film with Gloria, Rogers gave a demonstration therapy session to a workshop of 600 participants in Johannesburg, South Africa. Several people had volunteered and it was left to Rogers' colleague, Ruth Sanford, to select a client. Jan was chosen and the session was recorded. Subsequently Rogers himself decided to reflect on the interview and to write about it (Rogers, 1986b). In many ways Gloria and Jan might well have been clients seen on the same day in 1964, for little seems to have changed in Rogers' operational functioning as a therapist. Indeed Jerold Bozarth has argued that throughout his career Rogers neither altered his fundamental view of therapy nor changed his way of being in a therapeutic relationship (Bozarth, 1990: 61). Through careful analysis of various demonstration recordings made over

the years Bozarth concludes that Rogers' interviews with clients were predominantly dedicated to the unspoken question, 'Is this the way it is in you?' In other words, his therapeutic relationships were characterized primarily by what we have called 'empathic responsiveness'.

In one important respect, however, the interview with Jan differs significantly from its predecessors and it is tempting to believe that Rogers' decision to write about it may well have been prompted by this new element. Some way into the interview Jan comments on the amateur dramatics in which she used to be involved:

Jan: This may be related, and it may be able to help you: whether it's something to do with the amateur dramatics that I used to be involved with, I don't know, but I love playing the naughty little girl. And whenever I want to get away with something or I want something, I would play that naughty little girl.

Rogers: That's a part that you know very well. [*Jan laughs.*] You've acted it in many plays. [*Jan: And it works*] It works – the naughty little girl can get away with things ...

A few minutes later Jan begins to experience a great sense of hopelessness and expresses her yearning for a helping relationship with another person and her conviction that help must come from outside.

Rogers: ...you wish so much that there was this other person from outside, who would give you confidence, who could help you through this tough time.

Jan: Yes, because although I do pray – I have my own feelings about religion – I believe in spiritual development. And maybe for me this is a karmic conditioning, I don't know. That's another thing, of course, that's going on in my mind: it's a part of my development, as it were. But I feel it's not enough; I must have physical contact. [*Pause*]. Somebody I can relate to ...

Rogers: Somebody you can relate to. And I guess that – this may seem like a silly idea, but – I wish that one of those friends could be that naughty little girl. I don't know whether that makes any sense to you or not, but if that kind of sprightly, naughty little girl that lives inside could accompany you from the light into the dark – as I say, that may not make any sense to you at all.

Jan: [In a puzzled voice.] Can you elaborate on that a little more for me?

Rogers: Simply that maybe one of your best friends is the you that you hide inside, the fearful little girl, the naughty little girl, the real you that doesn't come out very much in the open.

Jan: [Pause] And I must admit – what you have just said, and looking at it in retrospect – I've lost a lot of that naughty little girl. In fact, over the last eighteen months, that naughty little girl has disappeared.

Rogers, in his commentary on this passage, is highly excited because for the first time he has captured on a recording what he calls an 'intuitive' response. Such responses, he believes, arise out of a slightly altered state of consciousness when he is 'indwelling in the client's world, completely in tune with that world'. His introduction of the 'naughty little girl' is not a conscious affair but is a response that arises in him from his 'nonconscious sensing of the world of the other'.

It is evident that the intuitive response which Rogers values so highly is the outcome of the quality of 'presence' of which he wrote briefly towards the end of his life and to which he attributed 'transcendental' and 'spiritual' dimensions. It is also significant that he finds himself offering the intuitive, nonconscious response immediately following Jan's own reference to her practice of prayer and her belief in spiritual development. The suspicion that it was this one passage which persuaded Rogers to offer his work with Jan to posterity is further strengthened by his concluding comment in his reflections on the interview.

The next morning Jan told me that the interchange about the 'naughty little girl' had initiated a self-searching. She realized that not only was the naughty little girl missing, but several other parts of her self had also disappeared during the past eighteen months. 'I realize that to face life as a whole person I need to find those missing parts of me.' She said that for her the interview had proved to be a 'soul-shaking experience'. (Rogers, 1986b: 197–208)

The language of spiritual development, intuitive responses and soul shaking signifies new terrain both for Carl Rogers and for his clients and yet this brief excursion into the world of 'indwelling' where intuition can be trusted may yet prove to be a major practical contribution from the man whose favourite saint was Thomas, the Doubter (Thorne, 1990: 396).

The Precursor of Client-centred Practice

The practice of client-centred therapy constituted a radical departure from most of what passed for therapy at the time of its original evolution. It blazed a new trail that differed markedly from both the psychoanalytical and behavioural traditions. Rogers' profound respect for the client's capacity to find his or her own answers, once the necessary psychological conditions were established, led to an apparent simplicity of practice which often masked, to the uninitiated, the enormous demands placed upon the therapist. Rogers saw no need to probe deeply into the client's unconscious and he believed there were great dangers in offering interpretations, however insightful, or in attempting, for example, to analyse dreams. Furthermore he abhorred behavioural manipulations and was sceptical about the use of psychological tests if the aim was to diagnose or label problems. His concern was to establish an honest relationship with his clients, characterized by an unpossessive caring and a deep empathic responsiveness. Although the essential ideas of the person-centred approach are without complexity, implementation of these ideas can be challenging in the extreme.

We have already noted the influence of Otto Rank on the child guidance colleagues who were close to Rogers during his formative years at Rochester. Jessie Taft and Frederick Allen were renowned for their profound respect for Rank's ideas and Taft was to write a book on Rank in the late 1950s (Taft, 1958). It seems likely that it was not only Rank's theoretical ideas which were powerful and influential among child guidance practitioners at this time but also his actual practice of therapy. In James Liebermann's expressive account of Rank's life and work (Liebermann, 1985) there are several allusions to Rank's behaviour with his patients and he, like Rogers after him, believed deeply in the worthiness of the person and in the patient's capacity for finding his or her own way forward. He wrote that he applied 'no general therapy or theory. I let the patient work on his own psychology, as it were' (Rank, 1966: 17). Liebermann quotes a student of Rank as saying in 1938, 'the actual therapeutic relationship is the curative factor', and a patient who reported that 'nothing was imposed on you. Rank was not looking for a disease, he was not trying to eradicate anything. He wanted you to open up and be as you might want to be but didn't dare to' (Liebermann, 1985: xxxvi). It is not difficult to surmise from these brief remarks that Otto Rank, too, saw his approach as a functional philosophy and that, in practice, he showed the same open and accessible response to those seeking his help as

client-centred therapists of later years. If Rogers gave shape and form to an idea whose time had come, as he himself was to put it, Otto Rank may justifiably be seen as the theoretician who paved the way for much that became central to person-centred theory and as a clinician whose practice was to be reflected and developed in the later work of Rogers and his colleagues.

The Lay Therapist

In 1973 Rogers was awarded the Distinguished Professional Contribution Award by the American Psychological Association and he gave an address to mark the occasion at the Association's annual meeting. He chose to look back over forty-six years of professional activity and to identify his most significant struggles and achievements. Despite the honour which had been bestowed upon him by his fellow psychologists Rogers was quick to note that academic psychology found him painfully embarrassing.

The science and profession of psychology have, I believe, profoundly ambivalent feelings about me and my work. I am seen – and here I must rely mostly on hearsay – as softheaded, unscientific, cultish, too easy on students, full of strange and upsetting enthusiasms about ephemeral things like the self, therapist attitudes, and encounter groups. I have defamed the most holy mysteries of the academic – the professional lecture and the whole evaluation system – from the ABCs of course grades to the coveted hood of the doctor's degree. (Rogers, 1974a: 116)

Later in the same address Rogers describes, with obvious relish, his ferocious battles with members of the psychiatric profession, many of whom had attempted to prevent mere psychologists from practising psychotherapy at all. He tells of one aggressively hostile psychiatrist at the University of Chicago who had demanded that the Counseling Center be closed since its members were practising medicine (that is, psychotherapy) without a licence. Rogers' response to such opposition from the medical profession was either to mount a blistering counterattack or to move ahead with such speed in theory, research and practice that the pre-eminence of psychologists in the therapeutic arena was indisputable. About such matters he was implacable, and he confessed that his behaviour in what he often believed to be an all-out war was deeply surprising and even shocking to those who were more accustomed to see his thoughtful and gentle side.

It is not difficult to understand why Rogers so frequently provoked the anger of professional power groups, whether academic,

medical or political. He had no confidence that academic qualifications, medical expertise or even psychological sophistication endowed people with the capacity to help others. There was even evidence to suggest that the weighty baggage of intellectual and academic achievement could diminish rather than augment an individual's ability to relate to others. By his emphasis on the personal qualities of therapists Rogers threatened those whose professional identity depended on the length of their training or their accumulation of higher degrees. On the other hand, his point of view was immensely encouraging and supportive to those who might otherwise have considered it impossible to pursue careers as therapists.

Rogers' impassioned insistence on the primary importance of the therapist's personal qualities opened up psychotherapy to the psychology profession and contributed to the development of lay therapy in general. The word 'counselling' was originally used by Rogers as another cheeky strategy to silence psychiatrists who were objecting to psychologists practising psychotherapy. By simply changing the name of the activity he enabled practitioners to continue their work without any change in their situation and without detriment to their clients. In our own country the healthy outcome of Rogers' determined campaign has been the evolution of a counselling profession where practitioners are drawn from a wide variety of disciplines and where neither medicine nor psychology rule the roost. Furthermore, the basic attitudes of the client-centred therapist underpin the work of countless individuals who exercise counselling skills in a variety of settings throughout education, the health professions, social work, industry and commerce, the armed services and international organizations. Rogers' indirect contribution to the daily life of literally thousands of individuals who have never heard his name is, by any criterion, astonishing.

Rogers the Researcher

Rogers' research activities during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s were prolific and the client-centred hypotheses were strengthened and elaborated by the completion and publication of numerous studies undertaken under his general guidance and inspiration. This body of research constituted the most intensive investigation of psychotherapy attempted anywhere in the world up to that time and showed that the delicate and elusive movement of therapeutic processes could be studied and measured purposefully. The major

achievement of these studies was to establish beyond all question that psychotherapy could and should be subjected to the rigours of scientific enquiry.

Once he left the university world Rogers' interest in and opportunities for research diminished, but towards the end of his life he returned to the subject with a renewed urgency. In the earlier period he was instrumental in evolving research designs which enabled the objective measurement of the self-concept, ideal self and the relationship of the two over the course of therapy or the correlation of subjective and externally based variables. He also used refined methodologies to explore therapist effectiveness which often involved the introduction of outside consultants and the development of rating scales. These were major innovations which profoundly affected psychology research for many years. In 1961 he wrote in *On Becoming a Person*:

Therapy is the experience in which I can let myself go subjectively. Research is the experience in which I can stand off and try to view this rich subjective experience with objectivity, applying all the elegant methods of science to determine whether I have been deceiving myself. The conviction grows in me that we shall discover laws of personality and behaviour which are as significant for human progress or human understanding as the law of gravity or the laws of thermodynamics. (Rogers, 1961: 14)

These are the words of a man whose confidence in the objective scientific method is still unshaken and who remains convinced that a rich harvest of discovery lies ahead. The later Rogers, however, speaks with a markedly different voice. Whereas in the 1950s and 1960s he made perhaps *the* major contribution to the objective investigation of therapeutic processes and thereby inspired countless research studies, his contribution in the 1980s is of an entirely different order. In an article published in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* in 1985 he finally turns his back on the logical positivism in which he has been professionally reared and unequivocally makes the case for a 'New Science' (Rogers, 1985).

In this article Rogers throws his weight behind forms of investigation which are no longer constrained by the 'straitjacket of logical empiricism'. He cites numerous studies which experiment with new methodologies and new paradigms for doing research. He commends the British book *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research* by Peter Reason and John Rowan (1981) and refers to it as 'an excellent collection of papers exploring the philosophical and methodological aspects of the new alternative scientific models. It is a gold mine ...'. With obvious delight he

emphasizes a characteristic that seems to link all the new methodologies of which he so firmly approves and in doing so he acknowledges the profound influence of the British scientist, Michael Polanyi, for whom he had great respect and affection. The new methodologies, he suggests, are all infused by Polanyi's term, 'indwelling'. The scientist whom Rogers now commends and encourages develops a 'mode of indwelling' in the world of the participant or participants who are no longer 'subjects' of research but 'research partners' or 'co-researchers'. It is the knowledge gained from this deep empathic indwelling that the researcher will then hope to organize in a purposeful fashion so that new discoveries can be made and new approaches to the truth illuminated (Rogers, 1985: 7–14).

It is not fanciful, I believe, to see in Rogers' clear and enthusiastic endorsement of new research paradigms the inevitable conclusion to a life dedicated to the understanding and validating of subjective experience. No longer is he content to pay even lip-service to the supremacy of the conventional view of science, the Newtonian, mechanistic, linear cause–effect understanding of reality. He does not throw it out but considers it singularly inappropriate for exploring the questions that now need to be addressed in the psychotherapeutic relationship where living human persons deserve to have researchers who are prepared to commit themselves to their studies in a way that enhances the dignity of everyone involved. Throughout his long professional life Rogers devoted himself tirelessly to the pursuit of truth and his research endeavours were highly practical contributions to that quest. As an old man without a research base in an academic institution, his zeal remained unimpaired and his powerful endorsement of new scientific paradigms inspired by empathic indwelling is now proving to be a powerfully practical contribution in the development of psychotherapeutic research.

Conclusion

It was my privilege to know Carl Rogers and to work with him on a number of occasions in different parts of the world. He always gave of himself unstintingly but never to the detriment of his own being. He was immediately approachable and accessible and yet he knew how to guard and preserve his own privacy. He was a shrewd and penetrating thinker but there was nothing about him of the ivory-tower professor: on the contrary, he was always acutely aware of practical issues and the importance of detailed planning.

He was one of life's eternal learners, concerned to develop his own understanding and to facilitate the learning of others. It was for this reason that he wrote so many books and articles, because in doing so he learned more of what he really thought and believed and simultaneously made those thoughts and beliefs available to others. His demonstration therapy sessions served the same function for he loved to set out on the unknown venture of meeting another human being and to do so in a context where not only he and the client but also many others could draw value from the experience. In a way his whole life was a 'contribution', freely and consciously offered to the human family for which he continued to have such hope despite its follies and apparent destructiveness. Above all, perhaps, he was a supremely practical man who was consistently concerned with what 'worked' and who never ceased to ask his clients and his colleagues if he was understanding them aright. For this reason he has left behind a body of knowledge and a way of being which are deeply influential because they are solidly grounded in experience and are the outcome of a life lived to the full.

For Rogers, the human psyche remained a complex mystery to which empathic listening provided one of the least clouded windows. But he did not allow himself to be seduced into developing abstract and untestable theories. Instead he was content to make only low-level inferences and to formulate testable hypotheses. At heart he remained in many ways the agriculturist of his youth and we have every reason to be grateful that a man so dedicated to the exploration of subjective reality could at the same time have his feet so firmly planted on the ground.

Criticisms and Rebuttals

Criticisms

Rogers had his critics from the very beginning and they have not grown less vociferous with the passage of the years. At the present time the standing of person-centred scholars and therapists within the world of academic psychology is not high: they tend to be patronized as naive enthusiasts from a former age or to suffer the greatest indignity of all – indifference. In Britain, the last few years have seen a welcome shift in this situation with a resurgence of research activity and a strengthening of the professional identity of person-centred practitioners through well-established training programmes and professional groupings. Nonetheless, it continues to be the case that the person-centred viewpoint does not align itself easily with the spirit of the age. We live in an era when the pressure of life and the endemic ‘drivenness’ of so many work contexts encourage swift answers to problems, the application of slick techniques and, above all, procedures which are demonstrably cost-effective. In such a climate experts are sought after who, it is believed, can provide authoritative guidance and effect rapid change. Rogers, with his insistence on the uniqueness of individuals and with his unshakeable faith in the capacity of persons to find their own answers, is not a natural hero for such an age. His profound and stated distrust of the power-hungry ambitions of many in the helping professions makes him the likely enemy of those who vigorously ply their therapeutic wares in the competitive marketplace in order to convince prospective clients that the wonder cure has arrived and that they possess it.

If Rogers’ standing in academia is less than secure, his influence on therapists throughout the world seems to be curiously persistent. Practitioners from many different therapeutic traditions acknowledge their indebtedness and five years before his death a survey of American therapists revealed him as, for them, the most influential figure in twentieth-century psychotherapy, surpassing even Freud (Kirschenbaum and Henderson, 1990a: xiii). In some

sense it seems that he has become an idealized figure symbolizing a refreshingly uncomplicated approach and a hopefulness about both people and therapy which somehow continue to inspire other practitioners even if they openly disagree with his theories and dismiss client-centred practice as altogether too utopian or too demanding in its claims on the therapist's commitment. It is a strange and confusing picture which has its origins in the criticisms thrown at the early pioneers, who were accused at one and the same time of 'doing nothing' in their 'non-directive' therapy and of inciting a narcissistic ego inflation in their clients. Rogers was castigated throughout his career for being both ineffective and too effective in a detrimental way.

Power Issues

Rogers' ideas threaten those whose professional identity resides chiefly in their psychological knowledge and in their capacity to embody the role of 'expert'. He consistently maintained that the therapist's competence derives not from his or her level of knowledge but from the ability to offer a particular kind of relationship in which the client can gradually move to a new self-concept and way of being. Rogers' persistent battles with the medical and psychiatric professions and the ambivalence he experienced from his fellow psychologists are powerful evidence of the hostility he provoked from those who sensed that his theories and practice might undermine their authority and credibility. It is small wonder that they sought to discredit him and even to suggest that he was behaving irresponsibly in encouraging his clients to determine their own way forward. Profound issues of power are at stake in these conflicts and the accusations of superficiality or of irresponsibility are a scarcely veiled attempt to silence someone who calls into question the authority of psychological knowledge and the right of any therapist to diagnose mental conditions – let alone to prescribe courses of treatment. The radical belief that it is the client who knows what hurts and how to find healing throws a mighty spanner in the works for those who see it as their task to evaluate 'conditions' and to set up programmes to remedy problems and to alleviate pain. The tendency of those who feel threatened in this way is to accuse Rogers of misguided naivety and to ridicule him for daring to claim (for example) that therapeutic relationships can be offered by those with no formal psychological education. In one of the last interviews he gave before his death, Rogers was as forthright as he had ever been about the serious limitations of psychology as a knowledge base for therapeutic work, and continued to maintain his belief that there were those whose life experience

equipped them to be admirable therapists without formal training (Baldwin, 2000).

It would be utterly wrong, of course, to maintain that Rogers, despite his many caveats about the formal training of therapists, in reality saw the therapist as a non-expert. On the contrary, he believed that the highest level of expertise was required by anyone who was bold enough to offer therapeutic assistance to another human being. It was the precise nature of this expertise, however, which concerned him deeply; he saw it as residing not in the therapist's cognitive or even experiential knowledge but in his or her capacity to offer clients a relationship where growth could take place. He believed that such a capacity demanded dedicated commitment on the part of the therapist together with a willingness to develop a rigorous discipline of self-exploration which would ensure a high level of congruence, empathy and acceptance. To those critics who accuse Rogers of selling psychotherapy short and reducing it to the level of a mere loving relationship it should be pointed out that the relationship between a person-centred therapist and his or her client, marked as it is by the involvement of the therapist's total responsiveness, constitutes not a cheapening but an elevation of psychotherapy to an altogether different plane of experience.

Human Nature: Criticisms of Rogers' Viewpoint

Rogers' trust in the client is buttressed by and indeed dependent upon his beliefs about the essential nature of the human being and these beliefs have often come in for the severest criticism from the same people who feel their own power base threatened by the person-centred philosophy. Depending on your viewpoint, it is clearly not only naive but also irrational to trust persons if you believe that they are by definition untrustworthy or behaviourally conditioned or corrupt or a mass of potentially destructive instinctual drives. Such beliefs and others equally denigratory of the human person are held by many of Rogers' critics in both the psychological and theological domains.

Rogers, as we have seen, makes clear assumptions about human nature and emphasizes that humans are growth orientated and will naturally progress towards the fulfilment of their innate potential if psychological conditions are favourable. By contrast, Freud in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1962) portrays men and women as essentially 'savage beasts' whose aggressive tendencies and unpredictable sexuality can only be domesticated by the processes and structures of civilization. Freud was pessimistic about human nature and saw the instinctual drives as pushing

individuals towards the self-satisfaction of primitive needs or the relief of powerful tensions. This gloomy view is supported and reinforced by the strong emphasis which Freud placed on the unconscious with its powerfully destructive elements. The primary significance of the unconscious sources of human disturbance and unhappiness characterizes the analytical point of view in its many varieties – neo-Freudian and otherwise – and even when the unconscious is seen as the repository of many positive forces (as, for instance, in the work of Carl Jung) there often remains the predominant sense of a human nature which is essentially unpredictable, untrustworthy and in continual need of careful monitoring and control. Not surprisingly, therefore, many analytical theorists regard Rogers' view of human nature not only as naive but also as seriously misguided because it fails to do justice to the unconscious which, for the analytical practitioner, largely determines an individual's behaviour and perception of reality.

The behavioural tradition tends to regard all hypotheses about the inner workings of the human being as largely irrelevant. For the convinced behaviourist they must for ever remain hypotheses in so far as they can never be adequately researched and tested. Quite simply it is not possible to prove the existence of the Freudian unconscious or of Rogers' internal locus of evaluation any more than it is possible to prove the existence of God. In the circumstances the behaviourist opts to understand human beings in terms of genetic structure and, more significantly, of environmental variables. He or she rejects the notion that behaviour arises from some source within the human being and prefers instead to see an individual's behaviour, including his or her thoughts and feelings, as primarily determined by environmental history and the present circumstances of the person's life. In some ways the behaviourist can appreciate the force of Rogers' emphasis on the central importance for human development of the core conditions because this is to speak in terms of a reinforcing environment which determines the individual's behavioural direction. The behaviourist parts company with Rogers, however, once the emphasis changes to an endorsement of the subjective life of the individual and to the fundamental significance of the internal locus of evaluation. This essential conflict is revealed in the famous dialogue between Rogers and the doyen of behaviourists, B.F. Skinner, which took place in 1962 and which only saw publication as late as 1990 in *Carl Rogers: Dialogues* (Kirschenbaum and Henderson, 1990b). At one point in this dialogue Skinner remarks:

I always come back to the discovery that when I give up trying to account for something with an inner entity of some sort and try, very awkwardly at first, to deal with external entities which might be responsible for it, in the long run it comes out.

A few minutes later Rogers responds:

In your talking about the external causes of behaviour, you spoke as though for every external cause we can find, then you can drop a previous erroneous internal cause which you formerly posited Yet one lives a subjective life as well as being a sequence of cause and effect. It seems to me this has an importance which you don't always acknowledge. (Kirschenbaum and Henderson, 1990b: 97-9)

The difference in theoretical standpoint could scarcely be clearer and the implications for therapeutic practice are enormous. For the behaviourist, Rogers' confidence in the individual's capacity to discover his or her own internal resources and wisdom is to fly in the face of the fact that we are all subject to external forces and conditions which must be controlled and manipulated so that we can be provided with opportunities for acquiring alternative behaviour to replace and extinguish the maladaptive patterns that spoil our lives.

In recent times the meteoric rise to prominence of cognitive behavioural therapy has perhaps provided its own critique of the classical behaviourist position. The CBT practitioner, far from ignoring the internal landscape of the client, attaches great importance to the way an individual thinks about his or her world and experience. Indeed, false or irrational thinking is seen as being at the root of much human suffering, and the cognitive behavioural therapist will be concerned to help the client explore and remedy such false thought patterns and the behaviour springing from them. In the eyes of such a practitioner, the inadequacy of Rogers' approach lies in its failure to attach the necessary importance to cognitive processes and the apparent lack of interest in devising corrective modes of thinking and acting. The CBT practitioner tends to see Rogers as altogether too 'laissez-faire' and over-concerned about the world of the feelings and the emotional climate of the therapeutic relationship.

Rogers' religious and theological critics are numerous, even if they are seldom united in their objections to his theories and practice. Most are agreed, however, that his understanding of human nature is at best defective and at worst erroneous. If, for the behaviourist, the notion of the internal locus of evaluation is an untestable hypothesis, for some theologians it smacks of a godless

universe where the isolated conscious self becomes the sole judge of what the person should value and how he or she should behave. Rogers' human being is a creature without a sense of his or her creator and, as such, is woefully ill-equipped for the challenges of life and for the encounter with death. Rogers' view of the individual is seen as selling human beings short by divorcing them from higher sources of wisdom and energy and from the religious and spiritual traditions that seek to give access to those sources. Critics of this persuasion see in Rogers' understanding of human nature a profoundly narcissistic tendency whereby the individual becomes the only arbiter and evaluator of his or her own conduct and experience. Without the concept of God or of a higher spiritual authority the individual is totally at the mercy of self-delusion and is likely to succumb to the cult of self-worship. One of the most virulent attacks on Rogers' view of human nature is contained in Paul Vitz's *Psychology as Religion* which has as its subtitle the very words 'The Cult of Self-Worship' (Vitz, 1977/1994). Vitz, a Christian professor of psychology, argues with great passion that humanistic psychologists in general and Rogers in particular have evolved a theory of human nature which inevitably leads to psychology itself becoming a religion in the form of a secular humanism based on worship of the self.

For many Christian apologists the inadequacy of Rogers' view of human nature resides not so much in its rejection of God as the source of all being but in its refusal to acknowledge the ravages of Original Sin. For these critics such blindness is as baffling as Rogers' apparent neglect of the unconscious is for the analyst. To the Christian, reared on the doctrinal tradition of the Fall-Redemption theology originating in St Augustine and alive and well today, it is inconceivable that anyone could be so wilfully obtuse as to regard human nature as essentially trustworthy and forward moving; such a perception of humanity is dangerous for it suggests that men and women have no need of redemption, that they do not require a saviour and that the death and resurrection of Christ are without meaning and significance. For such Christian critics Rogers' view of human nature strikes at the very heart of their understanding of the Christian gospel and, as such, ranks as a major heresy to be eradicated at the earliest opportunity. It is not only the understanding of human nature which is at stake, for Rogers' reluctance to acknowledge the fundamental defect in human beings and their built-in tendency to corruption brings into question the whole issue of evil in the world and in the cosmos. Nothing pleases the devil so much, such critics would argue, as the assumption that he does not exist.

Criticisms of Therapeutic Practice

In 1957 Carl Rogers met in public dialogue with the famous Jewish scholar and philosopher, Martin Buber. Buber's great contribution to the understanding of human development lies in his conviction that men and women are essentially relational creatures. In his celebrated *I and Thou* (1937) he enshrined his major thesis that 'life is meeting' and that salvation lies in glorifying neither the individual nor the collective but in the open dialogue of relationship. That Buber should debate with Rogers was wholly appropriate, for Rogers is often portrayed as the therapist who more than any other stresses the quality of relating between therapist and client as the primary source of healing. The dialogue that took place between the two men is notable on many scores and is of particular relevance for our present purposes because it ended with Buber clearly unconvinced about the nature of the relationship which Rogers experienced with his clients (Kirschenbaum and Henderson, 1990b: 63). Indeed, in the closing minutes of the dialogue, Buber implies that the therapeutic relationship resulting from client-centred therapy may produce individuals rather than persons, and he roundly declares himself to be against individuals and for persons. An individual, he explains, 'may become more and more an individual without making him more and more human. I have a lot of examples of man having become very very individual, very distinct of others, very developed in their such-and-such-ness without being at all what I would like to call a man.' Buber arrives at this disturbing reservation about the therapeutic practice which Rogers has sought to explain and explore in their conversation because he is unconvinced about the reciprocity of the therapeutic relationship. 'You are not equals and cannot be,' he says at one point and in these concise words he throws doubt on two issues central to Rogers' viewpoint. In the first place, he questions the power base of the therapeutic relationship and secondly he raises grave reservations about the individual's process of becoming if that process is not firmly anchored in what he calls 'real reciprocity' (Kirschenbaum and Henderson, 1990b: 50–63).

Many of the criticisms which have been directed at Rogers' way of 'doing therapy' can be traced back to one or other of these central issues. The behaviour of the therapist, it is suggested, can create a situation where the client experiences confusion rather than empowerment, which then leads not to increasing autonomy but to a dependency on the therapist whose very acceptance and empathy leave the client without reference points of any kind. Furthermore, as the client becomes more in touch with powerful but repressed feelings he or she may develop a concept of self

which, as it grows in strength and uniqueness, may feed a sense of alienation rather than of belongingness if the therapist is unable to safeguard the client's experience of connectedness.

The trust that the therapist places in the client leads to the attentive empathic listening which frequently characterizes much of client-centred therapy. When this is allied to a deep acceptance of the client there can be little doubt that for the vast majority of clients the therapist becomes unique in his or her experience. Nobody else in the client's life, it can safely be assumed, listens and accepts with such dedicated commitment and intensity. For the client this may be liberating and validating but it is also possible for the experience to be unnerving. The client is placed in a position where his or her words are accepted at face value and where the therapist apparently does not believe it necessary or even relevant to express an opinion about the rightness or wrongness of what is expressed. Harry Van Belle has suggested that for many clients this response may well seem mystifying in the extreme – precisely because it is so unlike their experience with other people in their lives (Van Belle, 1980: 148). They may conclude that the therapist sees them in a way that they cannot fathom and that, in this sense, the therapist is 'up to something' which is unknown to them. Van Belle comments that in such a situation the client may have no option but to trust the therapist totally on the assumption that the therapist at least knows what he or she is doing even if the client knows neither who he is nor what he should be doing! In an ironical way the therapist's trust in the client which finds expression in attentive listening, empathic understanding and deep acceptance leads not to the client trusting himself but to a total trust in the therapist. Van Belle is suggesting that, far from empowering the client, the therapist's response may induce a massive dependency which springs from the confusion at being received in so singular a fashion. This is another sign of the lack of reciprocity to which Buber draws attention in the dialogue and about which he clearly felt so uneasy. For Buber there is an imbalance in the relationship which deprives it of the creativity that is the hallmark of the true I-Thou dialogue, whereas for Van Belle it is the very operation of empathy and acceptance that can leave all the power with the therapist despite, perhaps, the sincere intention to empower the client.

These are serious criticisms for they strike at the heart of Rogers' beliefs. He attaches great importance to not interfering in the life of the client and to facilitating the process of the client's growth rather than directing it. He refrains from diagnosis and from interpretation in any traditional sense. Indeed, as Van Belle points out,

such behaviours are regarded as anti-therapeutic (Van Belle, 1980: 146). And yet the very absence of such feedback may serve to prolong and even exacerbate the power imbalance which it is Rogers' avowed aim to eradicate.

More serious still, perhaps, is the implication of Rogers' acceptance at face value of what clients say. Nye, among others, has questioned the adequacy of a therapeutic method that relies on data obtained simply by listening empathically to those who seek help (Nye, 1986: 150). He refers to the large body of psychological evidence which indicates that it is often very difficult for a person to be understood let alone to express adequately 'real' feelings or thoughts. When to this difficulty is added the possibility that conscious, let alone unconscious, distortions may be present in client statements then it becomes even more questionable whether a reliable picture of individuals can be obtained simply by listening to them. The accusation can readily be levelled that Rogers' methodology is the inevitable outcome of his phenomenology and that both are equally naive.

Buber's uncomfortableness about the evolution of individuals rather than persons points to the most serious criticism of all as far as Rogers' view of therapeutic process is concerned, for, if it has substance, the whole theoretical edifice of Rogers' work is endangered. Buber implies that it is possible for an individual to achieve an increasingly strong sense of his or her own unique identity without a corresponding awareness of others and without the development of the responsiveness which makes for social responsibility. Rogers, on the other hand, repeatedly affirmed his belief that men and women are essentially social creatures and that, given the opportunity to experience their own value, they will inevitably develop in a way which is socially constructive. Buber's scepticism about this optimistic viewpoint closely mirrors the Christian objection that Rogers fails to acknowledge humanity's basic tendency to evil. In terms of therapeutic process this theme is strongly revisited in an 'Open Letter' which Rollo May addressed to Rogers in 1982 through the pages of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. In this letter May refers to the Wisconsin experiment, which Rogers and his colleagues had conducted with schizophrenic patients twenty years earlier, and to his own experience of listening to tapes of the therapy conducted at that time. He comments:

After listening to the tapes you sent me, I reported that, while I felt the therapy was good on the whole, there was one glaring omission. This was that the client-centered therapists did not (or could not) deal with the angry, hostile, negative – that is, evil – feelings of the client.

Later in the same letter, he goes on to say:

The issue of evil – or rather the issue of not confronting evil – has profound, and to my mind, adverse effects on humanistic psychology. I believe it is the most important error in the humanistic movement. (May, 1982: 10–21)

The combined criticisms of Buber and May cast doubt on the 'realness' of the therapeutic relationship in client-centred therapy in so far as it may lack genuine reciprocity, and on the capacity of client-centred therapists, because of their belief system, to acknowledge and confront the evil and destructive tendencies in their clients. The very mode of therapy, it is suggested, can encourage the development of a narcissistic individualism based on a misguided self-love which evades the confrontation with the negative. In short, the process induced by client-centred therapy is not trustworthy. Van Belle, in his mainly sympathetic book on Rogers (Van Belle, 1980), adds further fuel to the critical fire by calling into question not only the validity of the therapeutic process as Rogers describes it but also the emphasis in Rogers' work as a whole on process and changingness.

Van Belle notes that in Rogers' concept of the fully functioning person it is the quality of changingness which merits the highest accolade; indeed for Rogers the fully functioning person is the 'epitome of man as a process'. Van Belle is troubled by this notion and sees in it the danger that men and women could be encouraged to pursue a life of excessive change and might thereby lose all sense of a solid identity. Once more there seems to be the lurking danger of confusion, disorientation and a lack of anchorage. Van Belle is equally unhappy about Rogers' conviction that the process of therapy itself will follow an inevitable path. He questions whether the client's open expression of feelings and their empathic and acceptant reception by the therapist will automatically be followed by insight and cognitive clarification and he is equally uncertain whether this phase will be followed by the client's capacity to act upon his insights. Van Belle's doubt about the inevitability of the therapeutic process is great enough for him to question Rogers' fundamental belief that the therapist has only to be the facilitator, the companion of the client, for the process to occur. In the closing pages of his book Van Belle goes so far as to reject the notion of therapy as a facilitative event and with it the belief that the therapeutic process can occur spontaneously in the client once the core conditions have been established. He argues that the process, if it is to occur, needs the aid of the therapist's intervention every step of the way and that therapy must be a

co-operative activity. Indeed, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Van Belle, after painstakingly exploring Rogers' theoretical beliefs and clinical practice with consummate accuracy and sensitivity, proceeds in the final quarter of his book partially to demolish the elegant edifice which he has illuminated (Van Belle, 1980: 145–55).

It would be impossible to consider criticisms of Rogers' therapeutic practice without drawing attention to one issue that has continually attracted debate and not infrequently led to heated differences of opinion. For analytical practitioners the concept of the transference is central to the understanding of therapeutic process and the 'working through' of the transference is often seen as fundamental to the successful outcome of therapy. In such 'working through' clients have the chance to re-experience earlier relationships as they 'transfer' past emotions on to the therapist. In doing this they may experience the therapist by turn as positive, demanding, even rejecting and, as the process develops, the therapist must take great care to guard against countertransference, which is an inappropriate emotional reaction to the client, and to remain objective in the face of what can at times be a bewildering array of emotions. Because of Rogers' inadequate attention to unconscious forces, as the analyst sees it, the whole transference–countertransference dynamic is missing from client-centred therapy, at least in an overt way. The analytical criticism, however, revolves around the belief that transference takes place *whether the therapist acknowledges this or not* and that Rogers, by his failure to give due respect to this unconscious dimension, is in danger of attributing to the relationship which he forms with his clients a quality of present reality that cannot be sustained. Rogers himself was never tempted into lengthy dispute about this contentious issue but because the concept of transference is so widespread and still seems to have such a powerful grip on the therapeutic professions and even on many members of the public, it cannot be ignored in a survey of critical responses to Rogers' way of 'doing therapy'.

The Case of Jeffrey Masson

In 1989, in his book *Against Therapy*, Jeffrey Masson, former analyst and project director of the Sigmund Freud archives, launched an extraordinary attack on the very foundations of modern psychotherapy. His disenchantment with psychoanalysis had set in much earlier with his attack in *The Assault on Truth* (1984) on Freud's suppression of the seduction theory, but the 1989 book casts its net of condemnation much wider. Masson's thesis is that abuse of one kind or another is built into the very fabric of psychotherapy

because it is of the nature of psychotherapy to distort another person's reality. Much of Masson's book is taken up with a devastating exploration of various figures in the history of analysis and he reserves his most violent attack for the discredited John Rosen, the initiator of so-called 'direct psychoanalysis'. There is a chapter on sex and battering in psychotherapy where Masson assembles overwhelming evidence of physical and sexual abuse of a most extreme kind. Immediately following this chapter Masson turns his attention to a therapist who, by universal recognition, he acknowledges to be 'kind, compassionate, helpful'. This is Carl Rogers, who comes under Masson's condemnatory searchlight to be shown as a benevolent despot whose practice is built on the same bedrock as that of the manifest abusers Masson has already exposed so ruthlessly.

Masson seeks to demonstrate that there can be no real genuineness in the relationships offered by a client-centred therapist because it is only the artificiality of the therapy situation which enables the therapist to 'play out' the core conditions for brief periods of time. Nobody, Masson argues, could ever in 'real life' do the things Rogers prescribes that the therapist should do. 'If the therapist manages to do so in a session, if he appears to be all-accepting and all-understanding, this is merely artifice; it is not reality.' Masson goes on to accuse Rogers of complete indifference to the glaring injustices suffered by many clients as a result of societal and other forces. In a powerful analysis of Rogers' Wisconsin research project on hospitalized schizophrenics he shows Rogers to have been callously indifferent to the abusive practices of psychiatry and condemns him for having closed his eyes to the evident injustices and humiliations which many of the patients endured. Indeed, he berates Rogers for having colluded with the hospital administration in order to further his own professional interests and that of the research project. In a final section, Masson turns his attention to the practice of empathic responsiveness and to Rogers' determination not to make interpretations of his clients' statements. He praises Rogers for his genuine desire not to intrude on the thought processes of his clients but concludes that this is simply not possible: 'There is no way out of this dilemma. It is in the nature of therapy to distort another person's reality' (Masson, 1989: 229-47).

Masson's attack on Rogers must be seen in the context of his impassioned onslaught on the whole practice and profession of psychotherapy but in its specific criticisms it resonates with other opinions rehearsed in this chapter. His cynical view of the artificial nature of the therapeutic relationship is a much more extreme

expression of the doubts raised by Buber. The lack of attention to the realities of social injustice and the abuse of medical power is further ammunition for the behaviourist point of view which sees Rogers as seriously deficient in his evaluation of external forces. The impossibility of offering an empathic understanding which does not distort the client's reality belongs to the same category of criticism as Van Belle's questioning of the empowerment of clients through empathy and acceptance. The force of Masson's attack lies, however, in his acknowledgement of Rogers' benevolence. The benevolent despot is seen as a figure who is just as sinister as his malevolent counterpart, for he exercises power covertly. In Rogers' case, Masson would argue that the abuse of power is concealed by the claim that the very reverse is happening. The therapist who professes to be relinquishing power so that his client may be empowered is, in reality, intervening in the life of another person with powerful and manipulative intent.

Research Critique

In their introduction to *Client-Centered Therapy and the Person-Centered Approach* (Levant and Shlien, 1984), the editors point to the troubling situation in the area of research into client-centred therapy. They show that until the mid-1970s there was considerable support for Rogers' hypotheses regarding the necessary and sufficient conditions for psychotherapy or at least for the clear connection of the facilitative conditions with therapeutic outcome. This favourable conclusion was, however, much in dispute by the end of the 1970s as researchers from traditions other than the client-centred conducted studies and as other workers exposed faulty research design in previous studies. Levant and Shlien conclude that as far as client-centred therapy is concerned neither research methodology nor outcome evaluation have much to be proud of. This gloomy summary somewhat undermines the previous security expressed by many client-centred therapists in the knowledge that their approach was one of the best researched in the whole field of psychotherapy.

Later in the book, however, Neill Watson in a detailed review of a large number of research studies presents a further reflection. He concludes that in his review he located no studies that adequately tested Rogers' hypotheses in their entirety. Most particularly, he draws attention to the fact that a large number of studies have used judge ratings of the therapist-provided conditions to the total neglect of client perceptions of the relationship, which are essential to a test of the hypotheses. Where studies *have* explored client perceptions of the relationship they have typically not included all

the hypothesized conditions and have therefore failed to take account of the fact that Rogers' propositions address a *set* of necessary and sufficient conditions. Watson ends his review: 'After twenty-five years of research on Rogers' hypotheses, there is not yet research of the rigor required for drawing conclusions about the validity of this important theory' (Watson, 1984: 40).

It is intriguing, to say the least, that Watson's review reveals the difficulty that researchers have apparently experienced in giving the primacy to the client's perception of what is going on in the therapeutic process. The reliance on 'expert' external judges makes nonsense of Rogers' hypotheses and yet it appears that such research has been carried out in good faith, sometimes at Rogers' own instigation, without awareness of its irrelevance to the testing of the hypotheses. Those who criticize the research on client-centred therapy for its inadequacy or inconclusiveness are justified, but it is worth recalling again that towards the end of his life Rogers was increasingly aware of the need for new research paradigms if the phenomenological world of the client was to become the cornerstone of research in the same way that it is central to the therapeutic endeavour of the client-centred therapist.

More Recent Criticisms

The last decade has seen significant shifts in the world of counselling and psychotherapy not only in Britain but in many other parts of the world. Accountability and cost-effectiveness have become catch-all slogans while at the same time the move towards a regulated and state registered professionalism has gained increasing momentum. Such developments encourage finance-driven strategies and the emergence of a profession increasingly subject to governmental policies and fearful of falling foul of vested interests in a competitive and often litigious culture. Such a context with its hidden agendas and its inevitable tendency towards uniformity of practice is not congenial to person-centred therapy and to the spirit which informs everything that Rogers stood for. It is an essentially materialistic and authoritarian culture which masquerades as a benign environment designed to offer equal opportunities for all and to achieve an ever higher standard of living for every citizen.

In such a changing climate the criticisms of person-centred therapy have proliferated. They are bewildering in their diversity. As the underlying violence and dysfunction beneath the surface of the affluent society become tragically apparent, the approach is accused of being too soft, lacking in rigour and suitable only for the 'worried well' in the middle classes. It is also berated for having

nothing to offer in the field of psychopathology and in the treatment of personality disorders. It is accused of being lightweight and lacking a convincing theory of personality development. It is seen as altogether too vague, too slippery and, above all, empirically unquantifiable. To complete this catalogue of criticisms there is the notion that person-centred therapy encourages a potentially abusive intimacy with clients and is in any case ill-suited to focused brief therapy and is therefore, by definition, too expensive.

Summary of Criticisms

Many of the criticisms which have been levelled against Rogers and his work have their origin in what his critics see as his grossly inflated trust in and regard for the individual. Such a view threatens those whose professional identity is closely bound up with the importance of their psychological expertise and knowledge in the healing of others: Rogers reinforced such anxiety by his deep ambivalence towards institutions of all kinds, by his own distrust of authority and by his conviction that nothing of significance could ever be taught. The only learning that significantly influences behaviour, he believed, is self-discovered learning.

His view of human nature has proved unacceptable to a wide variety of critics. For the analysts and for many Christian commentators he not only has too optimistic a perception of human potential but also greatly underrates the forces of the unconscious and of evil. For the classical behaviourists his belief in the subjective core of the human personality is an unprovable hypothesis which blinds him to the overriding influence of environmental conditions and behavioural reinforcements, while for the cognitive behavioural therapists, he pays insufficient attention to the relationship between cognitive processes and dysfunctional behaviour. For all these critics, Rogers' notion of the internalized locus of evaluation as a desirable guide which is trustworthy remains unconvincing and unpersuasive.

Rogers' therapeutic practice has been criticized on many scores, but among the more serious criticisms is the doubt cast on the effectiveness of the relationships created by client-centred therapists to develop a socially responsive attitude in clients. It has also been argued, by Van Belle, that the belief in the core conditions as facilitating client autonomy may be misplaced and that the experience of intensive empathy and acceptance may actually engender a deep dependency on the therapist. Van Belle has cast doubt, too, on the notion of therapy as simply facilitative and has questioned the inevitability of the therapeutic process as Rogers describes it. The validity of the therapeutic relationship in client-centred therapy

is deeply suspect in the eyes of many analytical practitioners, who see Rogers' neglect of transference processes as an omission with far-reaching consequences.

Jeffrey Masson's ferocious attack on psychotherapy in general and on Rogers as the seductive example of the benevolent despot draws together in accentuated and radical form many of the threads of opposition discernible in other writers. The force of Masson's critique lies in its contention that Rogers' very benevolence obscures the essential abuse of power which characterizes his therapeutic practice.

The considerable body of research into client-centred therapy has been shown by subsequent reviews to be seriously flawed in many respects. The proud boast that Rogers was wont to make that client-centred therapy was well supported by empirical research (much of it instigated by himself and his associates) is now shown to be less than convincing. Indeed, it would seem that, as yet, Rogers' own hypotheses as he originally formulated them, remain untested.

In the last decade, many of the previous criticisms of Rogers' work have been reactivated and given added strength by the development of a 'surveillance culture' and a 'low-trust ideology' which are buttressed by an obsessional preoccupation with cost-effectiveness and so-called empirically validated procedures. In such a climate, Rogers with his lifelong distrust of pseudo-professionalism and bureaucratic powermongers assumes once more the mantle of the tiresome revolutionary whose prophetic warnings seem increasingly to be resented or ignored.

Rebuttals

Contemporary Relevance

In 1988 my colleague, Dave Mearns of Strathclyde University, and I wrote a book which attempted to describe the theory and practice of person-centred therapy in a manner which would bring this approach to a largely British public in a new and, we hoped, engaging way. *Person-Centred Counselling in Action* appeared in a second edition in 1999 and, at the time of writing, the overall sales figures for this book are rapidly approaching 100,000. I report this, for us, highly satisfactory fact not only because it is a matter of some pride but also because it points to a fascinating paradox. Why, it can justifiably be asked, does a book on person-centred therapy achieve such impressive sales figures while Rogers

continues to be so poorly regarded in many areas of academia, and person-centred work is frequently castigated as out of step with the contemporary Zeitgeist and of little relevance to the challenges confronting twenty-first-century men and women?

For me the possible answer to this apparent conundrum has become clearer since the appalling events of 11 September 2001 and their aftermath. It is now apparent that the world is on the edge of catastrophe and that the whole materialistic ethic is under savage assault. What is more, the collapse of communism has left a vacuum which has given rise, it seems, to a resurgence of long-repressed nationalistic and ethnic hostilities together with religious animosities of formidable ferocity. In such a climate it is perhaps not surprising that in the field of counselling and psychotherapy there are many who are progressively disenchanted with a materialistic culture (which 'the war against terrorism' is aggressively waged to defend) and with systems which purport to have rapid and cost-effective answers to existential and behavioural problems whose roots are often deeply embedded in the cultural and social malaise. There is additionally a distrust of complex and intellectually elaborated 'isms', whether religious or psychological, which seek to provide detailed explanations of the bewilderingly diverse antics of humankind. In such a 'postmodernist' age where all metanarratives are suspect, Rogers' deep respect for subjective experience and the elegant simplicity of the theoretical framework of person-centred therapy offer individuals – whether clients or prospective practitioners – a refreshingly expansive arena in which to discover their distinctive resourcefulness and ways of being in the world.

The fragmentation and discontinuity which many experience in their lives today often contribute to feelings of emptiness and loneliness and, here again, Rogers' validation of subjective experience and his painstaking exploration of the facilitative relationship commend him and the person-centred approach to those who have lost all faith in dogmatic rigidity of any kind and who yearn for meaning and intimacy in their personal relationships. What is more, even if Rogers is not always honoured in academia and is little esteemed in those professional circles where analytical or behavioural modes of thought continue to hold sway, it is often his work which inspires and underpins countless self-help groups and counselling skills or human relations programmes in colleges up and down the land. In the last ten years, too, there has been a notable resurgence of interest in Rogers' work within the British university context, with person-centred scholars being appointed

to Chairs of Counselling as well as person-centred therapists directing and shaping university counselling services. These years, too, have seen the establishment of strong professional associations committed to the person-centred approach, as well as numerous publications devoted to the study and development of Rogers' theories and practice. It is not insignificant that a publishing house committed almost exclusively to the approach and its development (PCCS Books of Ross-on-Wye) has seen a period of unprecedented growth in Britain and publishes work not only by British authors but also by distinguished American and European practitioners. If Rogers is out of tune with the technological marketplace and with a finance-driven freneticism characteristic of the 'new capitalism', there can be little doubt that he has become a rallying point and a source of inspiration for those disenchanted with mechanistic or falsely scientific views of reality and with the inadequacy of corrupt politicians. For a society and a world which often seem on the brink of disaster, Rogers' confidence in the human person and his commitment to the cultivation of interpersonal environments which can nourish the human spirit offer hope to a generation which often teeters on the verge of meaninglessness and suffers the ravages of violence and despair.

Human Nature

To those critics who accused him of having too optimistic a view of human nature, Rogers always gave essentially the same answer. He pointed to his own experience as a therapist and called upon the evidence. Thus it is that in an article in 1957 he writes:

My views of man's most basic characteristics have been formed by my experience in psychotherapy. They include certain observations as to what man is *not*, as well as some description of what, in my experience, he *is*. Let me state these very briefly

I do not discover man to be well characterized in his basic nature by such terms as *fundamentally hostile, antisocial, destructive, evil*.

I do not discover man to be, in his basic nature, completely without a nature, a tabula rasa on which anything may be written, nor malleable putty which can be shaped in any form.

I do not discover man to be essentially a perfect being, sadly warped and corrupted by society.

In my experience I have discovered man to have characteristics which seem inherent in his species, and the terms which have at different times seemed to me descriptive of these characteristics are such terms as *positive, forward-moving, constructive, realistic, trustworthy*. (Rogers, 1957b: 200)

In 1982 in a response to Rollo May's 'Open Letter' – and equally pertinent to the attack by the Christian critic, Paul Vitz – he wrote:

When you speak of the narcissism that has been fostered by humanistic psychology and how many individuals are 'lost in self-love', I feel like speaking up and saying 'That's not true!'... In the groups with which I've had contact, the truth is quite the contrary. Such groups lead to social action of a realistic nature. Individuals who come in as social fanatics become much more socially realistic, but they still want to take action. People who have not been very aware of social issues become more aware and, again, opt for realistic actions on those issues. We have had plenty of evidence of this in our encounter groups and workshops. Irrational anger and violence are sometimes defused, but action of a more realistic sort increases. (Rogers, 1982: 85).

The issue of self-love is addressed again in Rogers' review of the book *The Self and the Dramas of History* by the theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr which appeared in 1956. Once more Rogers draws on his therapeutic experience, this time to refute Niebuhr's notion of Original Sin.

It is in his [Niebuhr's] conception of the basic deficiency of the individual self that I find my experience utterly at variance. He is quite clear that the 'original sin' is self love, pretension, claiming too much, grasping after self-realization. I read such words and try to imagine the experience out of which they have grown. I have dealt with maladjusted and troubled individuals, in the intimate personal relationship of psychotherapy, for more than a quarter of a century. This has not been perhaps a group fully representative of the whole community, but neither has it been unrepresentative. And, if I were to search for the central core of difficulty in people as I have come to know them, it is that in the great majority of cases they despise themselves, regard themselves as worthless and unlovable ... I could not differ more deeply from the notion that self love is the fundamental and pervasive 'sin'. (Rogers, 1956: 4)

Rogers' own experience of human beings constantly leaves him baffled by the propositions of theologians and psychologists alike. In the 1957 article referred to above he confesses himself bewildered by the statement of Freudian, Karl Menninger, that he perceives man as 'innately evil' or 'innately destructive'. Rogers asks himself how it could be that Menninger and he, working with such similar purposes in intimate therapeutic relationships, could come to view people so differently. He even goes so far as to advance hypotheses as to the reasons for the wide discrepancy between the Freudian view of man's nature and his own. Interestingly, he suggests that because Freud relied on self-analysis he was deprived of the warmly acceptant relationship which is necessary if apparently destructive and negative aspects of the self are ever to be accepted fully as having meaning and a constructive part to play.

Rogers' deep and lasting trust in human nature did not blind him to the reality of evil *behaviour*. In his discussion of Niebuhr's

book he refutes the notion that he is an optimist. 'It disturbs me,' he writes,

to be thought of as an optimist. My whole professional experience has been with the dark and often sordid side of life, and I know, better than most, the incredibly destructive behaviour of which man is capable. Yet that same professional experience has forced upon me the realization that man, when you know him deeply, in his worst and most troubled states, is not evil or demonic. (Rogers, 1958: 17)

In his reply to Rollo May he writes in similar vein:

In my experience, every person has the capacity for evil behaviour. I, and others, have had murderous and cruel impulses, desires to hurt, feelings of anger and rage, desires to impose our wills on others Whether I, or anyone, will translate these impulses into behaviour depends, it seems to me, on two elements: social conditioning and voluntary choice I believe that, theoretically at least, every evil behaviour is brought about by varying degrees of these elements. (Rogers, 1982: 88)

There is evidence that Rogers was not wholly satisfied with his own arguments in favour of man's essential trustworthiness despite the almost overwhelmingly positive data from his therapeutic experience. In the response to Rollo May he admits that he finds 'a shocking puzzle' in the famous experiments by Stanley Milgram and Philip Zimbardo which demonstrated, in the first case, that 60 per cent of people were willing to turn up electric current to a voltage which they knew would kill others and, in the second, that randomly assigned 'guards' and 'prisoners' were rapidly caught up in violent destructiveness which became life-threatening. Furthermore, in 1981 he contributed a leading article to the first number of the short-lived 'international notebook', *Journey*, in which he wrote:

We are often asked, how do we account for evil or the dark side of human nature, the shadow side? How do we explain irrational violence and the rising crime rate etc.? My own feeling is that we have an answer to this question, but I am not sure that it is an adequate answer. (Rogers, 1981: 1)

Adequate answer or not, Rogers did not deviate from his belief in the positive and trustworthy basis of human nature and continued through the years to give the primacy to his own experience as a therapist. He seems to have been ignorant of theological traditions that might well have buttressed his own deeply held convictions. His family background, together with the attacks made upon him by Christian writers steeped in the essential Augustinian notion of

Original Sin, meant that to the end of his life he saw Christianity as essentially hostile to human nature and caught up in guilt-inducing judgementalism. In recent years, however, the more ancient spiritual tradition of original righteousness and original blessing is being rediscovered in the Western Christian church and with it the hopefulness for human evolution which is characteristic of Rogers' viewpoint. Such hopefulness is not to be confused with optimism for, like Rogers, theologians of this tradition are too much in touch with the pain and tragedy of human existence for that (for example Allchin, 1988). Nonetheless the doctrines of original righteousness and deification proclaim that humanity is made in God's image and that men and women are partakers of the divine nature and are made for union with God. Such doctrines have inspired those Christians down the ages who have seen the glory of men and women as lying in their capacity to realize their divine potential through their relationship both with God and with each other. Theologians of this school of thought would agree with Rogers that, far from being caught up in the grandiosity of false self-love, most human beings are trapped by feelings of worthlessness and self-contempt. It is only by recognizing and escaping from the deeply damaging effects of such self-denigration that they come into their divine inheritance. In brief, such a theology enshrines belief in a God who is unconditionally accepting and bears no resemblance to the judgemental figure of Rogers' youth and the theological tradition which he came so much to detest. The 'creation-centred' tradition, as it is often known, offers a view of the divine nature and of the evolving cosmos which is wholly supportive of Rogers' understanding of human beings and of their capacity for growth once they have internalized the liberating truth that they are unconditionally accepted.

Rogers' view of Christianity and that of his detractors is thoroughly Western but what is only now being rediscovered by Catholic and Anglican theologians in the West has been a central part of the Eastern Orthodox tradition from the earliest times. With the collapse of the Soviet empire and the re-emergence of the Orthodox churches in Europe, it may be that the emphasis on theosis, that is, the Christian's pilgrimage into the likeness of God, will percolate into Western consciousness. Should that happen, it will be increasingly difficult for Christian detractors to accuse Rogers of having too rosy a view of human nature, without at the same time castigating the whole Orthodox tradition for having so grandiose a notion of humanity's potential and ultimate destiny (Staniloae, 2002).

Rogers' admission that he was not convinced that his answer to the problem of evil was an adequate one, together with his response to Rollo May that evil behaviour springs from varying degrees of 'social conditioning and voluntary choice', constitute a humble but powerful response to both the behavioural and analytical viewpoints. It is the essence of the phenomenological position, when carried to its logical conclusion, that the human organism is unknowable in scientific terms. Because of the primacy given to subjectivity, each individual, according to Rogers, lives in a private world of experience which he or she alone has the capacity to understand, and then probably not fully. Not even the most empathic and sensitive therapist can fully penetrate the mysteriousness of another person. Rogers' tentativeness and deep respect before the unknown made it impossible for him to accept either the determinism of behaviouristic psychology or the complex theories of the unconscious advanced by the analytical schools.

In response to the behaviourists he acknowledges the power of social conditioning and indeed much of his own understanding of human development is based on the adverse effects of the conditions of worth imposed by others. At the same time, however, it is impossible for him to deny the reality and the importance of human choice. From his experience in therapy he observed individuals struggling to develop and wrestling with decisions which ultimately they succeeded in making. To this extent he saw people being the architects of their own lives. Once more it is his *experience* of intimate relating to others which compels him to reject the absolutism of the behaviourist position.

In similar fashion, Rogers does not deny that the way we think can often condition the way we behave. Unlike the cognitive behavioural therapist, however, he does not presume actively to intervene in changing a person's way of thinking or in determining his or her view of reality. Furthermore, his experience of entering into relational depth with clients and of empathically accompanying their process of self-exploration leads him to be acutely aware of the danger of elevating the cognitive over the affective or of prematurely imposing meaning upon experience. It is difficult to imagine that Rogers' therapeutic experience could lead him to feel happy with an approach which seems to have only limited respect for the integrated functioning of the whole person and runs the risk, however courteously and gently, of encouraging the client to modify his thinking and behaviour in order to reduce anxiety or to adapt more appropriately to his social environment.

It is the same deep respect for the client's uniqueness and autonomy which prevents Rogers from embracing any of the available maps of the unconscious although he readily acknowledges that we are all to some extent influenced by forces outside our awareness. Far from pleading guilty to the charge that he ignores the unconscious, Rogers would assuredly claim that it is precisely his respect for the unconscious which compels him to refrain from adopting any particular map of this essentially unknowable terrain, for to do so might lead him to impose his own view or interpretation upon his client. In short, Rogers accepts both the reality of social and cognitive conditioning and the existence of the unconscious but refrains from elevating either to a position where they threaten to deprive individuals of the freedom to trust their own subjective experience and the mystery of their own natures.

Therapeutic Practice

Many of the criticisms of Rogers' therapeutic practice, as we have seen, revolve around the unreality of the relationship which is created between therapist and client. Buber complained about the lack of true reciprocity and was unconvinced by Rogers' contention that a meeting or dialogue can take place purely within the experiential world of the client. For Buber the life-giving 'I-Thou' relationship is only possible when both frames of reference are experienced simultaneously. Egocentricity is thereby transcended as both partners in a relationship experience themselves in the other person's skin without losing contact with their own realities. May accuses Rogers and his colleagues of failing to cope effectively with negative feelings in their clients, Van Belle questions the efficacy of empathy and acceptance in encouraging client autonomy while Masson dismisses the whole therapeutic enterprise as grotesquely inauthentic and inevitably manipulative.

Rogers in his reply to May makes an admission which has considerable relevance to this discussion. Commenting on May's judgement that client-centred therapists fail to accept and respond to negative feelings in general, he says: 'I think that to some extent this was definitely true of me in the distant past.' He goes on to describe the changes in himself over the years and refers to both films and published transcripts which demonstrate his growing ability to handle negative and hostile reactions. He concludes: 'I believe I have learned to be acceptant of anger towards me and towards others' (Rogers, 1982: 86).

It can be seen from these brief comments that Rogers himself believed that his therapeutic style had changed over time, and this

is supported by researchers who have studied his work in the years since his death (for example Van Balen, 1990; Temaner Brodley, 1991). Although these studies show no change in Rogers' dedication to discovering the perceptual world of the client, they do indicate a shift in his willingness to give a more personal expression of himself in his interaction with his clients.

Van Balen in his study sees the dialogue with Buber as having a decisive influence on Rogers' practice and quotes Rogers himself, writing in 1974, in support of this thesis:

This recognition of the significance of what Buber terms the I-Thou relationship is the reason why, in client-centred therapy, there has come to be a greater use of the self of the therapist, of the therapist's feelings, a greater stress on genuineness, but all of this without imposing the views, values or interpretations of the therapist on the client. (Rogers, 1974b: 11).

Van Balen and others are also agreed that the 'Wisconsin project' with schizophrenic patients, despite May's reservations, actually gave rise to an increased emphasis on the therapist's use of his own thoughts and feelings in order to establish contact with persons who might themselves be very uncommunicative or even completely silent. It seems that this project, together with the intensive group experiences in which Rogers was later to participate, gradually led him to the point where he could state unequivocally that genuineness or congruence was the most basic of the conditions that foster therapeutic growth. In the last formal interview which he gave on the use of self in therapy, Rogers even went so far as to suggest that he had perhaps overstressed the three basic conditions and that the most important element of therapy arose when 'my self is very clearly, obviously present' (Baldwin, 2000: 30).

This movement towards greater authenticity and appropriate self-revelation is, I believe, the most powerful reply to those who accuse Rogers of creating one-sided relationships which are essentially manipulative or which encourage an unanchored narcissism. Through his increasing emphasis on the congruence of the therapist Rogers acknowledges that self-revelation, without imposition, can help to bring about the reciprocity of relationship which engenders mutual respect and avoids the dangers of confused dependence which Van Belle sees as a possible outcome of undiluted acceptance and empathy. There is a particular irony in the notion that the Wisconsin project played a crucial part in this move towards what Van Balen has called 'authenticity as an independent pole of interaction', for one of the other commonly held criticisms

of client-centred therapy which has received added reinforcement in recent times is that it is useful for articulate neurotics but of little value in the treatment of mentally ill individuals. It would seem that Rogers in his work with the Wisconsin patients not only demonstrated the validity of client-centred therapy with those suffering from so-called psychosis but also gave a new impetus to the practice of his approach. Increasingly 'being open to the other' became a significant goal for both therapist and client and was seen to be related to the client's achievement of self-acceptance as a consequence of feeling accepted. Perhaps acceptance of this life-transforming kind can only be experienced at the hands of a person whose own reality and vulnerability are readily accessible: an acceptant, empathic mirror or *alter ego* is not enough.

It is worth recording that the closing years of the last century saw notable developments in the application of person-centred principles to the treatment of mentally ill patients. Rogers' pioneering work at Wisconsin laid the foundations for the development of Dr Garry Prouty's pre-therapy (Prouty, 1994) and for the ground-breaking work with institutionalized patients by Dion Van Werde in Belgium and with borderline personalities in the community by Ute and Johannes Binder in Germany (Van Werde, 1998; Binder, 1998). Those critics who are quick to condemn person-centred therapy as suitable only for the neurotic well are usually totally ignorant of these developments and know nothing either of the work of Marlis Pörtner in Switzerland in applying the person-centred approach to everyday care for people with special needs (Pörtner, 2002). Equally important is the creative work of Elke Lambers in reformulating some of the most common psychiatric nomenclature in person-centred language thus clearly demonstrating that Rogers' theoretical framework readily lends itself to the exploration of so-called psychotic states of being (Lambers, 1994).

Jeffrey Masson's depiction of Rogers as a man indifferent to the abuses of the psychiatric system and blind to political realities scarcely seems just in the light of Rogers' lifelong struggle with the psychiatric 'establishment' and his deep and energetic commitment to world peace in his final years. Most people, after all, would have been content to relax into a well-merited retirement. Masson's basic premise that it is the nature of therapy to distort another person's reality is more difficult to refute, for unless a therapist is a perfect mirror – and hence a frustrating bore for his or her clients – there must be a sense in which the therapist interacts with the client's reality and to that extent changes or modifies it. Masson's argument is that this is what we do all the time in our social relationships and that it is therefore dishonest and deceitful

for Rogers to suggest that he does not. I am not sure that Rogers ever claims to be so totally non-intrusive but it is certainly the case that in many of his writings he presents the therapist as solely the facilitator of the client's process which, once the core conditions have been established, unfolds spontaneously and inevitably. When Van Belle argues that this concept of facilitation is an erroneous analysis of the therapist's role he seems to be joining with Masson in accusing Rogers of a certain level of self-deception. Such criticism loses some of its force, however, if we believe all human life to be essentially relational. In this sense – and here again Buber's position is relevant – we need the other for our own completion. My reality needs the other's response if it is to be complete, and distortion comes not through the response in itself which is essential to the integrity of my reality but through a lack of respect for and understanding of my inner world. To accept Masson's critique of therapy as a distorting activity is tantamount to writing off all human relationships as destructive of the individual's subjective reality. Masson, it seems, would prefer us to be isolated creatures who steer clear of human interaction in the interests of preserving our perceptual purity. This seems conducive to madness because it is a denial of our need for relationship if we are to establish a sense of self.

Van Belle's rejection of facilitation in favour of co-operation as the essential task of the therapist is one with which I have considerable sympathy. I also believe it to be in keeping with the behaviour of the later Rogers for whom the capacity to be congruent assumes increasing importance. Barbara Temaner Brodley, in a study of Rogers' verbal behaviour in therapy sessions, states of his last period (1977–86) that his responses from his own point of view increased from 4 to 16 per cent over the previous period (1944–64). Interestingly, most of the increase appears in the categories of therapist's comments, interpretations and explanations. She notes, too, that Rogers in these closing years was slightly more inclined to voice agreement with his clients and to pose leading questions (Temaner Brodley, 1991: 13). It appears that Rogers through his manifest behaviour had come close to accepting the validity of Van Belle's point of view that the therapeutic process requires the active participation of the therapist all the way. Therapy is a co-operative event achieved by the client and the therapist working together (Van Belle, 1980: 150). More recent work by Merry and Temaner Brodley (2002) demonstrates powerfully that there is also no intrinsic contradiction between the attitude of non-directivity and the creation of a mutually influencing relationship. Non-directivity is seen as an attitude toward therapy 'as a mutual activity in which

there is dialogue in a spirit of open, collaborative enquiry into the concerns of one (the client)'.

In 1984 John Shlien, one of Rogers' earliest students and an Emeritus Professor at Harvard, published a startling paper entitled 'A countertheory of transference'. It begins with the provocative statement: 'Transference is a fiction, invented and maintained by the therapist to protect himself from the consequences of his own behaviour' (Shlien, 1984: 153). The paper caused considerable debate and some three years later an edition of the *Person-Centered Review* was largely devoted to responses and reactions to Shlien's ideas from a number of eminent therapists of different therapeutic traditions. Rogers contributed to this symposium but by the time it was published in May 1987 he had died, at the age of 85. There is something poignant about the fact that the issue of transference should have been the subject of Rogers' last theoretical paper for, despite the controversial nature of the subject, he had not previously chosen to enter into combat on the issue.

In the *Review* article, Rogers begins by welcoming Shlien's paper as competent, timely and important. He also declares himself to be in agreement with its major thesis and is particularly delighted that it should have come from the pen of a man who was 'an enthusiastic student of Freudian analysis' before he became a client-centred practitioner. Here Rogers is relishing the opportunity to express his support for Shlien and it is not surprising that what follows contains much scarcely concealed hostility towards analytical orthodoxy. After first discussing client feelings that are an understandable response to the therapist's attitudes and behaviour, Rogers embarks upon his discussion of client reactions which are 'the emotions that have little or no relationship to the therapist's behaviour'. Such emotions he describes as truly 'transferred' from their real origin to the therapist and he labels them projections which may be positive feelings of love, sexual desire and the like or negative feelings of hatred, contempt, fear, distrust. He continues: 'Their true object may be a parent or other significant person in the client's life. Or, and this is less often recognized, they may be negative attitudes towards the self, which the client cannot bear to face.' The paragraph which follows is a clear expression of Rogers' view on how such feelings should be handled in a therapeutic relationship, and merits quoting in full:

From a client-centred point of view, it is not necessary in responding to and dealing with these feelings, to determine whether they are therapist caused or are projections. The distinction is of theoretical interest, but is not a practical problem. In the therapeutic interaction all of these

attitudes – positive or negative, ‘transference’ feelings, or therapist-caused reactions – are best dealt with in the same way. If the therapist is sensitively understanding and genuinely acceptant and nonjudgmental, therapy will move forward through these feelings. There is absolutely no need to make a special case of attitudes that are transferred to the therapist and no need for the therapist to permit the dependence that is so often a part of other forms of therapy, particularly psychoanalysis. It is entirely possible to accept dependent feelings without permitting the client to change the therapist’s role. (Rogers, 1987: 183–4)

There then follows a case example previously published in *Client-Centered Therapy* in 1951 and the article concludes with some observations about psychoanalysis which show Rogers at his most militant and aggressive. Having once more made the point that *all* feelings directed towards the therapist should be dealt with by the creation of a therapeutic relationship characterized by the core conditions, he continues:

To deal with transference feelings as a very special part of therapy, making their handling the very core of therapy, is to my mind a grave mistake. Such an approach fosters dependence and lengthens therapy. It creates a whole new problem, the only purpose of which appears to be the intellectual satisfaction of the therapist – showing the elaborateness of his or her expertise. I deplore it.

Even then Rogers has not finished and it seems as if his anger must find further expression. He challenges the analysts to present their data and provide evidence for their belief that the ‘transference neurosis’ is so important to successful therapy. Where, he asks, are the recorded interviews which would prove the point? The article ends with a challenge which, one suspects, Rogers knew was unlikely to be accepted. ‘Why the reluctance to make known what actually happens in the therapist’s dealings with this core of the analytic process? ... The questions cannot be finally answered until psychoanalysts are willing to open their work to professional scrutiny’ (Rogers, 1987: 187–8).

Research

It is difficult to accept that the formidable amount of research undertaken on client-centred therapy has been utterly in vain. While it appears true that Rogers’ original hypotheses remain untested because of faulty research design and a failure to explore the hypotheses as a complete package, there remains considerable support for the more modest assertion that the qualities of acceptance, empathy and congruence are at least connected with therapeutic effectiveness. Evidence for the potency of the facilitative conditions also comes from research in hundreds of classrooms

both in the USA (Aspy and Roebuck, 1983) and in Germany (Tausch, 1978). Clearly, we still await the necessary conditions for evaluating client-centred therapy and it remains to be seen whether the eventual breakthrough will come through the more rigorous application of the 'objective' methods of yesteryear or through the development of new research paradigms more in harmony with the spirit of the phenomenological view of reality (Mearns and McLeod, 1984). What is certain is that researchers are once more wrestling with the complexity of the task in an attempt to revive Rogers' earlier commitment to a coherent integration of theory, practice and research. In Britain recent research projects which have combined both quantitative and qualitative methodologies have provided further encouraging support for the efficacy of person-centred therapy. A recent publication by the British Association for the Person-Centred Approach stresses the importance of this new surge of research activity and of the findings which show the effectiveness of person-centred therapy in primary care settings with patients suffering from depression and anxiety, sometimes of a severe nature. What is more, person-centred therapy in the largest of all these research studies proved itself to be as effective as the much-vaunted cognitive behavioural therapy. The BAPCA publication concludes its survey of recent research with the ringing verdict: 'The importance of this recent research cannot be underestimated. Along with the cumulative effect of the fifty years research into Client-Centred Psychotherapy, the work of Friedli et al. (1997), Rowland et al. (2000) and King et al. (2000) amounts to practically 'conclusive' results in the effectiveness of the approach' (BAPCA, 2001).

Contemporary Issues

The move towards an increasingly regulated profession with an emphasis on certification, accountability and cost-effectiveness has created an environment both in Britain and elsewhere in which person-centred practitioners often find themselves on the defensive. The constant insistence on specialized training, for example, as a prerequisite for working with particular client groups runs counter to Rogers' belief that what matters most is the client's resourcefulness and the therapist's ability to offer a facilitative relationship. The current enthusiasm – mainly for financial reasons – for short-term work also runs counter to the person-centred insistence on the client's wisdom and on his or her ability to determine his or her own needs which include the desired length of therapy. In both these circumstances, however, there are signs that the

prevailing wisdom is beginning to reveal its flaws. Despite the large number of those counsellors specifically trained to help drug and alcohol abusers, for example, there is little evidence to suggest that they are having much effect and in Britain the situation is clearly getting worse. There is also increasing evidence that, while person-centred practitioners can often work happily and successfully in therapeutic relationships which are time-limited, short-term contracts are singularly inappropriate for many clients. It would seem that the clients themselves are providing increasing evidence of the short-sightedness of many current policies and that person-centred therapists will do well not to lose heart but to stick to their beliefs and swim vigorously against the prevailing tide, which may be on the turn.

As long ago as 1973 Rogers expressed himself forcefully on the subject of professionalization, regulation and certification. In a memorable phrase he stated his opinion that 'there are as many *certified* charlatans and exploiters of people as there are uncertified' and went on to describe a situation where bureaucrats rapidly dominate the scene and set a profession back enormously. He challenged the therapists of his day to sweep away all the carefully constructed procedures for professionalization and so let in a breeze of fresh air and the prospect of new creativity (Rogers, 1973). This radical voice needs to be heard again as in so many countries the heavy hand of state regulation descends. In Britain the definitive move has not yet been made and in recent weeks (2002), as the debate reaches a new intensity, Rogers' spirit has been powerfully influential in giving courage to person-centred practitioners and sympathizers who are urging extreme caution in the face of the seemingly inexorable movement towards state control (Thorne, 2002a; House, 2002).

The move towards state registration of therapists takes place against the background of a litigious and risk-conscious culture which is in danger of creating a mechanistic and impersonal approach to professional caring in order to avoid the messiness of emotional involvement with the concomitant dangers of sexual entanglement or abuse. In such a climate the person-centred therapist must resist the descent into an impersonal functionalism. Rogers' theoretical map, contrary to the view of his detractors, provides a clear picture of human development and, more importantly, of what impedes it. The meeting at relational depth which inevitably requires of the therapist a level of commitment to the client which renders him or her vulnerable cannot be simulated or avoided if there is to be real hope of counteracting the damaging effect of years of negative conditions of worth and of furthering instead the process towards self-affirmation.

Conclusion

Many people find in Rogers' writings a clear articulation of what they themselves have felt and thought confusedly for many years. Such people – and I count myself among them – respond instantly to a person who conveys powerfully what it involves to struggle towards self-acceptance and to discover a respect for one's own experience. Rogers' theoretical formulations also offer a way of relating to oneself and to others which is compelling in so far as it encourages honesty, openness, understanding and acceptant responsiveness. Rogers offers a way of being which is attractive and even seductive, for it gives absolute primacy to subjective reality and yet places this supreme value within the context of a mode of relating which promises a high level of intimacy.

Rogers' critics are for the most part resistant to such seduction. They are less inclined to attribute such overriding importance to subjective reality and doubt the capacity of human beings – even well-intentioned therapists – to embody the core conditions to the extent that Rogers advocates. They detect within Rogers' concern for the autonomy of the individual an ambiguity about the nature of the relationship which is being offered in therapy. At times the apparently self-effacing behaviour of the therapist suggests that, once the core conditions have been established, he or she only has to provide a particular psychological environment and the therapeutic process in the client will unfold spontaneously and inevitably. At other times Rogers appears to acknowledge the centrality of the therapist's own congruence and his or her willingness to be involved in a reciprocal exchange as long as there is no intention of imposing on the client's reality.

There was initially, I believe, a genuine confusion at the heart of Rogers' thinking, and his critics in one way or another tend to sniff this out. Rogers never seemed to be absolutely sure whether men and women are essentially relational beings or not. His tendency to employ images culled from agriculture and his emphasis on the actualizing tendency and the wisdom of the organism can lead to a highly positive view of the human being but one which is strangely non-relational except that the evolution of the species is seen to be part of a universal formative tendency. Because of this central confusion Rogers' critics – rightly in my view – question the nature of the relationship between therapist and client and raise doubts about Rogers' view of therapy as essentially the facilitation of inherent growth processes. Rogers' constant emphasis upon process and changingness and his apparent preference for affective as opposed to cognitive experience have led some of his critics to accuse him of,

at one and the same time, affirming the uniqueness of persons and denying them any continuing or stable identity.

For my own part, I acknowledge the inconsistencies and, at times, the logical contradictions in Rogers' point of view. I am reassured, however, by my powerful memories of the man himself. In my own relationship with him, I never for one moment feared that we would be lost in an infinite process of becoming. On the contrary, I recall many an encounter from which I gained a heightened sense of my own identity and a powerful impression of Rogers' complex but integrated personality. In practice, there was never for one moment any doubt that we were both unique and that our uniqueness was characterized by the fact that we were relational beings. Rogers' keen interest in everything around him and his capacity for drawing pleasure from his social environment provided ample evidence that he was well aware of the ways in which our social context can support personal development as well as impede it. For a man dedicated to the understanding of the subjective world of others he was wonderfully at home in the mundane world of eating, drinking and catching the post. What is more, this combination of empathic compassion and hard-headed practicality makes Rogers an admirable source of encouragement and inspiration in a world where competitive materialism and professional rivalry seem increasingly to contaminate the therapeutic enterprise.

The Overall Influence of Carl Rogers

The Legacy and Issues of Power

It is now sixteen years since Carl Rogers died and in the summer of 2002 there was a great 'Symposium' in San Diego, California, to celebrate the anniversary of his birth. In addition, it is twenty-one years since the first international forum on the person-centred approach took place in Oaxtepec in Mexico. During the intervening years a succession of such meetings (both 'forums' and 'conferences') have been convened in many different parts of the world, the latest conference being in Chicago (2000) and the most recent forum in Japan (2001). The international conference in Lisbon in 1997 saw the birth of the World Association for Person-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapy and Counseling, the statutes of which were finally ratified three years later in Chicago. At the 2002 World Congress on Psychotherapy in Vienna the approach was strongly represented by a number of leading practitioners. In short, there is no doubt that Carl Rogers' legacy is powerfully alive and has permeated the world of counselling and psychotherapy on a global scale. It is perhaps an appropriate time therefore to attempt a review of the nature of his influence, not only on therapy but on the many other arenas in which he found himself increasingly involved as his interests took him beyond the consulting room.

Rogers himself was not greatly bothered, it seems, about the preservation of his ideas or the continuation of the approach as a discrete model for conducting therapy. Maria Bowen in her tribute to his memory at the event convened to celebrate his life and work shortly after his death expressed her own frustration and even anger at Rogers' apparent indifference to his legacy. 'I asked him: "Don't you care about the future of your ideas?" He answered, "No, I don't, and I wish you would also stop caring so much. I know I can't control it, and you can't either. It will take the direction that the group wants, so why don't you just relax?"' (Bowen, 1987).

I have two personal memories of his reluctance to be drawn into discussions about the future. The first comes from the forum at Oaxtepec when one evening the community began to explore the idea of establishing an international association (which was only to happen some fifteen years later). Rogers quietly got up and left the meeting without anyone quite noticing that he had gone. The second occasion took place in England at Ambleside in the Lake District during a residential week convened by the Facilitator Development Institute. Several staff members had gathered in Carl's room rather late in the evening and, again, the conversation turned to the future and to the need to establish structures of some kind to ensure the survival of the approach. To everyone's astonishment Carl began to undress, put on his pyjamas and slipped into bed. As he switched off his bedside lamp, we crept away somewhat shamefacedly, more conscious than we had ever been that, for Carl, the future had to be trusted to look after itself.

Rogers' attitude and behaviour as exemplified in these incidents reveal among other things his deep ambivalence about the exercise of power. Many times in his professional life he came into conflict with those who, as he perceived it, were more interested in wielding power and knowledge to bolster their own esteem than in truly helping their clients. With his deep trust in the individual's own wisdom and resourcefulness, he was passionately concerned not to undermine or take away from clients the inherent ability to find their own direction. For him, what could appear to be expertise or interpretative insightfulness was, in fact, an abuse of power on the part of the therapist and constituted a damaging disrespect for the client's own capacities. There can be little doubt that he saw the same power-mongering at work in many professional contexts and not least in the structures and policies of professional associations. It is scarcely surprising, then, that he showed such indifference, bordering on hostility, to the creation of a person-centred organization to guard the future of the approach on the international stage. Where national associations had already been developed, Rogers saw all the signs of rivalry and rigidity which sadly confirmed his worst fears.

The deep respect for personal autonomy and the declared intent to empower others are central to the theory and practice of person-centred therapy, but there can be little doubt that these same core beliefs have made it difficult for Rogers' followers to acknowledge, let alone utilize, their corporate power. Even today there are those in the person-centred community who distrust profoundly all institutions and associations and refuse to believe that a person-centred association, simply by claiming the name, can turn out

differently. There is no denying, too, that Rogers himself became disenchanted in the latter part of his life with universities and professional organizations alike, and ultimately found refuge in the creation of the Center for Studies of the Person only to discover that, even there, power struggles were all too frequent. The labour and birth pains of the World Association have been considerable and it is still early days to predict whether or not it will grow in strength and prestige or fall victim to internal contradictions. For the moment, though, from its somewhat shaky beginnings, it seems to be winning the allegiance of growing numbers of person-centred practitioners and its stimulating international journal co-edited by Professors Robert Elliott of Canada, Dave Mearns of Scotland and Peter Schmid of Austria should do much to enhance the credibility of the approach and to demonstrate to the psychotherapy world in general the vitality and the development of person-centred theory and clinical practice.

Current Trends and Conflicts

At a time when the international conferences draw participants from as many as thirty different nations with representatives from Africa, South America, Japan, China and most European countries, including those that were formerly part of the Soviet Union, it is perhaps sad and surprising that in the United States of America, the approach is now all but invisible as a distinctive therapeutic orientation. It would seem that although Rogers himself continues to be remembered and respected in his country of origin, person-centred therapy is viewed as a relic of yesteryear, a fine humanistic monument to an age which is now past. There can be little doubt that the 'managed care' movement in the United States with its emphasis on 'empirically validated therapies' together with the power of the medical insurance companies has profoundly undermined the contribution not only of person-centred therapy but of many other humanistic approaches. Psychoanalytical practitioners, too, have felt the cold winds of the cost-effective, solution-focused culture which is wedded to the concept of guaranteed outcomes provided by pragmatic experts. Where person-centred therapists continue to practise in the United States they tend to be elderly people trained by Rogers himself or his close associates in the 1950s and 1960s, or those who hide their person-centred credentials beneath an integrative or eclectic cloak.

This latter group can be replicated in many other countries not least in Great Britain where there are those who consider themselves to be part of the person-centred 'fold' who nonetheless

openly acknowledge that they no longer believe the traditional core conditions 'to be both necessary and sufficient' for ensuring therapeutic movement. At the first international conference in Leuven, Belgium, in 1989, the distinguished German scholar and practitioner, Reinhard Tausch, gave a provocative paper in which he declared that the introduction of skills and strategies culled from other therapeutic orientations was fast becoming a 'client-centred necessity'. He advocated as 'desirable supplementations' such adjuncts as relaxation techniques, non-systematic behavioural counselling, problem analysis and even medical treatment and self-help books. What is more, Tausch based his advocacy of such an approach on clinical experience and on research findings. He asserted authoritatively:

It is obvious from daily practical experience that we as client-centred psychotherapists help some of our clients only insufficiently. This is in agreement with our empirical results from the doctoral theses of a research project on individual therapies with approximately 200 clients, and on group-psychotherapy with 350 clients. (Tausch, 1990: 447)

Such a position is far removed from that of those who keenly defend what they perceive as the essence of the client-centred/person-centred paradigm. A major 'champion' of what might be called the 'purist' position is Professor Jerold Bozarth of Georgia University in the United States who in a succession of publications seeks to underline the radical and revolutionary nature of Rogers' belief in the centrality of the client's direction, the client's pace and the client's unique way of being (see particularly Bozarth, 1998). For Bozarth and others there is, underpinning the approach, a functional premise which, by definition, rules out other therapist intentions. Seen in this light, attempts to add other therapeutic methods to person-centred therapy constitute a betrayal and a grave misunderstanding of its essential core. Bozarth summed up his position, which is shared by many, in the paper he delivered at the first international conference in Leuven:

It is a functional premise that precludes other therapist intentions The therapist cannot be up to other things, have other intentions without violating the essence of client-centered/person-centered therapy. To be up to other things – whatever they might be – is a 'yes, but' reaction to the essence of the approach. (Bozarth, 1990: 63, original italics).

Bozarth and his associates – and, indeed, any person-centred practitioner who has received a thorough training in the approach – would be horrified at some of the entries in the current UK Directory of Counselling and Psychotherapy published by the

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. In this much consulted reference book there are those who, astonishingly, describe themselves variously as 'psychodynamic, person-centred', 'cognitive behavioural, person-centred' or even, in an orgy of bizarre eclecticism, as 'psychodynamic, gestaltist, transpersonal, person-centred'. Such blatant violation of any claim to 'purism', while being infuriating to the point of exasperation for those who truly embrace person-centred theory and practice, points to a more indirect outcome of Rogers' pervasive influence. Peter Schmid in a paper delivered at the Lisbon Conference in 1997 referred, half in amusement and half in ironic pride, to the fact that in recent times even behaviour therapists, psychoanalysts and systemic therapists have come to recognize the central importance of the actual relationship between therapist and client and take the core conditions – or their understanding of them – for granted. Schmid goes on to record his astonishment at hearing psychoanalysts at the World Congress in 1996 promoting 'new positions' in their practice which were adopted by person-centred practitioners nearly fifty years ago (Schmid, 2000). It is at one and the same time a mark both of Rogers' powerful influence on the whole psychotherapeutic field and also of his reluctance to exert power that so often person-centred ideas and applications are incorporated into other orientations without acknowledgement of their source and often, one suspects, in genuine ignorance of their originator. For someone who believed that the best facilitator is the one who can take pleasure in a group's belief that whatever they have achieved is the result of their own efforts, this state of affairs must be immensely satisfying. For Rogers' successors on the terrestrial plane, however, the failure of practitioners from other orientations to be conscious of, let alone to acknowledge, their indebtedness is often a source of bewilderment and understandable resentment. Peter Schmid, it seems, is neither bewildered nor resentful. Like Rogers, he is not possessive of ideas and can take genuine pleasure that the person-centred influence is surreptitiously permeating into unexpected quarters. The danger for Schmid lies not in the appropriation or even the misappropriation of person-centred insights by other orientations but in the fear that can afflict genuine person-centred practitioners if they see themselves on a 'sinking ship' whose mission is completed and whose glory lies in the past. For Schmid, nothing could be further from the truth. On the contrary, he believes that the future of the approach is assured and that its radicalism, profound humanism and critical potential have not yet been fully grasped and exploited. Furthermore the principles of

the new World Association commit its members to 'an openness to the development and elaboration of person-centered and experiential theory in the light of current and future practice and research' (WAPCEPC, 2000). This, then, is an approach which, according to Schmid, has yet to grasp fully the real implications of its core beliefs and whose World Association proclaims a firm hope in its further evolution. If both these points of view are embraced with conviction it would seem possible that Rogers' legacy to the world of psychotherapy and counselling has yet to reveal its full potential.

The Case of Eugene Gendlin

The fact that the World Association has in its title the word 'experiential' provides evidence that one important conflict has, at least for the moment, been uneasily resolved. From the outset in 1989, the international conferences have welcomed those practitioners for whom not only Carl Rogers but also Eugene Gendlin constitute major influences. The incorporation of Gendlin's 'experiential psychotherapy' into the name of the World Association, sends out the signal that experiential practitioners are not to be considered heretics and tolerated with difficulty but are bona fide members of the person-centred 'family'. It is also perhaps relevant that it is Gendlin who was invited to provide the Foreword for the 'oral history' of Rogers' life and career which was published to coincide with the recent Symposium in California (Rogers and Russell, 2002).

Gendlin, a former close associate of Rogers, conceptualized experiential psychotherapy in the 1960s and has always viewed it as theoretically consistent with and in some ways an improvement on client-centred therapy. Certainly Gendlin has the distinction of being the first client-centred therapist to develop a distinctive approach, with its own enthusiastic adherents, which is clearly derived from Rogers' work. Gendlin's major contribution lies in his understanding of the experiencing process which takes place within the client during therapy. He believes that therapeutic movement occurs when the level of experiencing is high and is accompanied by a bodily felt sense. Gendlin developed a method, which he calls 'focusing', whereby the therapist could assist the client to achieve such a level of experiencing and to use specific bodily feelings as a referent for discovering new meanings (Gendlin, 1978). Gendlin maintains that focusing is a way of enabling clients to make contact with the deepest levels of experience by paying attention to an unclear sense of 'something there'.

He is understandably enthusiastic about 'focusing' and he and his associates have taught the technique to thousands of people in the past thirty years. There is no doubt that it can be powerfully effective in enabling clients to locate and clarify feelings that are on the 'edge of awareness'. For many therapists, who would claim the label experiential rather than client-centred, focusing is an activity which they would aim to commend to their clients and it is precisely this aim that continues to bring down upon Gendlin and his followers the wrath of the 'purists'. Barbara Temaner Brodley has been particularly critical, for she sees the experiential therapists as essentially directive in intent and therefore as having forsaken the basic principles of client-centred therapy.

The theory as written and illustrated by Gendlin makes it clear that the therapist's primary and active responsibility – that is, what the therapist should do in working with his client – is to *direct* the client toward the focused experiencing process and help the client to maintain a 'high experiencing level'. (Temaner Brodley, 1990: 89)

Critics of experiential therapy see it as essentially lacking in trust that the client will find his or her own way forward without the active and directive intervention of the therapist in relation to the experiencing process. It is no longer the primary concern of the therapist to provide the therapeutic attitudes but rather to ensure that the client experiences in the manner and at the level for therapy to occur.

In answer to questions at the Leuven conference Gendlin categorically refuted the suggestion that experiential therapy is a false development from Rogers' work. In reply to Barbara Temaner Brodley's challenge to explore the difference between client-centred and experiential psychotherapy, he said:

I would take client-centered therapy to be the larger thing What I call focusing is paying attention inwardly to that unclear sense of something there. Now surely therapy and personal development are much bigger things than that. Focusing is a very deliberate way to touch something inside. I have seen that help the bigger process. The bigger process comes from behind you and takes you and expands you, and you do not know what is going to happen. Whereas focusing is this very deliberate thing where an 'I' is attending to an 'it'. I think it is very valuable. But surely it is not therapy. Therapy is a relationship, therapy is a process of development. These focusing steps I described come in client-centered therapy. That is where I learnt them from, that is where I saw them and if you observe your clients, you will see that they are silent before these steps typically come. (Gendlin, 1990: 222)

Doubtless the debate will continue but it is noticeable that with the passage of time much of the heat seems to have gone out of the

conflict. The experiential therapists were major contributors at both the Lisbon and Chicago conferences and between them represented America, Europe and Asia (e.g. Leijssen et al., 2000; Nakata, 2000; Purton, 2002; Hendricks, 2002). Gendlin himself is a major player on the world stage and the fact that he is also a well-respected philosopher commends him to the many person-centred practitioners whose attitude towards psychology is at best ambivalent. The 'purists', while still uncomfortable at times with these increasingly self-confident 'cousins', are now more likely to reserve their most passionate criticism for those who seek to integrate diverse skills and strategies from other orientations on the specious grounds that to be 'person-centred' means tailoring the treatment model to meet the needs of each unique client.

Natalie Rogers and Expressive Therapy

Towards the end of his life Rogers established a close professional relationship with his daughter, Natalie, who, together with Maria Bowen, became a major force in enabling her father to become responsive once more to the spiritual dimension of experience. In addition, Natalie dared to introduce Rogers to her therapeutic work in the expressive arts and there are charming photographs of father and daughter working together with groups in 'person-centered expressive therapy' workshops. Natalie established the Person-centered Expressive Therapy Institute in Santa Rosa, California, which offers training for those therapists wishing to work with the expressive arts while remaining true to the person-centred philosophy. Movement, art, music, pottery, dream exploration and writing all feature in this approach, and clients who have grave difficulty in expressing themselves verbally find new possibilities for self-expression through essentially non-verbal channels. The approach attracts the inevitable criticism that it fosters too directive an attitude in the therapist but the creation of the facilitative conditions is essential to its success and there is no sense in which clients are coerced into forms of expression which they have not willingly embraced. Rogers is sometimes criticized for being altogether too verbal in his approach and for pandering to the articulate middle class. It is somehow appropriate that his daughter should be chiefly instrumental in the training of person-centred therapists for whom verbalization is the least preferred mode of expression (Rogers, 1993).

Natalie Rogers has shown formidable energy and commitment in the last fifteen years or so and has taken her work and its associated training to many parts of the world including Great Britain.

The affiliated programmes of the Santa Rosa Institute, together with the pioneering work of Liesl Silverstone's Person-Centred Art Therapy Centre in London, have ensured that in Britain the person-centred approach and the expressive arts are recognized as wholly compatible (Silverstone, 1997). International conferences, too, bear witness to the vitality of this extension of Rogers' therapeutic work.

Development of Theory

Reference has already been made in the previous chapter to the resurgence of interest (somewhat low-key since the Wisconsin days) in the application of person-centred therapy to those suffering from severe mental disorders. Such work has required an elaboration or at the least a reformulation of person-centred theory in the light of new challenges. There has perhaps been less incentive to undertake such work in the context of more 'conventional' person-centred therapy where Rogers' original theories, formulated in the 1950s, continue to offer a seemingly sound basis for practice. It is Peter Schmid, however, who has consistently drawn attention to the fact that whereas Rogers has left an elaborated theory from the first half of his work (Rogers, 1959) he failed to develop his theoretical ideas in any structured way to incorporate the experiences and discoveries of his final twenty years (e.g. Schmid, 2000). As a result the years of encounter group experience, the cross-cultural community building, the profound awareness of interconnectedness when the quality of presence is heightened, the tentative movement into altered states of consciousness – none of these is reflected in an elaborated theoretical framework which takes full cognizance of the individual as a social being. The result, Schmid believes, is that person-centred therapy, both in the eyes of many of its critics and in its own theoretical statements, can present a one-sided, individualistic image which is no longer representative of what person-centred practitioners believe or of what they do.

Schmid's challenge has not gone unheeded and the most recent international conference in Chicago saw several presentations where such concepts as the actualizing tendency, the nature of the self and the self-concept, the quality of presence, the interrelatedness of the core conditions, the practice of empathy and the therapeutic process were all being viewed with fresh insight and in the light of clinical experience. In Britain examples of this attempt to bring theory into line with emerging practice are to be found in a recent book which I have co-authored with my colleague, Dave Mearns, where we are at pains not only to present new ideas

about, for example, the nature of the self and the actualizing tendency, but also to situate person-centred therapy in the context of a rapidly changing society and of a world which trembles on the verge of catastrophe. With Schmid, too, we believe that the radical nature of the person-centred paradigm has still not been fully grasped and we attempt to spell this out in ways which have undoubtedly entailed not only a costly battle with words but also a stark challenge to our own integrity (Mearns and Thorne, 2000). It is my hope that in the years ahead Rogers' example and influence will continue to encourage a willingness among practitioners and researchers to give primacy to the advancement of theory in the light of clinical practice and, at the same time, to enter ever more deeply into the mystery of the human person and the awesome complexity of human relationship.

Indirect Influence

On many occasions, both in private and in his published articles and books, Rogers expressed awe and amazement at the influence his work had had in various professional spheres and in many different countries. In part, the influence is attributable to his prolific writing: Rogers wrote sixteen books and more than 200 professional articles and research studies, which were read and continue to be read by many thousands of people. He was a communicator of rare ability and his books in particular have a quality about them which tends to make the reader come away from them feeling good.

This capacity to validate others through the written word is a natural outcome of Rogers' deep respect for the uniqueness of persons and of his desire to facilitate their development. There are some, however, who believe that this very capacity has led to the unfortunate situation where Rogers can appear to be giving his blessing to almost any form of therapy on the score that every practitioner must find his own style and way of operating. It is as if Rogers, through his deep acceptance and empathic understanding, has given licence to therapists of widely differing orientations to claim allegiance to him – and even to call themselves client-centred or person-centred – although they have, in fact, departed completely from the basic philosophy and principles of the approach he advocates. The entries in the United Kingdom Directory of Counselling and Psychotherapy, referred to earlier, provide unfortunate evidence of this widespread tendency which shows little sign of abating. For members of the 'purist' camp this is intolerable

and that is why they are so uneasy about their 'supplementation' colleagues. C.H. Patterson, in a heartfelt article in the special issue of the *Person-Centered Review* to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the person-centred approach, sums the matter up with characteristic bluntness:

Are there no limits to what can be called client-centered? Is anything that is done by a therapist claiming to be client-centered actually client-centered? Did Rogers, in his modesty and openness to new ideas, issue a licence for client-centered therapists to do whatever they feel like doing and still claim to be client-centered? (Patterson, 1990: 427)

We are left, then, with the overwhelming impression that Rogers' indirect influence on the whole field of counselling and psychotherapy has been immense, and yet at the same time it seems impossibly difficult to evaluate how the influence has been experienced and received. David Cain, in his editorial to the fiftieth anniversary edition of the *Person-Centered Review* struggles with the same issue and is bold enough to attempt a more precise account of Rogers' contribution. His list of major ways in which Rogers and his colleagues influenced the whole field of counselling and psychotherapy includes:

- 1 Emphasizing the importance of the therapeutic relationship as a healing agent in therapy.
- 2 Articulating a view of the person as inherently resourceful and self-actualizing.
- 3 Developing the art of listening and understanding and demonstrating its therapeutic effect on the client.
- 4 Introducing the term, *client* as opposed to *patient*, to convey greater respect, dignity and equality for the person seeking help.
- 5 Initiating the sound recordings of therapeutic interviews for learning purposes and informal research.
- 6 Initiating scientific research on the process and outcome of psychotherapy.
- 7 Paving the way for psychologists and other non-medical professionals to engage in the practice of psychotherapy. (Cain, 1990: 358)

Later in his article, Cain observes:

To a large degree Rogers' impact has been indirect. Consequently, the magnitude of his impact is difficult to assess. If I were to venture a guess about how Rogers' contributions might be assessed on their 100th anniversary (2040), I would predict that the most enduring and meaningful contributions for which he will be remembered are the therapeutic impact of *listening* and the quality of the *therapist-client relationship*. Although many practitioners do not find Rogers' style of listening and

responding congenial, almost all recognize the importance of empathy and the desirability of a sound working relationship with the client. (Cain, 1990: 357-8)

I find myself in broad agreement with Cain and would like to believe that his overall judgement is soundly based. I realize, however, that 'recognizing the importance of empathy' is not the same as being able to offer empathy and I am reminded of Rogers' own despair at the lack of training of many therapists in developing their empathic capacities. This, in turn, makes me question whether Rogers' example has really brought about a revolution in the art of listening. Eugene Gendlin is certainly doubtful about this and goes so far as to attach blame to client-centred practitioners for their failure to communicate the power of listening to colleagues from other orientations. At the Leuven conference he addressed this issue with some passion:

It is unbelievable that after all these years, we have totally failed to communicate client-centered listening in such a way that *other* practitioners could have it. How can they go so long without it? How can they be so stupid? But then, I realize, that is largely our fault. We have told them that if one does client-centered listening, then one does nothing else, so, of course, they cannot have it because they are already doing something else and they know that that is helpful. They are not going to give that up. They cannot 'unknow' what they know. (Gendlin, 1990: 207)

Doubtless many from the 'purist' camp would question the motivation behind Gendlin's listening, yet his comment throws a shadow over the perhaps too readily accepted assumption that Rogers has brought about a revolution in therapists' ability to listen and to empathize. It may be that, thanks to Rogers and his writings, there is now a much greater *awareness* of the importance of listening and of empathy in the therapeutic relationship, but awareness of itself does not necessarily mean that there is any great increase in the *ability* of most therapists to listen and to empathize.

Training

Whereas in the United States it is now difficult to locate courses and institutes which are committed to offering training in person-centred therapy as opposed to incorporating 'modules' or 'units' on person-centred work, the situation in Europe is spectacularly different. When in 1998 my colleague, Elke Lambers, and I co-edited a book to bring the contributions of European person-centred

practitioners to the attention of the British person-centred community, we were startled to discover how many opportunities existed for full-scale training in the approach (Thorne and Lambers, 1998). In the fourteen countries which we explored in some detail no fewer than seventy-five recognized courses were functioning, many of them within university settings and others in private institutes of varying sizes. In the last four years the number has undoubtedly grown and in Great Britain alone there are now more than twenty person-centred courses most of which are accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. The influence of these courses and of the universities and institutes which offer them is clearly enormous as is the contribution of many national associations to the professional world of counselling and psychotherapy in their respective countries. In several European countries where psychotherapy is strictly regulated by the state, person-centred therapy nonetheless features as a mainstream orientation, and where such statutory regulation does not exist the approach is often well placed to benefit from such freedom. International conferences and forums provide substantial evidence that training programmes are flourishing and developing in many other countries as well, not least in South America and Japan.

Rogers would, I think, be astonished at such developments (and it was striking how moved – and surprised – Natalie Rogers was on a recent visit to Britain to find the approach in such good heart) although I can imagine that he might also have some misgivings. He would fear that the apparent ‘success’ of the approach might lead to stultification and rigidity and his experience of universities, especially, would make him wary of institutional bureaucracy and soullessness. When in the final years of his life he lent his name and support to the work of the Person-Centered Approach Institute International founded by the indefatigable Dr Chuck Devonshire and the charismatic Italian, Dr Alberto Zucconi, Rogers, while committing himself wholeheartedly to the concept of training for person-centred therapists, was at pains to ensure that the Institute’s programmes and policies allowed for the maximum flexibility and respect for the unique needs and capacities of the participants. Undoubtedly this empowering and respectful spirit has permeated many of the training institutes of Europe and it is already clear that the pioneering work of Dr Devonshire in particular has been immensely influential. Indeed, it is possible in retrospect to wonder whether Rogers, through his consistent support and encouragement of Devonshire, who eventually resigned his academic post in the United States to devote himself to his European ‘outreach’, already foresaw in the late 1970s that it was

ultimately to Europe that person-centred therapy would 'come home'. Be that as it may, what may have seemed at one time a very American import has turned out to be well grounded in a European tradition which stretches back to Thomas Aquinas and the early Church Fathers and for that reason, perhaps, is revealing its enduring qualities in a European context while in the United States it sometimes seems little more than a passing fashion of yesteryear. It could also be that the long tradition of European universities has made them more open to accommodating an apparently unconventional discipline which does not sit too comfortably in any of the more established faculties. Certainly in Britain, as I have myself discovered in the University of East Anglia, it is often the Schools of Education which act as hosts to person-centred courses and research and have less difficulty in accepting and approving experiential learning and the need for self and peer assessment. Rogers, I am sure, would enjoy the experience of sitting on the examination board of a British university in the presence of a Belgian external examiner and endorsing the assessments made by trainees themselves on their fitness to practise as person-centred therapists. If he cared to look in, he could sample just such an experience at the University of East Anglia.

Beyond the Consulting Room

Unlike most other professional therapists Rogers was not content to remain in his consulting room. There are those who profoundly regret this and would have much preferred him to have stayed at the University of Chicago and to have continued in patient clinical practice and research until retirement, to the undoubted benefit of subsequent generations of therapists throughout the world. Instead he chose to move out into the untidy confusion of encounter groups, cross-cultural communication, peace work and what cynics often regarded as a mission to convert the world to the person-centred approach. Some have never forgiven him for this apparent grandiosity of intent, and one of his former students and associates, Dr Bill Coulson, hit the headlines, not long after Rogers' death, by launching a full-scale attack on what he considered the grave error Rogers made of generalizing from insights formulated in the counselling room to conclusions about how life should be lived in families, schools and society at large. Coulson went on to appear on American radio and television and testified before legislative committees on education, drug abuse and juvenile delinquency. He expressed the opinion that both he and Rogers owed the nation's parents an apology for having so grievously misled

them into thinking that their children should be offered the core conditions and encouraged to make up their own minds about the direction of their lives. So extreme did Coulson become in his denigration of the ideas of his former mentor, colleague and friend that he went so far as to imply that Rogers repudiated his philosophy late in life and acknowledged that he was in error. Howard Kirschenbaum, Rogers' biographer, felt obliged to answer Coulson and dismissed as totally without foundation the suggestion that Rogers in any way repudiated his beliefs (Kirschenbaum, 1991). What is particularly interesting about this whole bizarre sequence of events was Coulson's apparent conviction that Rogers' ideas had had and were continuing to have such a powerful effect on people's lives. The passion and intensity of Coulson's campaign could only be explained by his belief that Rogers' ideas were transforming society and that the transformation was pernicious.

It is perhaps significant that Bill Coulson was and remains a committed Roman Catholic and it appears that his zeal was fired by his realization that Rogers' ideas and beliefs had become something of a modern-day religious system. Interestingly, Coulson did not refute the basic tenets of client-centred therapy, which he still believed to be correct: his quarrel was with the application of discoveries made about psychotherapy to other areas of human life – notably education and the family unit. The issues at the heart of Coulson's attack are, I believe, both fascinating and important.

As someone who has frequently facilitated person-centred encounter groups in many parts of the world and often been a member of cross-cultural communities, I am well aware of the transforming effect such groups can have on many participants. There is a sense in which these experiences can lead to a greatly heightened sense of awareness and a much enhanced feeling both of self-worth and of interconnectedness with others. The encounter group can provide an avenue into a level of experiencing which can appropriately be described as spiritual, mystical, transcendental (Thorne, 1988: 201). Such experiences are naturally short-lived, but they touch people at the deepest level and often leave them both exhilarated and disturbed. For those who have no previous experience of such intensity and no religious or spiritual framework into which they can 'fit' what has happened to them, the underpinning philosophy of Rogers' work can become their credo. What they have experienced is of a spiritual order so it is understandable that they should elevate Rogers' ideas and the person-centred 'movement' to the same level. Rogers' ideas then become all-embracing and affect every aspect of their lives – and that, for Bill Coulson, was where the trouble began.

Coulson's perturbation was foreshadowed by Paul Vitz in his book *Psychology as Religion* which appeared in 1977 (revised in 1994) and to which reference was made in the previous chapter. Vitz argues persuasively that the most direct source for what he describes as contemporary 'humanistic selfism' is Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* which first appeared in 1841. The book was an influential attack on Christianity in so far as Feuerbach postulated that God is merely the projected essence of man and that the highest law of ethics is that man's selfless love for humanity constitutes salvation. Feuerbach argued that what was formerly viewed and worshipped as God is now recognized as something human. Man becomes man's God. Feuerbach, in Vitz's estimation, directly or indirectly affected the thinking of Marx, Nietzsche, Huxley, John Stuart Mill and – most significantly – Freud and Dewey. Rogers fits neatly at the end of this line of descent as the disciple of Dewey through the mediation of William Heard Kilpatrick.

Vitz is not content with citing Rogers' essentially anti-Christian precursors. He discovers that in the United States there were popular Protestant ministers during the period from 1920 to the mid-1950s who embraced such concepts as 'self-realization', 'becoming a real person' and the primacy of becoming over being without abandoning the Christian church. In Vitz's eyes their Christianity was a strangely emasculated and superficial version of the true faith yet it is clear that their message had great appeal for many Americans who did not wish to jettison a religious view of reality. Vitz quotes in particular the work of Harry Emerson Fosdick and Norman Vincent Peale and draws somewhat ironical attention to the fact that Fosdick's *On Being a Real Person* (1943) preceded Rogers' *On Becoming a Person* by almost twenty years. Both Fosdick and Peale were deeply involved in pastoral counselling and drew extensively on contemporary psychological insights. Vitz notes that for Fosdick integration and self-realization replaced the theological concept of salvation. In Vitz's view the period of Fosdick and Peale was one of transition, which responded to the needs of a population disenchanted with basic Christian theology and ignorant of real spirituality but still unwilling to relinquish a religious framework. The post-World War II generation, however, was ready for a humanistic selfism which had finally lost the trappings of the diluted Christianity of their parents' generation. The time was ripe for humanistic psychology to come into its own and Carl Rogers was to become the acknowledged leader not only of a psychological 'third force' to challenge the ascendancy of analysis and behaviourism but also, in Vitz's eyes, of an applied philosophy which amounted to a new secular religion (Vitz, 1977: 66-82).

Vitz and other writers find further historical precedents for Rogers' later work with encounter groups and large communities in the Christian pietism and Jewish Hasidism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Fascinating as these similarities are, their chief relevance in attempting to assess Rogers' overall influence lies in the fact that experiences of personal growth and interpersonal intimacy akin to those recorded by participants in person-centred contexts have in the past commonly been associated with a religious and spiritual understanding of reality. It is scarcely surprising that at the present time the process seems to be operating in the reverse direction: the 'secular' experience of person-centred groups in particular seems for some people to open up a channel into spiritual terrain which has previously remained unexplored and whose very existence has been denied.

A Spiritual Pioneer

It is my own conviction that Rogers' early experiences, however perverse the theology underpinning them, ensured that his understanding of subjective phenomena and of interpersonal relationships could not in the end fail to embrace what, in his own words, he described as the transcendent, the indescribable, the spiritual. For Coulson and for Vitz such language is presumably a sinister indication of the grandiosity of a psychotherapeutic approach which aspires to become a philosophy of life or, even worse, a substitute religion. Both condemn Rogers as hostile to true religion and particularly to Christianity and see his ideas as destructive of family life and detrimental to the creation of a responsible society. Vitz, indeed, places Rogers at the end of a line of thinkers who have consistently undermined Christianity since the nineteenth century. My own perception is radically different. Paradoxically, the vehemence of the attack on Rogers by such Christian apologists as Vitz and Coulson serves to reinforce my conviction that Rogers' deep ambivalence towards institutional religion is an inevitable outcome not only of his own negative experience of a constraining theology but also of his openness to experience and thus to spiritual reality. The evidence, I believe, is overwhelming that Rogers in his deep respect for human beings and in his trust in the actualizing tendency has enabled many to discover that at the deepest centre of the person is the human spirit which is open to the transcendent. This discovery, which is the very essence of spirituality, often results in a move towards a belief in God and in the divine quality inherent in men and women which would previously have been inconceivable for those who thus find

themselves unexpectedly launched on a spiritual journey. A few years from now it is likely that Rogers will be remembered not so much as the founder of a new school of psychotherapy but as a psychologist whose work made it possible for men and women to apprehend spiritual reality at a time when conventional religion had lost its power to capture the minds and imaginations of the vast majority. The spiritual thread in Rogers' work that remained covert and even denied for most of his professional life eventually emerges not as a mysterious dimension but as the outcome of faith in the actualizing tendency and in the power of the core conditions to bring about transformation. When Rogers spoke in 1986 of inner spirit touching inner spirit and of a therapeutic relationship transcending itself and becoming 'part of something larger' he was not deserting the 'third force' of humanistic psychology and throwing in his lot with the 'fourth force' of the transpersonal psychologists. Rogers did not set out in any conscious and deliberate way to give his 'presence' to clients and thus to sweep them up into a new spiritual reality. This fourth characteristic, however it is defined, was simply the outcome of his trust in the client's actualizing tendency and his commitment to the offering of the core conditions. And yet, as he discovered, and with him countless others whether therapists or clients, facilitators or members of encounter groups, the effect is totally transforming for it enables transcendence to occur so that a new perspective can be achieved. As I have written elsewhere:

Always there is a sense of well-being, of it being good to be alive and this in spite of the fact that problems or difficulties which confront the client remain apparently unchanged and as intractable as ever. Life is good and life is impossible, long live life. (Thorne, 1985: 10)

Thoroughgoing phenomenologist that he was, Rogers never attempted to impose his version of reality on anyone else, and the same remains true when we speak of a spiritual or transcendent reality. In a remarkable article written in 1978, 'Do we need "a" reality?', Rogers concluded:

I, and many others, have come to a new realization. It is this: The only reality I can possibly know is the world as *I* perceive and experience it at this moment. The only reality you can possibly know is the world as *you* perceive and experience it at this moment. And the only certainty is that those perceived realities are different. There are as many 'real worlds' as there are people! This creates a most burdensome dilemma, one never before experienced in history. (Rogers, 1978: 7)

It is nonetheless this 'burdensome dilemma' which Rogers' work enables us to shoulder and through it to discover freedom in

transcendence. The spiritual world to which the person-centred approach often gives access is not caught up in dogmatic formulations or ethical certainties for it, too, has as many facets as there are people who experience it.

Rogers dreamt of a world where society was based on the hypothesis of multiple realities and believed that such a society would not be characterized by selfishness and anarchy. He had a vision of a community of persons no longer motivated by a blind commitment to a cause or creed or view of reality, but by a common commitment to each other as separate persons with their own separate realities. As he put it: 'The natural human tendency to care for another would no longer be "I care for you because you are the same as I" but, instead, "I prize and treasure you because you are different from me"' (Rogers, 1978: 9).

The most far-reaching of Rogers' many contributions may well turn out to be this assurance that in order to affirm our natures and our interconnectedness we do not have to put on the straitjacket of a common creed or shared dogma but can celebrate the mysterious paradox of our uniqueness and our membership one of another. Since the events of 11 September 2001 no message can have greater urgency and I have argued elsewhere (Thorne, 2002b) that it may be that the person-centred approach has a significant contribution to make to the healing of the nations. With Ken Wilber (Wilber, 1998), I am firmly of the opinion that it is the mystical strand in all the great world faiths which points to a hope beyond the apparent irreconcilability of dogmatic formulations. The fact that many person-centred practitioners are drawn to Buddhism and that the approach is alive and well in Japan as well as in largely Catholic South America suggests that Rogers' ideas and the transcendent experience to which they give access have the capacity to engender dialogue where previously there was conflict and mutual suspicion. When Rogers remarked during an interview given in the last year of his life that he was 'too religious to be religious' (Baldwin, 2000: 35) he was pointing to a level of experiencing which suggests not the death of religion but a transformative evolution of religious understanding of which the world stands desperately in need.

Tributes in 2002

In the early summer of 2002 the British independent journal for therapeutic practitioners, *Ipnois*, devoted most of an edition to a celebration of the centenary of Carl Rogers' birth. The editor was successful in persuading many leading person-centred therapists to contribute to this issue of the journal and it seems appropriate

to conclude this chapter and the book by drawing on an uncommonly rich source of material. Between them the contributors point not only to the immense legacy which Rogers has left to the world but also to his continuing importance at the present time. Throughout his professional life Rogers never ceased to be both innovative and provocative and it would seem that for his successors he continues to provide the inspiration without which psychotherapy and counselling run the risk of becoming little more than a collusive activity for propping up a dysfunctional culture.

Colin Lago is the Director of the University Counselling Service at the University of Sheffield and has for more than twenty years involved himself deeply in cross-cultural work and the facilitation of large groups.

To me Carl ranks alongside others that I have found truly inspiring including people like Gandhi, Mandela, Martin Luther King, Paolo Freire ... his gift for sensitive communicative capacity I believe was outstanding. I have seen him offer demonstration interviews in front of 300 people as well as facilitate large groups and his various dialogues with key figures in the 50s, 60s and 70s are fascinating to listen to now and indeed to study. (Lago, 2002)

David Brazier holds a PhD in Buddhist psychology and is the author of *Beyond Carl Rogers* (Brazier, 1993) and *Zen Therapy* (Brazier, 1995).

Perhaps it is time for a new Rogers to arise. Do we not stand in need of somebody who can make a direct appeal to the human heart and exorcise 'technique' again as only he could? Since his time, therapy has subsided again into a quest for safety and respectability. There was nothing more alien to Rogers than the idea of standardization. Rogers listened to individuals. His writings return again and again to what was said to him by this person or that person, each unique and each offering a special quality of personal creativity. He listened and he trusted. Because he trusted, he was willing to take risks. He enjoyed doing so. He enjoyed learning. He had no time for the approach that sees education as primarily a search for credentials. He liked things to be on a human scale. He was frugal and unassuming. He valued the inner life over externals. He was bored by safety. He would not give the same talk twice because it would bore him to do so. He wanted a live relationship with real people. They were never simply an audience for him. He believed in the potential of each person, in their struggle, their pain, their vast inner potential, and the miraculous creativity of ordinary life. He was a compassionate man. I feel immensely richer that he entered my life. (Brazier, 2002)

Jean Clark is a therapist in private practice who in her seventy-fifth year has recently edited a ground-breaking book on the trials and tribulations of the freelance therapist (Clark, 2002a).

I had the privilege of being part of the staff team at the Cross-Cultural Workshop held in Szeged, Hungary, when Eastern Europe was still under communist domination. There were secret police in the community meetings, and Russian tanks on the streets, and the courage of those young people who spoke about freedom was very moving. I co-facilitated a group of 14 people from 8 countries, which included a professor from East Germany who had not been given official permission to come to the workshop. He was advised to leave early and I treasure the photograph taken when Carl joined our group as we said farewell to him.

For me to know Carl Rogers was a healing and liberating experience. My father had been a critical, disapproving man who was very bigoted in his views about racial matters – and he never listened! The experience of being deeply heard and valued by Carl, of being affirmed in my work, and the genuineness of his interest in my personal growth were profoundly healing. I had already been a student counsellor for 7 years when I first met him, but my contact over the next few years with ‘the source’ of the person-centred approach was a kind of extra-mural course! As I write I can still feel the strong yet gentle presence of someone I did not see as a guru, but as a fully human growing person who really did care, whose genuineness was real. (Clark, 2002b)

Dave Mearns, Professor of Counselling at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, is one of the world’s leading person-centred scholars. His many books have proved vastly influential and he has done much to advance person-centred theory and practice.

My contacts with Carl Rogers were between 1972 and 1987 and most intensively during the years 1972/73 when I was Visiting Fellow to the Center for Studies of the Person (CSP) in La Jolla, California. I had regular meetings with him, both in CSP and in his ‘glass-walled’ house on Mount Soledad, above the village. He was very much as he is depicted – a warm, shy man who showed a genuine interest in others and who also had a good brain for engaging in discussion on theory, which he loved. He had an inner circle of people with whom he would test his ideas and sometimes borrow theirs.

We kept in touch for fourteen years after I returned to Scotland. We worked together on workshops in Ambleside, Madrid and Barcelona as well as meeting elsewhere. Others give strange accounts of him during those years, but in my experience he remained a very centred, reliable and genuinely engaging person. My last letter from him is dated January 7th 1987, exactly a month before his death. I had been telling him about my two forthcoming books: ‘Person Centred Counselling in Action’ and ‘Experiences of Counselling in Action’. His letter totally ignores the first of these but majors in the importance of the second and its research into client experiences: ‘We have done a huge amount of research down the years, but not nearly enough of it has been about how our client experiences the work. We really need to listen more to our clients.’ He had retained that integrity and commitment right to the end of his life. (Mearns, 2002)

Dr Richard House is a humanistic practitioner and a trained Rudolf Steiner teacher. His relentless contributions to the national press on therapeutic and educational issues must make him one of Britain's most irrepressible polemicists.

In this tribute to Carl Rogers, I want to offer a retrospective on his outstanding and inspirational article 'Some new challenges to the helping professions', published almost 30 years ago. On re-reading this seminal article, what strikes me most is its freshness and telling prescience for anyone concerned with the present state and future development of the 'psi' field in Britain.

That Rogers' prophetically incisive arguments have stood the test of time across some three decades is testimony both to the enduring universality of perennial wisdom, and to the quality of insight possessed by this remarkable man.

In just four pages, Rogers succeeds in elegantly distilling a quite devastating indictment of 'the professionalizing mentality'; and one of the more remarkable features of the current therapy landscape is that, to my knowledge, not one of the proponents of therapy's statutory regulation has even *acknowledged*, let alone engaged with, Rogers' anti-professionalization arguments.

A pernicious and hyperactive 'surveillance culture' and 'low-trust ideology' have recently swamped our institutions without public debate and with minimal public awareness The fashionable drive towards the statutory regulation of therapy is arguably yet another case of such uncritical 'control-freakery' and it would surely be a tragedy if the field were unwittingly to collude with such damaging cultural forces. Any remaining semblance of creativity, innovation and child centredness within the mainstream education field, for example, has been absolutely decimated by the mentality and the soul-less aridity of 'modernity'.... If Carl Rogers were alive now in 'UK 2002' he would surely be arguing that it would be a disaster for a therapy field that makes claims to openness, awareness and insight to embrace pernicious values and practices such as these. (House, 2002)

Keith Tudor is in private/independent practice in Sheffield where he is a partner in *Temenos*. He is the co-author with Tony Merry of the *Dictionary of Person-Centred Psychology* (Tudor and Merry, 2001).

Sharing with Rogers a family background influenced by liberal theology, I find in his work and influence an echo of my own history of non conformity and dissent: not so much quaking as shaking. What I am reminded of and sustained in is a commitment in my practice, philosophy and theory to critical reflection, free thinking and radical action: a free radical – toxins an' all!

For those interested in the extended – and now extensive – family history of psychotherapy, Carl Rogers is undoubtedly the grandfather of the person-centred approach. However, like all wise grandfathers – and grandmothers – he does not stand as patriarchal *pater familias* or in

the way of changing times. Indeed, perhaps the most lasting tribute to him is that the ideas he and others developed transcend time and have been integrated into the fabric of many people's lives and embodied in their understanding and practice in many fields of human endeavour. (Tudor, 2002)

John Rowan is one of Britain's leading humanistic practitioners and writers. A prominent member of the Association for Humanistic Psychology in both Britain and America he has been on the editorial panel of the *Journal for Humanistic Psychology* for many years.

I remember once seeing Carl interviewed by a chat show host, late seventies in America. The conversation went something like this:

Host: Now Dr Rogers, you are well known for your work in counselling?

Rogers: Yes.

Host: Perhaps the folks here don't know so much about that – would you be willing to show them what you do?

Rogers: We could do it now if you like.

Host: All right. Fire away.

Rogers: What is it like for you right now, doing this show?

The host started talking about his job, and Rogers said very little, except to encourage the host to keep on talking: within two minutes he was in tears. Carl had this remarkable personality, which enabled him to get through to people very quickly. (Rowan, 2002)

Perhaps I may be forgiven for giving myself the final word. In my own tribute I could do no other than express my enduring thankfulness to Rogers for enabling me to deepen my own religious and spiritual understanding not in spite of my professional work as a person-centred therapist but because of it.

Carl's influence on my own life and professional career has been enormous. When I first began training as a client-centred therapist in 1967 I felt as if I had stumbled into a school of love. The God whom I had first encountered as a boy during the Second World War years and whom I had met again in the writings of the medieval mystic, Julian of Norwich, displayed precisely the characteristics which I was now being encouraged to embody and to manifest in my work as a therapist. I remember still the shock of recognizing that in the context of a secular training for a secular role I was being equipped to exercise what were in effect god-like capacities. In short, I was being trained to love as God loves. It was much later as I came to know Carl personally that I experienced the bitter irony that in order to find a way of discovering and proclaiming the nature of divine love, Carl had had to forsake the Church, the Christian religion and, at a conscious level, God himself. I and thousands like me

whether Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, agnostics or atheists owe much, possibly everything, to his courageous rejection of what stood between him and the discovery of his personal truth. When many years later he declared that what was most deeply personal was most universal, I knew what he meant. (Thorne, 2002c)

A Select Bibliography of the Works of Carl Rogers

In the list that follows, those works which are marked with an asterisk are regarded as key texts.

Books

Counseling and Psychotherapy: Newer Concepts in Practice (1942). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

**Client-Centered Therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications and Theory* (1951). Boston: Houghton Mifflin. (Other editions include: London: Constable, 1965.)

With R.F. Dymond (eds), *Psychotherapy and Personality Change* (1954). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**On Becoming a Person* (1961). Boston: Houghton Mifflin. (Other editions include: London: Constable, 1974.)

Freedom to Learn: a View of What Education Might Become (1969). Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill.

**Carl Rogers on Personal Power: Inner Strength and its Revolutionary Impact* (1977). New York: Delacorte Press. (Other editions include: London: Constable, 1978.)

**A Way of Being* (1980). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

With H.J. Freiberg, *Freedom to Learn* (1994). Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill.

Two edited 'anthologies' exist which provide an excellent overview of Rogers' work as well as including previously unavailable material:

Kirschenbaum, H. and Henderson, V.L. (eds) (1990) *The Carl Rogers Reader*. London: Constable.

Kirschenbaum, H. and Henderson, V.L. (eds) (1990) *Carl Rogers: Dialogues*. London: Constable.

To celebrate the centenary of Rogers' birth, an invaluable 'oral history' has been published which contains the transcripts of numerous extended interviews which Rogers gave during the last year of his life:

Rogers, C.R. and Russell, D.E. (2002) *Carl Rogers: The Quiet Revolutionary*. Roseville, CA: Penmarin Books.

Articles

'A note on the "nature of man"' (1957) *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 4(3): 199-203.

- *'The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change' (1957) *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 21(2): 95–103.
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- 'Toward a modern approach to values: the valuing process in the mature person' (1964) *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 68(2): 160–7.
- 'The formative tendency' (1978) *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 18(1): 23–6.
- *'Do we need "a" reality?' (1978) *Dawnpoint*, 1(2): 6–9.
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- *With R. Sanford, 'Client-centered psychotherapy' (1989) in H.I. Kaplan and B.J. Sadock (eds), *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry*, 5. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins. pp. 1482–501.

Collections and Websites

The Department of Special Collections at the Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara, contains selected papers, photographs and audio and video tapes of Carl Rogers. To access any of these materials, visit the Carl Rogers Archives website at: <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/cgi-bin/oac/ucsb/rogers>.

The Library of Congress, Washington, DC, holds all of Rogers' earlier material. To access the library catalogue, go to: <http://catalog.loc.gov/>.

Important Events in the Life of Carl Rogers

Formative Years

- 1902 January 8: Carl is born in Oak Park, Illinois
- 1919 Enters agriculture studies at University of Wisconsin, Madison
- 1922 Travels to the Far East, Japan, Korea, China
- 1922 October 22: Becomes engaged to Helen Elliott
- 1924 June 23: Receives BA in History from University of Wisconsin
- 1924 August 28: Marries Helen Elliott
- 1924 Enrolls in liberal Union Theological Seminary, New York City
- 1926 Leaves Union for Columbia University Teachers College
- 1926 March 17: David Elliott Rogers born
- 1927 June 1: Receives MA from Columbia University Teachers College

Emerging Theory

- 1928 Joins Rochester Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (RSPCC) as child psychologist
- 1928 October 9: Natalie Rogers born
- 1929 Appointed director of the Child Study Department, RSPCC
- 1931 March 20: Receives doctorate from Columbia University Teachers College
- 1939 *The Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child* is published
- 1940 Accepts position at Ohio State University as clinical psychologist and full professor
- 1940 December 11: Client-centered therapy is 'born' as Carl addresses the University of Minnesota's Psychological Honors Society
- 1942 *Counseling and Psychotherapy* is published

Theory in Practice

- 1945 Moves to the University of Chicago to start Counseling Center
- 1946–47 Serves as president of the American Psychological Association (APA)
- 1951 *Client-Centered Therapy* is published
- 1954 *Psychotherapy and Personality Change* (with Rosalind Dymond and others) is published
- 1957 Accepts appointment at University of Wisconsin, Madison, in psychiatry and psychology
- 1961 *On Becoming a Person* is published

Global Influence

- 1964 Moves to La Jolla, California, to join staff of the Western Behavioral Studies Institute (WBSI)
- 1967 *The Therapeutic Relationship and its Impact: a Study of Psychotherapy with Schizophrenics* is published
- 1968 With several WBSI colleagues, leaves to form the Center for Studies of the Person (CSP)
- 1968–77 Works with ‘encounter groups’ and larger organizations
- 1969 *Freedom to Learn: a View of What Education Might Become* is published
- 1970 *Carl Rogers on Encounter Groups* is published
- 1972 *Becoming Partners: Marriage and its Alternatives* is published
- 1977 *Carl Rogers on Personal Power: Inner Strength and its Revolutionary Impact* is published
- 1979 March 29: Helen Rogers dies
- 1980 *A Way of Being* is published
- 1983 *Freedom to Learn for the '80s* is published
- 1975–85 Travels extensively in the US, Europe, Latin America, Russia, Japan, and South America to facilitate Person-Centered Approach workshops
- 1985 The Rust Peace Workshop, Austria
- 1987 January 28: Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Congressman Jim Bates
- 1987 February 4: Carl dies in La Jolla, California

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