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Madness and mysticism in perceiving the other: Towards a radical organismic, person-centred interpretation

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Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.
Jesus

The mystic, endowed with natural talent for this sort of thing and following stage by stage the instruction of the master enters the waters and finds he [sic.] can swim; whereas the schizophrenic [sic.], unprepared, unguided, and ungifted, has fallen or has intentionally plunged, and is drowning.
Joseph Campbell

Mostly formulated by Carl Rogers, person-centred theory is at heart an outgrowth of an emerging paradigm of scientific understanding, an ideational world-view to which the names *general systems*, *holism*, *organismic*, and *process* have been attached (see Bozarth, 2001; Seeman, 2001—my preferred term is organismic). To lay claim to scientific pedigree, person-centred theory needs to be a coherent expression of such an organismic paradigm. Person-centred theory exhibits crucial flaws, I have argued, to the extent that its base concepts are not congruent representatives of this emerging paradigm but of the Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm that it supersedes (see Ellingham, 2001). To remedy such flaws I have proposed a strategy of 'organismic assimilation', a strategy involving assimilating into person-centred theory ideas drawn from organismic thinkers outside the person-centred fold: ideas developed by such thinkers as John Bowlby, Ernst Cassirer, Robert Kegan, Arthur Koestler, Susanne Langer, Kurt Lewin, Fritz Perls, Jean Piaget, Michael Polanyi, Rupert Sheldrake, Daniel Stern, Alfred North Whitehead and Lancelot Whyte (see Ellingham, 2000).

Employing this strategy in the present paper, my aim is to extend and deepen understanding of the meaning and relevance of the first and last of the six conditions that Rogers hypothesized to be 'the necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change' (1957). Of these conditions, it has always been the therapist-related 'core conditions' that have commanded most attention: namely, Rogers' proposal that for therapeutic change to take place in the client the therapist must (a) be 'congruent', personally whole and genuine in the relationship, (b) enjoy an empathic understanding of the client's experiential inner world, and (c) possess toward the client an attitude of acceptance and non-judgemental caring, an attitude Rogers technically terms 'unconditional positive regard'.

Aside from the condition that the client 'is in a state of incongruence, being vulnerable or anxious', the other two conditions that have been relatively neglected are condition 1, that there exists at least 'a minimal relationship' between therapist and client: that the two persons are in 'psychological contact' (1957, p. 221); and condition 6, 'that the client *perceives*, at least to a minimal degree, the *unconditional positive regard* of the therapist for him, and the *empathic understanding* of the therapist' (1959, p. 227)—later, in emphasizing the 'logically intertwined' character of all three core conditions, Rogers hypothesized that 'therapeutic movement' for the

client depends not just on the client perceiving 'to some degree the presence' of the therapist's 'unconditional positive regard' and 'sensitively accurate empathetic understanding', but also on perceiving the presence of 'the therapist's congruence or genuineness' (1966, p. 11). A further point is that there is an alternative version of Rogers' original statement of condition 6, i.e., that 'the communication to the client of the therapist's empathic understanding and unconditional positive regard is to a minimal degree achieved' (1957, p. 221).

In what follows, focusing in the main on the character and role of perception, I respectively explore and critique certain of Rogers' theoretical ideas relating to conditions 1 and 6.

In my critique, my aim on the one hand is to identify problematic aspects of Rogers' views associated with Cartesian-Newtonian thought. Key features of such thought are: taking the fundamental constituents of reality to be unchanging bits of 'stuff'; considering reality to be ultimately made up of two kinds of such stuff, 'mind' and 'matter'; regarding activity in the material world to be akin to that found in machines, of unchanging material bits being moved around by external forces; in contrast to unconscious matter, assuming consciousness to be a defining attribute of mind; deeming mind/consciousness to operate according to the principles of thought and to be of a different order to those that govern material activity—note, though, that a materialist offshoot of Cartesian-Newtonian thought assumes the same mechanistic principles to govern mind as govern matter (much of Freud's thinking fits into this category as does that of the modern 'cognitive scientists' who treat the mind as an information processing computer).

In tandem with identifying Cartesian-Newtonian aspects of Rogers' theorizing, the other purpose to my critique is the twofold one of (a) noting where Rogers' ideas are at odds with a radical organismic point of view, and (b) proposing the remedial introduction of ideas formulated by other organismic theorists, i.e. deploying the strategy of organismic assimilation. Spawned by evolutionary theory in biology and quantum theory and relativity theory in modern physics, a radical organismic perspective is characterised by the following assumptions: that all aspects of reality can be construed in process terms, i.e. as units of patterned activity or events; that like a wave in the sea an event has a pulse-like character; that, as with waves within the sea within the ocean, events interlock to form more complex events termed a field or an organism; that events take the form they do due both to their own impulse to self-actualize and to the space allowed them by other events similarly seeking to self-actualize; that the unchangingness of 'things' is due to a sequence of events exhibiting the same pattern, as the rhythmical repetition of the same vibratory pattern in a violin string is perceived as an unchanging musical note; that a fundamental creative principle is the ground of all activity, whether expressed in terms of unchanging or changing patterns; that the workings of this creative principle has given rise to evolution in the guise of the emergence of ever more complex patterns of activity; that, as a complex pattern of activity, the *stage-like* emergence of ever more complex processes in the life of the living organism serves to epitomise evolution and development at both a micro- and macro-level; that the continued existence of earlier, less complex forms of process alongside more complex forms, both within individual organisms and within the universe as a whole, means that all enduring 'things' exhibit a hierarchical, multi-level structure; that associated with the

emergence of ever more complex forms of process are ever more complex and differentiated forms of consciousness.

These, then, in a highly condensed and abstract form are key tenets of the emerging organismic paradigm and of its Cartesian-Newtonian forebear. As I explore in turn Rogers' views relating to conditions 1 and 6, I shall endeavour to clarify in concrete terms the meaning and relevance of these abstract notions.

Rogers' views relating to condition 1

A basic premise of Rogers' formulation of person-centred theory is that we each live in a 'continually changing world of experience', an experiential or perceptual field that we react to as reality (Rogers, 1951, p. 483). To have a relationship with another, for two people to be in psychological contact and thus for condition 1 of Rogers' six necessary and sufficient conditions to be satisfied, a situation must exist in which 'each makes some perceived difference in the experiential field of the other' (Rogers, 1957, p. 221). Thus, what Rogers is saying, as I understand him, is that psychological contact, the necessary requisite of an interpersonal relationship, is defined on the basis of each person perceiving the other in some fashion. Psychological contact, that is to say, is a function of perception. Of interest here is that in his writings as a whole Rogers makes reference to different modes of perceiving another, and thus to different forms of relationship. I examine these different modes below.

Subception, perception without perception

Subception, relates Rogers, is a way of 'knowing without knowing' identified by McLeary and Lazarus (1949) whereby the human organism is able to pre-perceive the 'positive or negative value' of a stimulus, to discriminate 'its meaning for the organism without utilizing the higher nerve centers involved in awareness' (1951, p. 506; 1959, p. 200).

Rogers' main reference to subception is as a mode of 'perception' that 'permits the individual to discriminate an experience as threatening, without symbolization to awareness' and thereby 'deny experiences to awareness without ever having been conscious of them' (1959, p. 200; 1951, p. 507). In the case of individuals whose conscious picture of themselves is at odds or incongruent with their actual experience (say, in the case cited by Rogers, of the boy who has no awareness of sexual desire yet finds himself lifting up little girls' skirts (Rogers, 1951, p. 509)), an individual may subceive an experience as threatening, threatening to their existing sense of self; but whilst they may experience anxiety, they do not have an accurate and conscious perception of the other, for instance, as a sexually attractive person.

Individuals who deploy subception in this fashion, whose perception of others is distorted to avoid becoming aware of their own inaccurate and inadequate self-picture (their self-concept), are individuals popularly known as neurotics, or even psychotics. Whether a person might be termed a neurotic or psychotic depends on the degree of such inaccuracy and inadequacy, i.e. of their incongruence. Under such

circumstances, for a relationship to exist between two people, opines Rogers, it 'probably…is sufficient that each makes some "subceived" difference' in the experiential field of the other 'even though the individual may not be aware of this impact' (1957, p.221). 'Thus', he elaborates, 'it might be difficult to know whether a catatonic patient perceives a therapist's presence as making a difference to him [sic.]—a difference of any kind—but it is almost certain that at some organic level he does sense [or subceive] the difference (1957, p. 221; 1967, p. 99).

In these instances, then, as a mode of perceiving another, Rogers associates the deployment of subception with personal incongruence, a lack of psychological well-being.

This, though, is not an exclusive usage since he does at one point refer to the therapist's behaviour communicating the attitudinal conditions of congruence, unconditional positive regard and accurate empathic understanding 'so that to some degree they are perceived or *subceived* by the client' (Rogers & Truax, 1967, p. 107—author's emphasis). Elsewhere, too, without using the term 'subception', Rogers (1977) once more cites the example of the boy who lifted the little girls' skirts and denied it was him. Here, rather than 'subception', Rogers prefers to speak of 'the nonconscious aspects of our living', of the organism's 'wisdom' that is 'wiser than our intellects', of trusting 'the unconscious' (p. 245 & 248).

Perception synonymous with awareness, symbolization, consciousness

For Rogers, 'consciousness (or awareness) is the symbolization of some of our experience', its 'symbolic representation (not necessarily in verbal symbols)'—the three terms 'awareness, symbolization, and consciousness' therefore being 'defined as synonymous' (1959, p. 198; 1951, p. 483). In this regard also, while 'we might say that perception and awareness are synonymous', perception has the narrower meaning being 'usually used when we wish to emphasize the importance of a stimulus in the process, and awareness the broader term, covering symbolizations and meanings which arise from such purely internal stimuli as memory traces, visceral changes, and the like, as well as external stimuli' (1959, p. 199).

What Rogers says of awareness and symbolization thus applies to perception, as when he speaks of symbolizing experience 'in some accurate form at the conscious level' and of there being 'varying degrees of completeness in symbolization' (1959, pp. 197-8). This means that 'when an experience can be symbolized freely, without defensive distortion and denial, then it is available to awareness' (p. 198). When, that is to say, my experience of another is freely symbolized in awareness, then I have an accurate perception in relation to that person. Further, the more open I am to my organism, as Rogers puts it, the more nearly I come to being *fully functioning*. As the idealized 'end-point of optimal psychotherapy', the fully functioning person is the person who displays, 'optimal psychological maturity, complete congruence', someone who 'has the capacity and tendency to *symbolize* experiences accurately in *awareness*' (1959, pp. 235 & 234). In such a person, Rogers further elaborates,

> every stimulus, whether originating within the organism or in the environment, would be freely relayed through the nervous system without being distorted by a

> defensive mechanism. There would be no need of the mechanism of 'subception' whereby the organism is forewarned of any experience threatening to the self. (1983, p. 286)

By way of an illustration of what it means to enjoy an accurate perception in relation to another, Rogers describes a man who due to denial and distortion is at one time unable to 'feel tenderness and love for his child' (p. 287). Subsequently, however, the man became 'genuinely open to the experience of his organism' and able to enjoy 'the full experiencing of whatever was organismically present'. He is now a person, relates Rogers, who can 'freely feel the love he feels for his daughter'.

Mystical perception

A further mode of interpersonal perception described by Rogers is also one he associates with the person who is fully functioning. It is a mode that he mainly portrays in relation to his own experience as a therapist, one that he eventually came to characterize as partaking of 'the mystical….the transcendent, the indescribable, the spiritual' (1980, p. 130). The following are prominent features of this mode:

- It is highly intuitive involving the operation of an individual's 'nonconscious intellect [or] mind or [sensing]', a 'wisdom of the organism' that is beyond consciousness (Rogers, 1986, pp. 206 & 208).

- It provides knowledge much more than the conscious mind is aware of (Rogers, 1986, p.206).

- It involves a 'total organismic sensitivity' to the other person, a 'resonating' to the other person 'at all levels' (Rogers, 1961, p. 202; 1980, p. 8).

- At the same time as allowing the apprehension of 'the words, the thoughts, the feelings, the personal meanings' of the other, it also enables detection of meanings that are 'below the conscious intent of the speaker', meanings that can make their presence felt in the perceiver's mind as an aural and visual image (Rogers, 1980, pp. 8 & 15).

- It tends to be momentary and associated with an altered state of consciousness (1986, pp. 198 & 206).

- It is experienced both as the 'the height of personal subjectivity', and yet as a deep, empathic indwelling in the other's world, of being completely in tune with that world and feeling a sense of communion and mutuality of oneself with the other. At such 'I-Thou' moments, says Rogers, speaking of his own experience, 'it seems that my inner spirit has reached out and touched the inner spirit of the other', psychological contact wherein 'our relationship transcends itself and becomes a part of something larger' (1986, p. 199).

- It not only transcends the everyday experience of a sense of personal separateness from another, but it also seems to transcend the sense of time associated with the everyday world. 'It is', attests Rogers, 'a timeless living in the experience which is *between*' the one and the other (1961, p. 202).

- It is associated with the release of 'power and energy…which transcends what we thought was involved,' and with the presence of 'profound growth and healing' (Rogers quoted in Baldwin,1987, p. 50; Rogers, 1986, p. 199).

- Beyond the personal communications of another, it enables the individual to sense 'orderly psychological laws' and 'what is universally true' (Rogers, 1980, p. 8). In other words, to not only be 'in touch with, but grasp the meaning of…[the] evolutionary flow', to comprehend the working of 'a strong formative tendency in our universe, which is evident at all levels' (Rogers, 1980, pp. 128 & 124).

Critique from an organismic perspective of Rogers' views relating to Condition 1

From an organismic perspective, at least one fundamental criticism can be levelled at Rogers' characterization of the preceding modes of perception, a criticism that thereby has an important bearing on what it means to say that one person enjoys a relationship, is in psychological contact, with another (i.e. on condition 1). It is a criticism that has to do with Rogers' definition of the nature of human consciousness, and *ipso facto* his definition of perception as a conscious experience. For intrinsic to Rogers' definition of consciousness in general and, more specifically, to his differentiation between unconscious subception/organismic experience and conscious perception is a formulation redolent of the quasi-Cartesian formulations of Sigmund Freud.

To Descartes, consciousness was the mark of 'mind', of mental functioning, whereas unconsciousness by contrast represented a defining attribute of 'matter', the other basic constituent of reality in Descartes' dualistic world-scheme. Freud (1915) thus saw himself as contravening Cartesian thought when he employed the term 'the unconscious' to denote certain mental processes that affected the perceptions and behaviours of his 'neurotic' patients, processes that these adult individuals were not conscious of. Thanks to 'once-in-a-lifetime insight', Freud came to identify a logic to the workings of these 'unconscious' mental processes, a logic by which similar 'things' were taken to be identical (as in the 'transference' relationship), symbolic images were not differentiated from the real thing, and time had no place insofar as what was taken to exist existed only in the present, episodic moment. It was Freud's claim that this logic was representative of a mode of mental functioning dubbed by him 'the primary process', a mode that operated in an exclusive and dominant fashion in generating the experiences and perceptions of the dreaming adult, the human infant and those who are mad.

Despite the fact that he had distanced himself from Descartes in claiming that mental processes could operate in an unconscious fashion, Freud, unbeknownst to

himself, remained in Descartes' thrall in his further claim that unconsciousness was a defining characteristic of such processes, i. e. that on a par with Descartes' definition of material processes such mental processes could *never* in themselves be consciously experienced.

For to say that the experiences and perceptions of the dreamer, the infant, and the mad are expressive of a primitive or primary mode of sense-making, a mode that in the human adult generally operates in an unconscious fashion, is not to say that the dreamer, the infant and the mad do not, as such, enjoy these experiences and perceptions in some conscious form—albeit that it is not the everyday form of consciousness of the human adult.

The general thrust of organismic theorizing has been to claim that both in terms of the evolution of the race and the development of the individual, human consciousness advances from a global and undifferentiated condition to a form that is more precisely focused and differentiated. So, for instance, even though the human infant may employ 'primary processes' to perceive the world in a fashion that we may regard as diffuse and indefinite, this does not mean that such perceptions are not consciously experienced.

From an organismic perspective, therefore, Rogers simply gets things wrong when he formally defines 'awareness, symbolization, consciousness…as synonymous' (1959, p. 198).

Because, given that the mode of experiencing/perceiving of the infant is clearly a *pre-symbolic* forms of sense-making, i.e. does not involve symbolization, it is apparently Rogers' view that it does not involve awareness or consciousness, even as he claims that each in its own terms exhibits complete congruence and is fully functioning.

Such an interpretation is borne out by the way in which Rogers defines the undistorted perception of the fully functioning person vis-à-vis not only the human infant, but also the non-human animal. Rogers speaks, for example, of the accurate symbolization of the fully functioning person being a matter of adding 'the gift of a free and undistorted awareness of which only the human animal seems capable….to the sensory and visceral experiencing which is characteristic of the whole animal kingdom' (1961, p. 105). And in like fashion, he describes 'the functioning of the psychologically mature [fully functioning] individual as being similar in many ways to that of the infant, except that the fluid process of experiencing has more scope, and that the more mature individual, like the child, "trusts and uses the wisdom of his [sic.] organism, with the difference that he is able to do so knowingly"' (1963, p. 20). Akin to Freud's characterization of the primary process operating in an unconscious fashion, Rogers thus envisages the infant's behaviour to be governed by 'an organismic, not a conscious symbolic function' in which 'operative, not conceived values' are at work (1983, p. 258). To illustrate which, he reminds us of the experiment 'in which young infants had spread in front of them a score or more dishes of natural (that is, unflavored) foods'. 'Over a period of time', Rogers recounts, 'they clearly tended to value the foods which enhanced their survival, growth and development'. For, on Rogers' interpretation, each child 'was utilizing the wisdom of

the body in her value choices, or perhaps more accurately, the physiological wisdom of her body guided her behavioral movements, resulting in what we might think of as objectively sound value choices'.

Now, while infants obviously do not possess the post-symbolic, self-reflexive form of consciousness of the human adult; and while consciousness may not have been involved in the infants' choice of foods in the described experiments—albeit that rats have been shown to sense the 'taste' of distilled water, so conceivably the infants could actually consciously taste differences in the bland food; nevertheless the idea that infants do not possess a (pre-symbolic) form of awareness is highly questionable. And indeed in a description of the complete congruence of the infant Rogers speaks of 'a matching of experience, awareness and communication' (1961, p. 339). In which case, if awareness is indeed synonymous with symbolization, the implication is that the infant from birth must enjoy a form of awareness mediated by symbols—which clearly she does not.

In relation to the notion of a pre-symbolic form of awareness, Susanne Langer (1972) has written a detailed and plausible account of the nature of animal mentality based on the notion of an animal's behaviour actually being governed by 'feeling', a pre-symbolic mode of awareness. She posits that 'animal perception might be normally a matter of locating situations for action, in which a center of highest value draws the agent's interest; that center—for us "the object"—presumably has sensory properties which the animal recognizes without conceiving them descriptively, i.e. without distinguishing them as shapes, colours, surface feelings or even characteristic smells' (1972, p. 116). Langer relates how such an interpretation fits with William James' assertion 'that to a broody hen an egg is not a smooth, pale object of characteristic form, but "just a beautiful, never-too-much-to-be-sat-upon-object"' (p. 54). John Bowlby (1969), for his part, has made much of the similarity between 'attachment' and distressed behaviour in animals and in human infants, so in the case of the human infant we might easily see her as governed by an intense feeling of desire to cling onto her mother, or consumed by a rageful feeling of seeking to distance herself from a stranger.

Of particular interest with respect to Langer's account of animal mentality is her supposition that in non-human animals 'subception' constitutes a dominant form of value apprehension, or sense-making. That is to say, what to the adult human is a mode of perception that is non-conscious or at the edge of awareness, to the animal is the primary mode of perception and conscious experience operating in the fashion described above, where what is perceived is 'felt in other than cognitive ways, either as an uneasiness…or an eager expectation' (1972, p. 116).

So described, such a mode of perception would appear to be essentially equivalent to Eugene Gendlin's (1984) conception of a bodily felt sense at the edge of awareness. Gendlin, for instance, refers to a perception of this form constituting 'the holistic, unclear sense of the whole thing', of it being the felt sense '*of* a whole situation', of its being 'indefinable, global, puzzling, odd, uneasy' (1981, p. 55; 1984, p. 79; 1986, p. 3). And not only that but he describes such a 'from the gut' mode of experiencing/perceiving as that principally employed by non-human animals (1974, p. 234; 1986, p. 143); while one of his leading followers acknowledges that such a mode of perceiving is 'paramount to the child' (Leijssen, 1998, p. 135).

If this is indeed the case, then *subception* as practised by the catatonic patient is an equivalent mode of perceiving to Rogers' *sensory and visceral functioning* in the animal and *the wisdom of the organism* or *non-conscious intellect* in the infant—overall each being equivalent to Gendlin's *bodily felt sense*. But not only does Gendlin (1984) consider such a mode of sense-making to be a mode whereby the human adult can tune in to the depths of the universe beyond themselves, but, as we have seen, Rogers describes such a mode of sense-making as being employed by the fully functioning adult or mystic—albeit, compared to infant, 'knowingly', and in relation to the animal by adding 'the gift of a free and undistorted awareness of which only the human animal seems capable' (Rogers, 1961, p. 105).

Rogers' idea that the mode of awareness enjoyed by the fully functioning adult consists of accurate perceptual awareness *plus* unconscious organismic experience/subception would, though, seem to be in conflict with his statement elsewhere that the perceptual awareness of the fully functioning person involves accurate perceptual awareness *minus* subception—where, that is, he describes the fully functioning person as someone not needing to employ 'the mechanism of "subception"' to perceive an experience as 'threatening' (1983, p. 286). In this regard, therefore, Rogers seems to be employing the term 'subception' in two different ways: (a) to denote the unconscious organismic capacity of perceiving whether the object of perception is positive and non-threatening or negative and threatening; (b) to denote a 'defensive mechanism' operating to forewarn and prevent the 'free relaying' of the perception into awareness. To illustrate these different usages, consider the role of a night-club bouncer. Rogers, on the one hand appears to be saying that subception is comparable to the activity of a bouncer who labels individuals at the door as good or bad dancers before letting them into the club where everybody can see their label and know them as good or bad dancers; on the other, that subception is comparable to the bouncer labelling would-be entrants as before but not allowing the bad dancers in—in which case only if subception did not take place would all the dancers be freely admitted.

So viewed, complementing Rogers' questionable characterization of consciousness and conscious perception is a lack of clarity in the manner in which he portrays non-consciousness and non-conscious perception.

Both these weaknesses in Rogers' theorizing have to do, in my view, with his tendency, originally pointed up by Gendlin (1962), to treat psychological events, especially 'feelings', and 'experiences', in a quasi-Cartesian manner, i. e. as 'thing-like'. It is a tendency bound up with the further criticism that Rogers depicts the process of symbolization as the 'passive' naming of these previously existing psychological 'things'. Symbolization, for Rogers, thus consists in attaching a symbol to an already existing feeling, experience or perception, comparable to the way in which labels are attached to products in a supermarket (see Rogers, 1951, pp. 144-5). Summarizing the views of her husband, Mary Hendricks-Gendlin relates how Gendlin has highlighted that 'Rogers' formulations imply that experience sits there first outside awareness waiting to be accurately perceived, as though it were something already separately formed apart from the perceiving', and the act of symbolization (1999, p. 1). Rogers' depiction for Gendlin, she continues, 'is like the "flashlight" model that Freud used with unconscious id impulses sitting there in the person and the

work of therapy is to bring the light of awareness or consciousness upon them'. And like Freud's model, too, Rogers' passive labelling view of symbolization conjures such ridiculous notions as the existence of a pain of which one has no awareness due to its not having been symbolized, i.e. a pain in which there is no feeling of pain; and an unfelt feeling, i.e. a feeling that is not felt—although see the argument put forward by person-centred author Per-Anders Tengland (2001) in favour of such nonsensical notions, an argument whose logic escapes me.

Rather than being the passive affair that Rogers portrays, symbolization is an active, constructive process by which meaning is enshrined in our perceptions; by which, that is, previously diffuse and affectively charged pre-symbolic perceptions become differentially transformed into the everyday, common-sense perceptions of the human adult. It is a creative process by which qualitatively different modes of perception and consciousness are brought into being, a process that in person-centred terms is representative of the workings of what Rogers (1963) calls the 'formative actualizing tendency' (p. 21).

Neither, also, is symbolization in itself unitary—certainly not as explicated by Langer (1967, 1972, 1982) and Cassirer (1955a, 1955b, 1957). The two of them identify both a non-discursive mode of symbolizing as well as a discursive, language-laden mode—in evolutionary terms non-discursive symbolizing emerging from animal sense-making and preceding the discursive mode. Thus, in comparison to the pre-symbolic sense-making of the animal—and we can presume the early infant—non-discursive symbolizing has 'the primary function…of conceptualising the flux of sensations, and giving us concrete *things* in place of kaleidoscopic colors or noises' (Langer, 1957, p. 93). Alternatively termed an iconic, presentational or expressive symbol, the non-discursive symbol mainly employs visual images—although images of sound and bodily movement can also be employed—to encapsulate the subceived feeling pervading a particular situation or object. A whole sequence of sensorimotor bodily action, bodily 'knowing' of another or of a situation, can thus be represented in a single moment by means of a single image. The feeling that the iconic image presents may be difficult to distinguish from the original subceived felt sense, but it is different nevertheless, being an idea of a feeling rather then the raw feeling itself. Iconic imagery provided the building blocks for the subsequent emergence of discursive symbolization in terms of the development of language. Whereas the iconic symbol can be compared to a ball of wool in which its import is contained in the single image, 'language has a form which requires us to string out our ideas even though their objects rest one within the other; as pieces of clothing that are actually worn one over the other have to be strung out side by side on the clothesline' (Langer, 1957, p. 81).

The relevance of such considerations for our present discussion is at least twofold. The first point concerns the notion of our dwelling in qualitatively different perceptual fields depending upon the dominant mode of perceptual sense-making/symbolization within the field, albeit that particular areas within the field may operate in a different mode. For instance, although in general I may dwell in the common-sense world of everyday discursive symbolization, I may perceive those that love me in terms of the diffuse amorphous feelings that are focal in the infant. The second is the idea that our first and most basic mode of sense-making and perception is couched in terms of the diffuse feelings of bodily sensing. If this can be relied upon

as a source of wisdom, as Rogers and Gendlin suggest, it is in terms of this mode that that we first sense new learnings about ourselves and others. It is the first mode by which we process information. Later this information may be further processed and expressed in terms of either discursive or more immediately iconic symbolization. For, as Whitehead describes matters, 'mysticism is direct insight into depths as yet unspoken', where the subsequent challenge is 'to rationalize mysticism; not by explaining it away but by the introduction of novel verbal characterizations' (1938, p. 174)—or, we might add, through iconic symbolizations. If we regard Rogers' mystical perception of the other as indeed an example of true insight into the nature of things, then I would suggest that the vision he presents is an organismic one, of both ourselves and the other being organisms, fields of activity, that are part and parcel of a larger field. It is a perspective in which perceptions, experiences, feelings are not considered things, but felt aspects of the field of activity, the patterns of process, of which both I and the other are part—in the manner, that is, of two whirlpools immersed in a larger stream.

I discuss such an organismic conception in relation to Rogers' views regarding condition 6. For the moment, suffice it to say that from an organismic perspective the conception of a relationship existing between two individuals when each makes a subceived/perceived difference on the perceptual field of the other is markedly more complex than Rogers describes.

Rogers' views relating to condition 6

To fully make sense of Rogers' account of the process by which the client's perception of attitudinal conditions in the therapist facilitates positive personality change in the client, we first need to appreciate how it is, according to Rogers, that the client came to be in a condition of incongruence and therefore in need of such facilitation. For, as related above, it is Rogers' view that infants start life in a condition of complete congruence, of being fully functioning. What Rogers presents, therefore, is a saga of *paradise lost* and *paradise regained*, a saga, as such a description suggests, that closely corresponds to religious and spiritual teachings down the ages—a fact highlighted by Brian Thorne (1996, 2002). In such teachings, 'the pure soul'—the equivalent of Rogers' fully functioning adult—is said to be 'like a lens from which all irrelevances and excrescences, all the beams and motes of egotisms and prejudice, have been removed; so that it may reflect a clear image of the one Transcendent Fact within which all other facts are held' (Underhill, 1915, p. 36). 'If the doors of perception were cleansed', as William Blake famously put it, 'everything would be seen as it is, infinite' (quoted in Huxley, 1958, p. 197).

Losing paradise

Rogers, as we have seen, describes the fully functioning adult as someone capable of perceiving the other without distortion and denial, someone who in so doing apprehends the fundamental truth of the workings of the formative actualizing tendency. 'The crucial point', he says, 'is that when a person is functioning fully, there are no barriers, no inhibitions, which prevent the full experiencing of whatever is organismically present' (1980, p. 128). In other words, to genuinely perceive, we need to be genuine. Apropos the congruent organismic functioning of the infant and non-human animals, this means that 'if man's [sic.] magnificent symbolizing capacity

can develop as a part of and guided by the tendency toward fulfilment which exists in him as in every creature, then the "animal harmony" is never lost' (Rogers, 1963, p. 21). What we are talking about, therefore, is 'the incredibly difficult but not impossible task of permitting the human individual to grow and develop in a continuing and confident relationship to the formative actualizing tendency and process in himself [sic.]'. Mirroring such congruent development, it is thus Rogers' view that incongruence—the 'dissociation' that is 'the basis of all psychological pathology in man [sic.], and the basis of all his social pathology as well'—comes about due to inaccurate and inadequate symbolization, symbolization that is not in accord with the formative actualizing tendency. As to the origin of such deficient and discordant symbolization, symbolization that constitutes the barriers and inhibitions to 'whatever is organismically present', Rogers identifies two basic causes.

Under the influence of Lancelot Whyte, Rogers deems one of these two causes to be cultural. To blame, in this respect, he says, is 'the peculiarly Western development of static concepts—in the formation of our language, our thought, and in our philosophy' (1963, p. 19). 'Though nature is clearly process', Rogers enlarges, 'man [sic.] has been caught in his own fixed forms of thought'. Thanks to Whyte's influence, concedes Rogers, 'now I believe that individuals are culturally conditioned, rewarded, reinforced, for behaviors—["behaviors guided by rigid concepts and constructs"]—which are in fact perversions of the natural directions of the unitary actualizing tendency' (p. 20).

The other basic cause of an incongruent person's inaccurate symbolizations, according to Rogers, is interpersonal in nature. As we have seen, Rogers' view is that an individual starts out in life in a fully functioning condition of unknowing congruence. What she encounters during her development to defile such innocent integrity, says Rogers, are interpersonal relationships conspicuous in their lack of a vital ingredient, an ingredient that Rogers formally defines as 'unconditional positive regard', and informally as 'love'. What we are talking about are formative relationships, with significant others especially, in which the giving of love to the child is conditional upon the child's activity being seen as worthy of such a gift.

In his theoretical explication of the impact on the child of conditional regard, Rogers does not 'divide the development of the child into hard-and-fast stages' (Rogers quoted in Evans,1975, p. 11)—as Freud did with his oral, anal, phallic and genital stages. Judging such an approach to be 'somewhat artificial', Rogers adopts instead a field theory perspective 'in the sense of analyzing all the influences on the individual in the present situation'; and, while he certainly does not dispute that 'early experience is a powerful force', he prefers to conceive the child's personal growth as 'a gradual development of the picture that he [the child] carries of himself', i.e. in terms of their self-concept.

In the theory that Rogers puts forward, therefore, love/positive regard is pronounced a universal human need that is 'pervasive and persistent' (1959, p. 223). 'The infant learns to need love', Rogers declares, 'Love is very satisfying' (1959, p. 225). And so wanting it, 'the infant…tends to behave in ways which bring a repetition of this wanted experience' (Rogers, 1983, p. 259). Thus the need for love develops 'as the awareness of self emerges', emergence whereby 'a portion of the individual's experience becomes differentiated and symbolized in an awareness of being,

awareness of functioning' (1959, p. 223). With the tendency toward differentiation and symbolization being 'part of the actualizing tendency', the awareness so generated is 'self-experience', and it is through elaboration of such awareness, 'through interaction with the environment, particularly the environment composed of significant others' that 'a concept of self' is formed, 'a perceptual object in…[the individual's] perceptual field'.

The self having so emerged and the need for love/regard experienced, the infant seeks to satisfy this need, such satisfaction being 'necessarily based upon inferences regarding the experiential field of another' (1959, p. 223). For example, when interacting with his mother should the infant need 'to know whether he is receiving it [love/positive regard] or not he must observe his mother's face, gestures and other ambiguous signs' (p. 225). Since it is rewarding to satisfy his own and his mother's need for positive regard, the infant 'develops a total gestalt of the way he is regarded by his mother', where a key feature of such a developmental process is that 'each new experience of love or rejection tends to alter the whole gestalt'. 'Consequently', explains Rogers, 'each behavior on his mother's part such as specific approval of a specific behavior tends to be experienced as disapproval in general'. 'So important is this to the infant', affirms Rogers, 'that he comes to be guided in his behavior not by the degree to which an experience maintains or enhances the organism, but by the likelihood of receiving maternal love'.

Therefore, while it may be organismically satisfying to pull his sister's hair, when he does so he 'hears [from mother] that he is "a naughty bad boy"' (Rogers, 1983, p. 259). He may stop doing this in order to be the 'total configuration' of the 'good boy' as viewed by his mother (Rogers, 1959, p. 225). When, though, he reaches the point of perceiving himself as a good boy if he does not pull his sister's hair and as a bad boy if he does, he has, says Rogers, introjected 'the value judgement of another, taking it in as his own' (1983, p. 259). The child has now become 'in a sense his own significant other', whereby he perceives himself positively and as having worth on the basis of 'self-regard', not on the basis of receiving love or rejection from a 'social other' (1959, p. 224). To the extent that the individual now lives in terms of alien 'introjected values…or conditions of worth….[or] self-regard' (1959, p. 225), says Rogers,

> to that degree he loses touch with his own organismic valuing process. He has deserted the wisdom of his own organism, giving up the locus of evaluation, and is trying to behave in terms of values set by others, in order to hold love. (1983, p. 259)

Which is to say, he has in this respect developed an incongruent self-concept, a perception of himself that is not true to his organismic experiencing. 'Because of the distorted perceptions arising from conditions of worth', the individual thus has departed 'from the integration which characterizes his infant state' (1959, p. 226). Paradise has been lost.

In specifying how incongruence and distorted self-perceptions result in distorted perceptions of the other, or a perception of the other that is denied to awareness. Rogers once more cites the case of the boy who indulged in sexual behaviour towards young girls by lifting up their skirts. The boy, says Rogers, had had an upbringing,

'that created a self-concept of purity and freedom from "base" sexual impulses' (1951, p. 509). On being arrested, the boy 'insisted that he could not have performed this behavior, and when presented with witnesses, was positive that I was not myself' (pp. 509-510). What we see here, declares Rogers, is a situation in which the boy's sexual impulses are not symbolized to awareness and integrated into his picture of himself, a situation in which 'the organism behaved in such a way as to gain satisfaction', although the boy himself did not feel the behaviour to be part of the self or under his conscious control (p. 510). In line with Rogers' theorizing, we might imagine the boy indulging in (so-called 'neurotic') 'defensive behaviors' that lead him to perceive the girls in a distorted fashion so that he can continue to deny his sexual nature (1959, p. 227). 'Fantasy', 'projection', and 'rationalization' might be involved as he maintains his self-concept of being sexually 'pure' through perceiving the young girls as sexual seductresses or little demons that exercise a power over him that is not in his control (1959, p. 228).

Incongruent individuals like the boy, avers Rogers, hold on to rigid and distorted perceptions of themselves in the way they do because of the need for self-regard, for 'if the experience were accurately symbolized in awareness, the self-concept would no longer be a consistent gestalt, the conditions of worth would be violated, and the need for self-regard would be frustrated (1959, p. 227). Rather than the experience being accurately symbolized in awareness, what the incongruent individual may become aware of is anxiety, anxiety brought about by *subceiving* that the experience is a threat to the existing self-gestalt. Should, though, the processes of defensive distortion and denial break down and the previously denied experience break through and be 'accurately symbolized in awareness', then a situation arises in which 'the gestalt of the self-structure is broken by the incongruence in awareness' (p. 229). Under such circumstances of 'disorganization' we are talking of a condition of psychosis rather than neurosis, a condition in which the individual is both subject to, and aware that he is subject to, forces beyond his control. For Rogers, therefore, both 'neurosis' and 'psychosis' are rooted in incongruence and may be labels that others have used to describe the incongruent and vulnerable individual whom the person-centred therapist seeks to help in re-capturing their childhood authenticity and innocence.

Paradise regained

With distortion, denial and disorganization construed as developing from the original integrated condition of the infant, the problem non-integrated clients face, says Rogers, is that of 'assimilating denied experience into a reorganized self' (1951, p. 104). Rogers' hypothesis of the conditions required for such 'reintegration or restoration of personality' to occur is, of course, his hypothesis of the six necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change (p. 231). What is necessary, says Rogers, is for 'the process of defense to be reversed' such that 'the congruence between self and experience' increases. Where originally positive regard was given on a conditional basis, now in order to decrease the conditions of worth, unconditional positive regard must be communicated to the non-integrated person (stereotypically, the client) by a significant other (stereotypically, the therapist). However, in order for such positive regard to be communicated, says Rogers, the client must perceive that the therapist is not only experiencing such regard for him or her, but that he or she empathically understands the client's inner world. For, to

perceive the therapist as fully accepting, the client must also perceive the therapist as fully knowing 'a wide variety of…[their] feelings and behaviors' (p. 231). Such comprehensive unconditionality is a matter of the client perceiving that they are always accepted and prized, despite the fact that therapist might not permit the client to commit certain acts in the counselling room. It is an unconditionality that frees the client to evaluate their experiences in terms of their own organismic valuing process. Now, not experiencing any threat, and with conditions of worth 'weakened or dissolved', the actualizing tendency functions freely as the individual comes to integrate previously denied experiences into the self-concept. The person becomes more 'nearly fully functioning'; 'the organismic valuing process becomes increasingly the basis for behavior'; and allied to 'increase in his own unconditional self-regard', the person's 'positive regard for others is increased' (p. 231). That is to say, as the person perceives themselves as loveable, so they see others as loveable too.

In the case of a client he terms Miss Cam, Rogers presents a graphic illustration of a client perceiving their therapist in a negative or positive manner according to their own sense of personal well-being. The client having come to see herself 'as having reached an insoluble dead end of a pointless existence, the counselor's face blackens, and takes on a disapproving look' (Rogers, 1951, p. 117). With an improvement in the client's mood during an interview, relates Rogers, 'the counselor's face, which had appeared dark is suddenly seen as clean, fresh, and individual' (pp. 116-7). 'It appears to be very significantly true', concludes Rogers, 'that the client perceives others in much the same terms that he [sic.] perceives himself, and alteration in self-perception brings about changes in the way others are perceived' (p. 117). Rogers' point here is that even though the therapist may be consistently attempting to communicate the core conditions the client may perceive the therapist differently at different times dependant upon the character of the client's momentary self-perception. Certainly, avows Rogers from his own experience, 'I have learned, especially in working with more disturbed persons, that empathy can be perceived as lack of involvement; that an unconditional regard on my part can be perceived as indifference; that warmth can be perceived as threatening closeness, that real feelings of mine can be perceived as false' (1962, p. 96).

However, according to Rogers, what happens as the end-point of successful psychotherapy is approached and the client becomes more fully-functioning is that the relationship between therapist and client becomes increasingly one of 'communion' and 'mutuality' (Rogers, 1951, p. 114). With the client trusting the 'wisdom of her organism' ('her non-conscious mind') to guide her path, there are those moments when the oneness between client and therapist is such that not only does the therapist get in touch with parts of the client that the client has lost touch with, but both therapist and client 'are perhaps in a mutual and reciprocal altered state of consciousness' (1986, p. 208 & 207). If we recall Rogers' words that at those mystical moments 'our relationship transcends itself and becomes part of something larger' (p. 199), it would appear that his words apply not only to the therapist's perception of the client, but also to the client's perception of the therapist.

Critique from an organismic perspective of Rogers' views relating to condition 6

In detailing Rogers' views on the causes of incongruence I briefly mentioned that Rogers saw one such cause to be the attempt in Western society to make sense of

nature in terms of fixed and rigid concepts when nature is process. To speak in terms of process is to speak in terms of patterned activity, where 'the reality is the process' (Whitehead, 1967, p. 72), and such organisms as ourselves are complex patterns/fields of such activity enmeshed in greater fields. In the present context, a significant question to be asked of Rogers himself, therefore, is how adequate in organismic/process terms is his account of both the development and resolution of incongruence as it pertains to interpersonal perception and to condition 6.

An organismic/ process thinker

That Rogers is very much an organismic/process thinker with respect to his conception of the person is vouched for by Harry Van Belle (1980) in a summation of Rogers' views that Rogers himself endorsed. For Rogers, the person, as Van Belle concludes,

> is an actualization process….a tendency, an activity or a functioning rather than an entity which then *does* the actualizing….This actualization process, this actualizing that…[the person] is…is an organized whole. It functions as a whole with all its part-functionings contributing inescapably to this total activity….[The person], as an actualizing process, has this total quality *originally* and every step of its development. Originally…[the person] is an organism, and remains this however he might change and however complex his activity may become….[the person] is… always and everywhere a total, active actualizing gestalt. (1980, pp. 70-1)

Van Belle goes on to highlight how Rogers' conception of personal growth/actualization implies the differentiation and further development of 'parts' or 'aspects' of the person out of an original 'dynamic unity….an originally undifferentiated organism becomes differentiated' (p. 71). A two-movement, dialectical process takes place: 'in a normal growth process', first differentiation occurs, followed spontaneously by 'assimilation' (p. 72). In this process 'the organism integrates *earlier* differentiations at the newly differentiated level of complexity'. 'Under adverse conditions', though, the differentiation process can become 'arrested' or 'blocked' and 'the latest differentiation fails to assimilate the earlier differentiations'. 'Two or more actualizing principles' now operate with the earlier, less complex differentiation seeking actualization in a manner that is independent of and at odds with the more complex one. What Van Belle is here expressing in abstract terms is the condition of personal incongruence where less complex organismic experiencing is blocked from being assimilated into the self-concept and so functions outside its bounds, as with the boy whose sexual impulses were blocked from being assimilated into the 'pure' picture of himself and so took on a life of their own.

A hierarchical developmental pattern

Made explicit by Van Belle in such a summation is the fact when differentiation and development are organismically conceived, then the pattern to the growth of any organism, including ourselves, is that of hierarchical stages. Further, that this pattern will be reflected in the organism's contemporary structure insofar as the more complex patterns emerge from and incorporate their less complex forebears. A simple illustration of such a state of affairs is that entailed in drawing diagrams of

cubes in the following stages: at stage one, a number of same length straight lines are drawn; at stage two, sets of four straight lines are joined to form squares, and at stage three, sets of six square are joined to form cubes. Employing the terminology of Michael Polanyi (1968), what we see in such an example is the way in which as new 'focal' forms emerge (those of the square and the cube), the form of the straight lines continues to exist as a 'subsidiary' constituent of the more complex form, albeit that as part of a greater whole it becomes 'the side of a square' or 'the edge of a cube'. In terms of such a scheme, incongruence or developmental arrest would be the situation where cubes having been drawn some squares remain 'unassimilated' and retain their focal form or, more fundamentally, straight lines are unassimilated in squares and are similarly focal. What Rogers terms 'disorganization' is then equivalent to the situation where a straight line, and a more complex form, a square, alternate in terms of being focal, without the straight line being assimilated into the focal form of the square. The straight line exists, that is to say, in a raw, 'unprocessed' form.

Given the hierarchical, multi-level nature of development from an organismic point of view, a significant criticism of Rogers' portrayal of the child's personal development is his aversion to describing such development in hierarchically organized developmental stages. Apropos which, John McLeod comments that 'in the area of the understanding of the development in childhood' and by comparison to 'the density of psychodynamic theory', 'the person-centred approach, in its use of the concept of "conditions of worth", is little more than silent' (1993, pp. 43 & 44).

The hierarchical structure that organismic thinkers see as pervading the world and all organisms within it is perhaps most obvious to us in the realm of biology: in the bulb becoming the shoot becoming the tulip; in the frogspawn becoming the tadpole becoming the frog; in the fertilized egg becoming the embryo becoming the baby; and far less so in the development of the child's sense-making capacities, a stratification made explicit by Piaget. But however obvious the stratification, the organismic theorist's claim for the omni-presence of such hierarchical structuring leads to the further claim that responsibility for it lies with a universal organizational/ordering principle or tendency.

There is thus a certain irony in Rogers' positing of his *formative tendency* as just such a universal principle. Since not only does the general way in which he defines it imply a universe-wide hierarchical structure, but he actually refers to it as a tendency that 'exhibits itself as the individual moves from a single cell origin to complex organic functioning, to knowing and sensing below the level of consciousness, to a conscious awareness of the organism and the external world, to a transcendent awareness of the harmony and unity of the cosmic system, including humankind' (1980, p. 133). In other words, Rogers appears to be conceiving such personal growth (allied as it is to qualitatively different modes of perceiving) in terms of developmental stages. And not only this, but he conceptualises therapeutic growth in the client (again allied to qualitatively different modes of perceiving) in terms of a hierarchical seven-stage scale (Rogers, 1961, chpt. 7). There seems a marked inconsistency, therefore, in Rogers' failure to generate or propose a hierarchical child development theory linked with qualitatively different modes of perceiving and concomitant perceptual fields.

Elsewhere (Ellingham, 2002), I have explored Lancelot Whyte's conception of a 'formative' or 'morphic tendency' from which Rogers' own 'formative tendency' derives. On Whyte's testimony, 'the universal morphic process generates a coordinating tendency of organisms and order-seeking tendency in the human mind and in all these the morphic tendency operates on levels forming a hierarchy' (1974, p. 61). In consequence, he contends, 'the known universe as a whole, and every organism, including man [sic.] contains a graded sequence of units in each of which a formative tendency, has been, or still is, present' (p. 58). What this means with respect to the person, maintains Whyte, is that we should think in terms of 'a hierarchy of mental processes' (p. 106); and, so far as the universe as a whole is concerned, conceive it as 'arranged in a sequence of discrete "levels", which for precision we call a hierarchy of wholes and parts' (p. 43). For, 'the first fact about the universe is its organization as a system of systems from larger to smaller, and so also is every organism'.

When, therefore, Rogers describes his formative tendency as 'an evolutionary tendency toward greater order, greater complexity, greater interrelatedness', 'which can be equally well observed at every level of the universe' (1980, pp. 133 & 125); and when he sees its existence evidenced in the fact that 'every form we see or know emerged from a simpler, less complex form' (p. 125), one can only wonder why he did not follow Whyte's lead in making explicit the implied hierarchical blueprint to the workings of such a tendency. Perhaps if he had, he would have seen the need to rework his characterization of both the child's personal development and of the nature of incongruence, allied as they both are to the manner in which self and other are perceived. For if there are more than the two stages of *organismic experiencing* and *symbolization to awareness* in the development of our perception of self, and thereby our perception of others, then the concomitant incongruence in our perceptions would no longer be seen as a two-level, but as a multi-level affair—a position I have argued in an article on Rogers' definition of congruence (Ellingham, 2001).

Psychodynamic assistance

In seeking to account for such matters in a multi-level, authentic person-centred fashion, there are a number of theorists within the psychodynamic tradition whose ideas might be drawn upon, theorists whose formulations or individual concepts are in tune with person-centred theory in that they are expressive of an organismic world-view. Here I have in mind, for instance, John Bowlby, Robert Kegan, Heinz Kohut, Daniel Stern, the object relations' theorists, and to some extent Carl Jung. In order to be seen as part of the tradition begun by Freud, the fact that such organismic psychodynamic theorizing is alien to, and incompatible with, certain of Freud's fundamental concepts—viz., the unconscious—is customarily glossed over, or perhaps not even recognized. It might cause consternation amongst the ranks of psychodynamic devotees, therefore, were they to realize that Rogers' concept of the formative actualizing tendency, or its equivalent, is exactly the 'foundation block' that their organismic theorizing requires. When suggesting that the flaws in Rogers' conception of child development referred to above can be remedied by making use of ideas drawn from organismic psychodynamic theorists, I thus see myself as giving their ideas a person-centred identity, not giving person-centred ideas a psychodynamic identity.

Selfobject love

This said, in looking to psychodynamic theorists to so aid the development of person-centred theory, one pressing matter is the need to amend Rogers' account of the part that the giving and receiving of love plays in the development and remedying of incongruence. Rogers, it will be recalled, describes the infant as having to 'observe his mother's face, [and] gestures' in order to 'know whether he is receiving' love/positive regard, the satisfaction of receiving it 'necessarily based upon inferences regarding the experiential field of another' (1959, pp. 225 & 223). Expressing the matter in this way invites the interpretation that such 'knowing' is based upon quasi-adult reasoning by inference: 'Oh, I see my mother is smiling, I must be on the receiving end of positive regard!'; rather than the immediate apprehension of the features of the mother's face as centring and being infused by an all encompassing and intensely vivid, bodily experiencing of joy. The term 'inference' may merely be loose terminology. But it does point to possible 'adulto-morphism' on Rogers part—of his reading into the infant's way of being, the way of being of an adult. It is a danger more likely to arise if one has a thing-like notion of feelings, since once having labelled a feeling as 'love' or 'unconditional positive regard', it gets easily seen as the same 'thing' whether in the 'envelope' of the child's perceptual field or that of the adult. To conceive feelings in this way, as akin to billiard-balls located in different chambers of the mind is intrinsic to Freud's thinking and has very much a Newtonian rather than an organismic character.

Be that as it may, set against contemporary psychodynamic ideas regarding the development of self from infancy (see Bowlby, 1969 and Stern, 1985), Rogers' notion that it is not from birth but only after developing an awareness of self that the infant becomes aware of the need for love, represents a clear-cut case of putting the cart before the horse, as David Brazier (1993) points out. For it is not through the development of self that love is experienced, but through the experiencing of love that the self develops. As Brazier puts it, 'it is the altruistic orientation which is fundamental and… "self"-development…derivative of this' (1993, p. 77). 'The moment the mother-child dyad is formed, Eros is constellated', declares Jungian Anthony Stevens, 'and it is out of love that ego-consciousness, selfhood and personal identity grow' (1982, p. 13). 'We are', as the African saying has it, 'therefore I am'.

Such a dyadic-field interpretation corresponds with Len Holdstock's claim, as reported by Dave Mearns and Brian Thorne of 'a conceptual confusion at the heart of the [person-centred] approach' (2000, p. 81), one that arises from Rogers' conception 'of the self as an independent unit of the social system' (Holdstock 1996, p. 399); whereas 'the therapeutic relationship, as conceptualised by Rogers, is based on the *interdependent* nature of the self' (Mearns & Thorne, 2000, p. 81). Certainly, the self so construed fits with Rogers' mystical perception of himself and his client as both one at their core, yet part and parcel of something larger than themselves, a condition in which such in-depth knowing/loving/perceiving of the other involves the mutual perception of each as they truly are. From an organismic field perspective, it accords, too, with the notion of the two-in-one being concentrations of patterned activity within a larger field of activity, 'process immersed in process beyond ourselves' (Whitehead, 1968, p. 8); 'a complex micro-system within and connected to a complex macro-system' (Sanders & Tudor, 2001, p. 149).

And, if indeed the feeling of mystical oneness that client and therapist so share is akin to the awesome feeling of 'love' that the infant feels for the mother (aside from the 'unknowing' character) then without doubt we are talking of a type of perceiving that arises from a deep empathic attunement and resonance of one organism with another (Stern, 1985), an interactional mode of perceiving that Stern pictures as the mother sending out 'curved lines of force flowing into space' by which her baby 'can move along her rays of attraction' (1998, p. 92). It would seem to be the case, therefore, that the inversion from 'self-to-loving relationship' to 'loving relationship-to-self' helps make better sense of how it is that unconditional positive regard when 'perceived' by the client facilitates self-growth in the client, on the grounds that it is love of the kind that the infant genuinely and empathically shares with the mother that constitutes the germinal source of our personhood.

Attachment and relational schemas

In looking to organismically enhance person-centred understanding of the powerful impact of interpersonal perceptions at the deepest interpersonal level, much is to be gained too, in my view, through examining the ideas of John Bowlby regarding 'attachment' and the formation of 'internal working models'—and, beyond Bowlby, 'relational schemas', the more general term for such models (see Baldwin, 1992). Such schemas or models are seen as developing in infancy and constituting 'engraved' patterns in the infant-significant other relational field, rather as skiers skiing down a mountain 'engrave' grooves in the snow. The more the interactional patterns are repeated, the more they become a template for subsequent interactions.

That such relational schemas take the form they do is based on the one hand on the infant being drawn to concordant and resonant interactions that give rise to intensely positive feelings of love and attachment; on the other, to her being repulsed by discordant and disharmonious interactions that rise to intensely negative distressful feelings. Thereby emotionally charged 'me-you' relational schemas emerge, from which through the process of symbolization we subsequently differentiate out our perceptions of self and perceptions of the other. Given that the original formation of the relational schema begins in infancy, the original affectively charged sensing of the other can be described as a form of subception. Perhaps, too, this is the same mode of 'perceiving' the other that is involved when Rogers talks of his mere presence having a therapeutic effect on a client (1980, p.129).

Disorganization and psychosis

The essential requirement of a symbol is that it should be congruent with, have the same pattern as, that which is seeks to represent. In line with Rogers' theorizing regarding inaccurate symbolization, we can thus envisage situations in which the symbolically expressed representations of self and other do not accord with those expressed in terms of subceived relational schemas. The result, as Van Belle indicated, is that the patterns of certain relational schema regarding self and other are not assimilated into subsequent symbolization—there may also be the pattern of fundamental impulses that are excluded from a relational schema in the first place. Activation of unassimilated lower level processes can lead to the kind of behaviour exhibited by Rogers' sexually 'pure' boy. They may actually become activated to the

point that they give rise to strange, intense and often fearsome perceptions and forms of experience—the equivalent we might surmise to knowing 'from the inside' what it is like to be an animal governed by its instinctual feelings, as with the frozen-in-fear response of the catatonic individual. Hallucinations may occur, where such feelings are enshrined in an iconic image. The relational schema or iconic image of a feared father may, for example, become activated and in governing the client's perception of a male therapist lead to that therapist being seen as the feared father, the 'transference' image being taken for the reality. Indeed the powerful nature of such iconic perceptions and their accompanying motivational force can be such as to completely take over the person—for controlling such perceptual experiences of 'archetypal' or 'numinous' intensity, to use Jung's terms, is no easy matter and can well lead to psychosis.

Mystical and spiritual traditions, with their religious rituals and monastic practices, have developed the means and, in their own symbolisms, charted the path whereby safe passage may be reached from such powerful forces, and 'salvation', i.e. adequate symbolization, achieved. The path is that of the hero who survives the descent into the underworld to return with a new truth; the story of the self that partially dismantles itself to become transformed; the psychoanalytic narrative of regression in the service of the ego. Above all, though, it is the universal creative logic of *reculer pour mieux sauter* (regress to progress) epitomizing the workings of the formative actualizing tendency (see Ellingham, 2002), of amplifying and focusing upon inaccurate and distorted symbolizations in order to cleanse 'the doors of perception'.

Powerful forces may be unleashed, but as Rogers personally attests, for the individual who is not alone on such a tempestuous journey but accompanied by a faithful and trustworthy soul-mate, someone who is perceived as genuinely loving and empathically understanding their inner trials and tribulations, for such an individual 'profound growth and healing and energy are present' (1980, p. 129). It is as though the perception of the therapist constitutes an area of calm in the individual's perceptual field, so allowing turbulent experiences to be activated, tolerated and assimilated through symbolization, without capsizing the vessel of the self. The secure 'attachment figure', as Bowlby expresses it, thus provides firm anchorage for exploring and taming the deep.

In *Trials of the Visionary Mind* (1999), John Weir Perry buttresses such an interpretation in summing up his own life's work of ministering to and establishing a safe haven for individuals undergoing the tempests of acute psychotic episodes. 'Turmoil and disorder', narrates Perry,

> are anything but disastrous if we can actually look into the process giving rise to them. If we listen to the individuals in the episode in an empathetic and caring manner, without the need to manipulate, control, or make them be quieter or different in some way, we find, much to our surprise, that they may change spontaneously in a quite short period of time. We have only to sit and relate openly with persons in the episode to find that what had once been a fragmented state of scattered associations, may now begin to assume a coherent form with clarity of thought. Setting up a bi-personal field of relationship, that is, one in which two psyches are in a process of opening up

> to each other, may stimulate an organizing effect that stimulates an integrative process. (p. 4)

Initially, fragments of unassimilated, inadequately symbolized experiential data become amplified to generate a confusing potpourri of multi-modal perceptions of 'self/other/world' mixed with existing symbolized perceptions of 'self', 'other' and 'world'. Thereafter, from the fused self/other/world perceptions discretely symbolized perceptions of self, world and other become differentiated out, and over time coherently integrated into the person's pre-existing symbolizations of 'self', 'other' and 'world'. In the acute psychotic episode, therefore, what we are encountering, according to Perry, is 'a disintegrative phase of what may be regarded as a developmental process' (p. 3): the working of the formative actualizing tendency.

Conclusion

In exploring and critiquing Rogers' views to do with the defining of an interpersonal relationship (condition 1) and the therapeutic perception of the other (condition 6), I have argued that persons be characterized in a multi-level manner: namely, as symbolizing organisms that are fields of patterned activity set within an overarching field or fields. So viewed, perception of self and other is nothing but the felt sense of harmony and/or discord of the activity of the organismic field that we are and/or of the field(s) of which we are a part. It is a characterization that I have further explicated elsewhere (see Ellingham 1984 & 2002) and one that I believe represents an authentic development of Rogers' theoretical formulations and insights.

For Carl Rogers left us with the profound vision that not only the mystical heights, but also the psychotic depths of our perception of self, other, and world are a function of the nature of the love shared with another at the core of ourselves. In the name of love, it behoves us to articulate that vision in the clearest possible form, to expunge inaccurate symbolizations and excrescences, both in relation to our personal perceptions of ourselves and others, and to our abstract perceptions (our theoretical formulations) of reality as a whole.

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