

INTRODUCTION

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There is only one way in which a person-centred approach can avoid becoming narrow, dogmatic, and restrictive. That is through studies ... which open new vistas, bring new insights, challenge our hypotheses, enrich our theory, expand our knowledge, and involve us more deeply in an understanding of the phenomena of human change (Rogers, 1986/2002:12).

We have chosen these words of Rogers' to begin the book, as it suggests that Carl Rogers was very open to a developmental approach in psychotherapy, counselling and education. It also suggest that he may have, towards the end of his life, 'intuitively' felt that the person-centred approach may be tending to become 'narrow, dogmatic, and restrictive'. Since the death of Carl Rogers¹ there has been much development, change and controversy in the person-centred movement; many of these accounts have been examined and discussed by some of the significant contributors in this field, perhaps in some way to 'avoid becoming narrow, dogmatic, and restrictive' (see Lietaer, Rombauts and Van Balen, 1990; Mearns and Thorne, 2000; Patterson, 2000; Cain, 2002; Wilkins, 2003). Yet, in all these developments there seems to have been very little in the way of examining issues of race, culture and ethnicity in person-centred therapy (see Chapter 3 for discussion).

The various chapters in this book have attempted in a small way to redress this imbalance, many of them are written by person-centred practitioners who are concerned about, and seek the inclusion of, issues of race, culture and ethnicity

¹ Carl Rogers was born on 8 January 1902 in Chicago, and died suddenly on 4 February 1987, after surgery for a broken hip. He was very active at the Center for the Study of the Person, in La Jolla. Rogers is world renowned for originating and developing the now prevailing humanistic trend in counseling, psychotherapy, pioneering research in this field and influenced all fields related to psychology (Gendlin, 1988: 127).

in Client-Centred Therapy. Through the investigation and exploration of these issues in 'a single case study' of one of Rogers' own demonstration films, this book in a sense hopes to generate multiple understandings of how person-centred therapy can be more inclusive of black and ethnic minority clients. Rogers himself had suggested the need for a, 'meticulous analysis of the single case ... as a source of emerging knowledge and generative hypotheses' (Rogers, 1986/2002: 12). This 'emerging knowledge' Rogers refers to could in some way be the inclusion of issues of race, culture and ethnicity. Although Rogers makes no overt mention of cross-cultural and transcultural issues here, he was nevertheless greatly involved with cross-cultural work around this time of his life, viz., cross-cultural encounter groups in South Africa, Mexico, Russia and the USA (see Sanford, 1999). In this sense, we feel that this book is connecting with current debates concerned with race, culture and ethnicity in counselling and psychotherapy but with a specific focus on the person-centred approach. We undertake this exploration, guided by Rogers' own thinking and ways of working—'meticulous analysis of the single case ... as a source of emerging knowledge'—to interrupt and disrupt the theory and practice of person-centred therapy in relation to race, culture and ethnicity. The analysis of the videotaped sessions also provides a critical point of departure from the often separate worlds of client-centred therapy and multicultural counselling (see Chapter 3, for discussion).

The sessions explored in this study were originally filmed in 1977; shows a young black man in a state of remission from leukaemia in therapy with Carl Rogers at the Centre for Studies of the Person, La Jolla, California.²

In the sessions which took place on two consecutive days, and which were

² The year 1977 was also an important year for Rogers, for many reasons. Gay (Swenson) Barfield writes, that at UC Berkeley, 3,000 people gathered at the Association for Humanistic Psychology's Annual Meeting honouring Rogers on his 75th birthday. Barfield records that at this meeting Dr Richard Farson had this to say about Rogers:

'... through his advocacy, battled at every juncture so that, in turn, psychologists, social workers, marriage and family therapists, school counsellors, pastoral counselors, lay and peer counselors and facilitators of self help groups such as AA, women's groups, etc., could eventually "counsel" individuals. In that regard, Rogers paved the way for most of these groups to emerge, develop, become recognised for their unique services to society, and for many to forge powerful professional associations which would ultimately come to certify, licence and monitor their own' (Barfield, 2000:12).

Barfield argues that without Rogers' efforts there might not be in existence today organisations or orientations outside of the physicians' medical model enabling people to do private counselling and psychotherapy. This view is shared by Robert Sollod when he says that Rogers, 'was instrumental in the political fight for psychologists and social workers to practice psychotherapy alongside their medical colleagues' (Monte and Sollod, 2003: 484).

filmed as *'Carl Rogers Counsels an Individual: Right to be Desperate'* and *'On Anger and Hurt'* (Whiteley, 1977)³ the client, whom Rogers described as 'an armor plated man', tells of the difficulty of being black in a white-dominated society and of the trauma of being 'a credit to his race'.⁴

This latter statement becomes a critical 'declaration of identity' which is repeated many times throughout the session. The issue of race appears to be the axis which creates the emotional movement. The client feels that he is the 'victim' of the race conflict in society which, to him, is worse than the leukaemia. He is quite emphatic that the leukaemia has been brought on by the socio-political process although he takes responsibility for his illness. He also speaks of loss, separation and hurt in his life: loss of his marriage, loss of his (white) wife and loss of children (he was separated from his wife and children during the period of the illness), loss of property and the loss of his father-in law who had died recently. The client indicates a number of times that he is desperate, angry and hurt; and hopes the therapist can 'give him the answers'. He also talks about his anxiety at not being in control and reflects on death and dying. The conversation interweaves between these themes with the issues of race and racism taking centre stage for the client.

The videotaped sessions offer a rare opportunity to see one of the 'founding

³ These titles appear to have arisen from the sessions themselves. For example, in the first session: 'The Right to be Desperate, Part 1', the client says: *C11: ... I didn't find anybody that allowed me to be desperate that could understand some of the things that I did and wanted to do ...*

Rogers' voiceover commentary after this exchange: *V3: I can let him feel desperate. Friends and family cannot allow this. It is important that someone can really permit it ...*

Rogers senses that the client can feel desperate with him, or senses after the events that he (Rogers) has allowed the client to feel the right to be desperate: 'The Right to be Desperate'. *V3: ... I also go back to his earlier feelings of hurt. I want to get a more complete feeling for his inner world but he as you will see doesn't pick up on this particular portion.*

This of course happened in the second video session, which is aptly titled: 'On Anger and Hurt'.

⁴ In the 'Carl Rogers Counsels an Individual' films, the client is named as 'an Individual' in the title; the client is not named in the actual session. But this is not the case with the therapist—Rogers is named by the client. For example, early on in the beginning of therapy, seen in 'The Right to be Desperate' session, the client tells Rogers: *C52: ... just sitting here talking with you, you know, whether you are Carl Rogers or Jesus Christ or whatever you know like. T53: Or, Jo Docs ... C53: Whom ever, you know, it's a (pause 2 seconds) still it's a very difficult thing for me to ... (T: yeah, yeah), you know. And I don't know ...*

To be acknowledged by name in the session even once is critical; naming or being named offers a particular status of the 'self' in the intersubjectively relating in therapy. Rogers could be seen as 'a man' with a big name. The client of course is 'a man' with no name (in therapy); but with many names in this book. For example, he is called an 'Individual', 'Dione', 'Hurt', 'Karl' (a spelling difference to Carl, as in Rogers' first name).

fathers or mothers' of counselling and psychotherapy working with a black client. There are of course no similar records of other pioneers of psychotherapy, such as Freud, Jung, Klein or Lacan working with their patients, let alone a black patients. Rogers, on the other hand, was filmed with as many clients as possible to demonstrate the person-centred approach. These sessions were made precisely so that a 'meticulous analysis of a single case' would offer 'a source of emerging knowledge' to support creative ways of working in the clinical room. Many of these films have already been given a 'meticulous analysis' by prominent scholars working in this field; some of which can be found in *The Psychotherapy of Carl Rogers* (Farber, Brink and Raskin, 1996). Clearly, it was 'brave' of Rogers to have allowed himself to be filmed in this way; knowing fully well that not only would the client-centred approach be under scrutiny, but also his own strengths and weaknesses as a therapist be exposed.⁵ As Maria Villas-Boas Bowen writes in the foreword to *The Psychotherapy of Carl Rogers*:

Carl Rogers was a courageous man. At a time when what happened in psychotherapy sessions was only known through the account of the therapist, he broke the taboo of secrecy by allowing himself to be recorded ... by doing so, he not only introduced one of the most valuable methods for teaching psychotherapy but also put himself under the microscope for scrutiny by his friends and foes (Bowen, Villas-Boas, 1996).

An analysis of the video sessions will, we hope, begin a process that will highlight some of the challenges and transformations which appear to be taking place within the field of counselling and psychotherapy, especially in relation to race, culture and ethnicity. In this respect, this book is very much focused on counselling and psychotherapy in the context of today's multicultural, multiracial and multiethnic society. Almost three decades after these demonstration sessions were filmed, we find that they are still widely used in psychotherapy and counselling training programmes to illustrate how the core conditions are employed in therapy, and sometimes to demonstrate therapy with black clients. This issue is further compounded by the lack of literature relating to these filmed sessions, and to the paucity of research on issues of race and culture in client-centred counselling and psychotherapy. A study by Brodley (1996) and

⁵ Rogers was extensively filmed throughout his career, in a variety of settings: working with individual clients; in small and large groups; and, in conversations with other therapists about counselling, particularly about the client-centred approach. In addition to his writings, these films, videos and transcripts have been critical in transmitting Rogers' humanistic approach to psychology and psychotherapy and his theories of non-directive client-centred approach to generations of therapists worldwide. All are now part of the Rogers collection at the Centre for Studies of the Person, University of California, Santa Barbara, and also in the United States Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

one by Menahem (1996) appear to be the only recorded studies of the 'On Anger and Hurt' sessions at the time of writing this book. They provide us with an insight into the way in which Rogers attempted to counsel this particular client (Brodley's study is included in this book, see Chapters 4a and b). Another study by Moodley, Shipton and Falken (2000; reproduced as Chapter 8 in this volume) focuses on issues of race and culture in the interaction between Rogers and his black client. It is this article which acted as an impetus for the development of this book as an attempt to understand further the ways in which person-centred practice can be applied to issues of race, culture and ethnicity.

This book was therefore written to fill in a gap by presenting a range of theoretical and empirical accounts of the issues facing students in training, professional counsellors, psychotherapists, social workers and others who use counselling and psychotherapy as part of their professional engagement. The aim was to understand better the nature of current shifts in professional and clinical practice, for example, transcultural matching, race in the clinical room, power relations in person-centred therapy, and many others. Therefore, the ideas presented in this volume tend to form a critical interrogation of the dominant discursive regimes of conventional psychotherapeutic and counselling theories and its applications in terms of difference and diversity. Although it focuses entirely on the question of race and culture in relations to the 'Carl Rogers Counsels a Black Client' sessions, it nevertheless has very important lessons for the 'other' equity and social justice issues of gender, class, disability and sexual orientation.

The book begins (in Part One) with summaries of the two sessions. In the first, *The Right to be Desperate* summary by Christine Clarke and Michael Goldman, the client tells of his childhood, the sense of alienation he experienced at an early age, the tensions that resulted from his marriage with a white woman (and his divorce), and finally the leukaemia which created a crisis and a need for him to reconsider his life. In the summary of the second session 'On Anger and Hurt' by Debora C Brink and Debra Rosenzweig, the client explores the difficulty he has in expressing his feelings of anger and hurt and talks about other painful experiences such as the way his 'white family' rejected him after his divorce. Part One also includes a chapter by Roy Moodley contextualising the therapy sessions against the background of multicultural counselling and person-centred therapy. Part Two (*Analysis and Clinical Reflections of the Therapy*) follows with a textual analysis of the sessions. It begins with Barbara Brodley's demonstration of Rogers' 'uncharacteristic directiveness' in *On Anger and Hurt* as a departure from his usual practice. Using extracts from the session, Brodley reveals how Rogers is in fact using therapeutic strategies that seem to go against his own theory of non-directiveness. Many contributors in this book have referred to this seminal study of Rogers' unusual practice, first published in 1996 and reproduced in this

volume. Rogers' verbal responses are also the focus of Germain Lietaer's chapter which examines the wide range of 'techniques' used by Rogers in *On Anger and Hurt*, providing numerical data analysis involving the frequencies of the various types of responses which Rogers uses with his client. This quantitative analysis is followed by a qualitative study of Rogers' responses which focuses on the therapist's capacity for empathy, his 'presence' and his profound engagement with the client. Catrin S. Rhys, W. R. Selwyn Black and Shauna Savage offer a more specific analysis of Rogers' use of language through a detailed examination of his use of 'minimal encouragers', particularly his use of 'mm hmm'. Using Conversation Analysis as a theoretical tool, they offer a breakdown of the interactive practices in the sessions and discuss empathic listening in relation to the issue of race.

The descriptive analysis of Rogers' verbal responses offered in Part Two forms the basis for the more contextual investigation presented in Part Three: *Race and Culture in Person-Centred Counselling*, which critically examines the white therapist-black client relationship. This part begins with Sharon Mier's and Marge Witty's reconsideration of Rogers' responses to the client's references to race in the sessions. Mier and Witty review the sessions in detail, identifying the points at which they, as therapists, could have responded to the 'racial content' present in the client's communications differently. The alternative hypothetical responses which they suggest, provide a more explicit and specific exploration of the client's references to race in the context of multiculturalism and diversity. In a similar manner, Roy Moodley, Geraldine Shipton and Graham Falken focus on the racial dimension in the client's narrative, arguing that it is possible (and perhaps, essential, if effective therapy is to take place) to work with racial identity psychologically. Their chapter examines the client's and the therapist's 'separate journeys' during the sessions and the difficulties for a white therapist and a black client to form a relationship. The status differential between Rogers and his client as well as the ways in which Western psychotherapy and counselling have developed represent the background against which the authors examine the therapeutic process.

The idea of the therapeutic relationship as the product of structural positionings resulting from race, gender, disability, class and sexual orientation seems to be a central concern for many contributors. Khatidja Chantler, for example, argues that therapeutic healing can only take place when such positionings are acknowledged and negotiated as part of the counselling process. This view often leads to the argument that person-centred counselling has historically de-contextualised the 'person' by excluding factors involving the group to which he/she belongs. However, contributions in this book at the same time suggest that the Rogerian practice is also (paradoxically) conducive in terms of acknowledging the 'other' in therapy. Christine Clarke, for example,

uses specific examples from the sessions to demonstrate that, through empathy and congruence, Rogers is able to engage with his client's reality. Her analysis is followed by the case study of one of her clients, a young woman of Pakistani parentage experiencing marital problems, a case that offers an insight into some of the complexities faced by clients seen as 'racial others'.

Another key focus in our analysis of race and culture as reflected in the sessions is the relationship between the white therapist and the black client. By addressing the question of racial and cultural matching between therapist and client, Shukla Dhingra and Richard Saxton, for example, argue that being able to choose one's counsellor—on the basis of race and gender affinities—is an essential aspect of the therapeutic process. While the previous chapters have at times offered a strong critique on the absence of race as a discourse on the part of Rogers with this client, Colin Lago and Jean Clark make a strong case of Rogers' growing awareness and sensitivity to issues of race and culture through the analysis of another video session showing Rogers with another African-American client in the mid-1980s, called *Carl Rogers Meets With a Black Client, 1985*. This interview is an interesting demonstration since it shows Rogers using a completely opposite approach to the way in which he 'worked with' the client in 'The Right to be Desperate' and the 'On Anger and Hurt' sessions. This time, Rogers addresses the race issue more directly, thus posing an interesting contrast with the earlier sessions.

In addition to presenting a theoretical analysis of race and Person-Centred Therapy, the book also intends to offer practical suggestions about how to conduct therapy with culturally diverse clients. Many contributors have selected specific parts of the sessions and offered alternative suggestions about responding to the client's references to race. Furthermore, since demonstration videotapes (of the films) are used widely in counselling and psychotherapy training, it seems critical that the book also addresses these videotapes as tools for teaching and training. Mary Charleton and Melanie Lockett, for example, suggest possible ways in which the training of therapists could respond to issues of race within therapy. By providing a set of 'questions to students' which are interspaced with the authors' discussion of the videotaped sessions, their chapter offers a practical perspective on the ways in which the person-centred counselling model can be used effectively in a transcultural context.

Another key aspect of the book is that, in exploring different interpretations of a single event, it tends to adopt what could be described as a hermeneutic approach. This is clearly reflected in Part Four: *Views from Other Perspectives* which offers different theoretical perspectives leading to multiple ways of understanding the client's distress. John McLeod examines the sessions using a social constructionist perspective to focus on the way in which the client provides 'vivid personal stories' that constitute his personal narrative. The analysis he

offers reveals the scarcity of such personal narratives in the sessions, an aspect of the therapy which is seen as a critical factor in the inability for the client to fully express his psychological distress. William West's chapter follows with a Humanistic-Spiritual view of the client's distress which leads him to examine the points of departure between Person-Centred Therapy and humanistic spiritual therapy. Using a culturalist perspective, Susan James and Gary Foster reflect on the ever-changing context which constitutes a person's life experiences in order to examine Rogers' interaction with his client. Their aim is to understand the role of the therapist as supporting the client's understanding of the social, religious and cultural circumstances that constitute his sense of self. A further exploration of the white therapist/black client dyad is offered by Anissa Talahite and Roy Moodley through the lenses of the theories on race and alienation developed by Frantz Fanon. By exploring the socio-historical dimension of the client's distress, their argument is that unresolved tensions regarding race identity can lead to aggression, guilt and mistrust.

Adding to the multiplicity of views on a single event is the inclusion of brief and immediate, and at times intuitive, observations gathered in Part Five: *Personal Reflections and Interpretations*. The authors in this section were invited to write brief spontaneous responses on the sessions from their respective perspectives and personal experiences. Many contributors have examined the sessions taking into account the history of African-Americans as a key factor in the interaction between Rogers and his client. For example, Courtland Lee examines the way in which the social history of the United States informs the therapeutic exchanges in the sessions before considering some of the limitations of Rogers' non-directive approach when working with African-American clients. He looks at the client's difficulty in experiencing his blackness and at the silence surrounding issues of race during the sessions. Lee suggests methods which could have allowed the client to engage with his blackness in a creative and positive way through the use of black art forms. These ideas, he suggests are made with the benefit of almost thirty years of knowledge and practice related to cross-cultural counselling, which of course was not available at the time Rogers was conducting the sessions. From a similar perspective and with a personal identification with the client, William A. Hall turns 'a credit to your race' (which is one of the client's key repetitive statements) on its head, as it were, by giving it positive interpretations. He also contextualises some of the client's experiences which are embedded in the history and the psychology of African-Americans by focusing specifically on the question of trust. For him, trust not only involves counselling dyads but also organizations and institutions of counselling and psychotherapy at large.

Following a similar socio-historical perspective, Josna Pankhania offers a personal view of what she describes as 'troubling' moments in the therapy sessions.

She suggests that some of the problems originate from the history of racial domination, colonialism and cultural imperialism which inform the white therapist/black client relationship. She reflects on the 'armour-plated' Western European therapeutic institutions and practices which can hinder black clients' therapeutic process. It is the relationship between dominant ideologies and the construction of identity which seems to lie at the core of many of the analyses made in this book. For example, Stephen Whitehead examines the discourses of race and masculinity in the client's narrative to demonstrate how both race and masculinity are meanings that have been imposed on the client. He discusses the ways in which the constructions of race and masculinity overlap as factors that contribute to the client's identity. Gella Richards explores an further aspect of dominant discourses through her experience as a black female psychologist. Her chapter examines the notion of 'tripping' in the client's narrative. She argues that 'tripping' is used by the client as a term which comes to encompass his experiences of racism and rejection but also resistance and survival.

Part Five ends with Will Stillwell's contribution which also goes beyond the clinical room and reflects on many different stories and narratives that were circulating around the making of these films. Using some of the rumours in Rogers' circle at the time when the filmed sessions were being previewed, Will Stillwell offers a reflection on the meaning of 'truth' in therapy and comments on Rogers' ability to go beyond the literal meaning of the client's narrative to explore deeper levels of truth. These ideas are supported by excerpts from Sanchez Boda's observations on the use of 'reflection', 're-perception' and 're-visioning' as key therapeutic activities in Rogers' sessions with the client. Finally, in order to offer a complete context(ualisation) of *Carl Rogers Counsels a Black Client*, which could be used as a reference for further research in the field of Person-Centred Therapy and multicultural counselling, we have included historical documents in Part Six. This part comprises an interview with Carl Rogers conducted by Michele Baldwin on the use of self in therapy; and extracts from letters, edited by Colin Lago, which Rogers wrote to Jean Clark, one of his colleagues, about multicultural counselling in the UK.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that the task undertaken in this book is not without certain limitations. An analysis of an event which lasted two hours, took place over two days and, for all intents and purposes, was a staged demonstration, presents numerous problems. Also, such an analysis is fraught with many difficulties, some of which are absent in real therapeutic encounters. For example, we can only rely on the view that the camera chooses to show, thus missing aspects of non-verbal communication and finer emotional exchanges between Rogers and his client. When we then turn to the written text and the transcripts for a deeper analysis of the therapy, we may need to keep in mind the words of Maria Villas-Boas Bowen (1996: viii):

That as valuable as verbatim transcripts of interviews are as a means to study psychotherapy, key aspects of the therapist's work are lacking. In Carl Rogers' case, transcripts fail to convey the incredible quality of his presence, which he expressed through his eyes, posture, and tone of voice; this presence was certainly a central element of his therapy. Often, it was not so much what he said or did that made the difference, but how he said it and his way of being with the client.

Furthermore, it is difficult to ascertain what the therapy would have been if a different method was used, since what we have in front of us is a session unravelling as a result of Rogers' interventions, some of them directive as observed by Brodley (see Chapter 4a, this volume). The client's narrative might have been totally different if a Freudian or Jungian approach had been used. Another limitation lies in the fact that we are reflecting on the video sessions many years later and in the words of William West (see Chapter 15, this volume): 'from the safety of our armchairs'.

As viewers, we remain outsiders to the process in the sense that we have no sense of immediate involvement with the client's material. Ours is mainly an intellectual reflection 'after the event' without taking any risks. The fact that we are analysing an event which took place in the 1970s from the vantage point of the twenty-first century is yet another parameter which has to be taken into consideration. Many of the contributors in this book have commented on these limitations inherent in the process of analysing videotapes of the filmed sessions. However, this does not make their analysis less valid. What this book intends to achieve is not so much a rendering of the 'truth' but an exploration of the multiplicity and diversity of ways in which the 'meticulous analysis of the single case [can be] a source of emerging knowledge' (Rogers, 1986/2002: 12), to support the emerging dialogue between person-centred therapy and multicultural counselling.

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