

Carl Rogers, the founder of client-centred therapy, is, with Abraham Maslow and Rollo May, acknowledged as one the founders of humanistic psychology, although in some ways person-centred therapy differs as much from other humanistic schools of therapy as it does from psychoanalytic and behavioural forces in psychology and psychotherapy. One of the differences is the issue of the therapist's non-directivity, which is the subject of one of the articles in this issue. However and wherever client- or person-centred therapy is located, it has been highly influential in the development of ideas and practice in psychotherapy and counselling. Rogers was, for instance, one of the first practitioners to research what he did; and his hypothesis of certain necessary and sufficient conditions for successful therapy was and is still relevant and applicable to all forms of therapy. Influenced by Otto Rank and Jessie Taft, in 1942 Rogers referred to his 'newer psychotherapy' as 'relationship therapy', a term which prefigures more recent interest in the therapeutic relationship and relational ways of working across all forces and schools of psychotherapy (see Tudor & Worrall, 2006).

In the last twenty years of his life Rogers became more interested in applying the principles of person-centred therapy – that, like all other organisms, the human organism has a tendency to actualise; that, in order to be facilitative, the therapist embodies a non directive attitude towards the client, and that therapist and client create certain conditions which facilitate the client's growth – to other aspects of life. He wrote about education and administration; groups and group encounter; conflict resolution and group facilitation; relationships and family life; organisations, culture and society. Indeed, Rogers' life work represents a concern with both self and society. These writings and their practical manifestations beyond therapy are referred to as 'the person-centred *approach*', for a contemporary elaboration of which see Embleton Tudor *et al.* (2004). The four commissioned articles in this special issue represent further exploration of person-centredness as an approach. In the first article Paul Wilkins explores what the term 'person-centred' means with reference to some of the philosophical traditions which influenced Rogers, and argues that the person-centred approach is not necessarily humanistic. In the second article Clare Raido examines the principle of non directiveness, which is central to person-centred practice, and argues that, rather than being viewed as an attitude of the therapist, it should more usefully

be experienced and promoted as a quality of the client-therapist relationship. Following this Seamus Nash reports initial findings from his research into what practitioners understand by being person-centred. He identifies a number of meanings, one of which is a political meaning. For Rogers and others the person-centred approach is highly political and this is the subject of a recently published book which is reviewed in this issue. In the fourth article, Pete Sanders, taking a highly political perspective, examines the field of illness and medicine, and argues for a social model of illness, and why person-centred practitioners should reject the medicalisation of distress.

Rogers' 'newer psychotherapy' is now over 65 years old. Both as a form of therapy and as an approach to life, person-centred psychology is as robust as ever, and more developed, more advanced, more theorised and more practised. In the UK it is now possible to study person-centred psychotherapy at Masters level and to become a UKCP registered person-centred psychotherapist and, earlier this year, Temenos in Sheffield became the first person-centred member organisation of the UKCP. An increasing number of books are being published, not only in the English language, thanks principally due to the good offices of PCCS Books, but also in German, Japanese, Portugese and Spanish. Continuing the theme of this issue, recent books on the person-centred approach are reviewed in the Book Review section.

## References

Embleton Tudor, L., Keemar, K., Tudor, K., Valentine, J. & Worrall, M. (2004) *The Person-Centred Approach: A Contemporary Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

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