

Guest Foreword

Invited Foreword by David Murphy

It's a real privilege to write this foreword for the special issue of *Self & Society* commemorating and celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Carl Rogers's address to the American Psychological Association (APA). To mark this occasion the editorial collective has assembled a fantastic set of papers and reviews reflecting key contemporary ideas for Person-Centred Psychology. Each contributor offers a unique blend of passion and reason that makes for an exciting issue.


In Rogers' address to the APA he set out five areas in which he challenged us with questions beginning 'Dare we...?'. Today, Rogers' psychology is widely applied across a range of settings and contexts, with some applications being more closely aligned to the original vision than in others. The idiom 'Person-Centred' is widely used but doesn't always have quite the same meaning. Does this really matter, as long as one is living the attitudinal conditions, if one 'buys into' the theory lock, stock and barrel? Lawton and Nash's review suggests that large group theory (or PCA, as they term it) is not suitable for guiding client-centred psychotherapy with individual clients, yet Rogers stated that he didn't alter his way of being in either setting. So what does this mean? Who is right? Does it matter? Or is this kind of theoretical hair-splitting what Andy Rogers suggests creates greater differences within approaches than those between them? Notwithstanding theoretical debates, Gillian Proctor's review reminds us how far person-centred counselling is effectively applied across the spectrum of distress to optimal functioning; yet today, competition over adjectival titles, terminology and seats at the health commissioners' table seems to have become the focus of attention.

Carl Rogers' question, 'dare we do away with professionalism?', remains as important today as it did when first stated. As Brian Thorne points out, it might be easier to make such statements when one is in the end of their career than at the outset: Brian's article reflects on his life, work and recent illness, and his passion for counselling is clearly alive and well. He outlines concerns for the future of therapy in today's risk-averse society, and argues that the era of 'daring' has been replaced

by an era of audit and Big Brother style management of practitioners' lives, leaving little room for living 'in love'.

Rogers' address also pointed towards the need to dare to change the systems in which care is provided. Andy Rogers shows us the radical nature of Rogers' work and asks whether, today, the approach has lost its way. With so many people 'making a living' out of this work, occupying professional roles in mainstream National Health Service posts, it's important for us all to consider our own interests and how they are served. Public health style models of improving well-being is certainly one way to go, as Larry Davidson and Peter Pearce make reference to this in their papers. Both point towards early interventions as a step along this road.

Our world community is developing such that the medical model is pervasive. Lago, Lossifides and Tudor each touch on the issue of culture. Tudor shows how cultural approaches often get overlooked in favour of the DSM as medicalised approaches continue to spread. And Lossifides outlines the financial crisis in Greece and asks what we can do as person-centred counsellors. Have we really been about design, or more about maintenance of the status quo?

Perhaps the biggest question of all that speaks to the tension of Rogers' vision is captured in Pearce's comment that the critical-engagement approach has shown an alternative to principled non-engagement. It's certainly not yet indicative of a truly human science and, we must ask, at what cost will this one small step have come? 

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