

Rogers's Philosophy of Person

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1. INTRODUCTION

“How beauteous mankind is. O Brave new world that has such people in it”, wonders Shakespeare in his *Tempest*.

Art and Architecture, musical melodies etc are subtle expressions of an age. They portray the desire, dream, disposition and deeds of people belonging to that age. For instance when we look at the Victorian age, we are quick to notice that the most of its buildings were constructed out of solid stones and its structures appeared to be massive; even their tables and chairs were huge and heavy. It symbolically expressed the stability and prosperity of that age.

Anyone who is attentive to aspiration of our age will look at it as age of sensation and presentation. A few subtle manifestations of our world today are “use and throw goods”, “hire and fire” business relationships, “glittering and glamorous” appearances, “appealing and attractive” arrangements. The soft is cute and the lightest is handy, cosy and comfy. On the other hand there is so much of unrest, uncertainty and anxiety. There is a fear of treating or valuing human beings in terms of commodification and reification. Our phase value is gain or loss, credit or debit, success or failure. Somehow our actuality and achievements fail to manifest the depth dimension of life. Descartes declared that “I think therefore I exist”, whereas our generation seems to affirm that “I have more therefore to exist.” The criteria for assessment of our self-worth are money, mind and muscle. Power, possession, profession, position, etc are prestige and privilege of a few. Are we in a make believe world? We are puzzled and perplexed.

The very foundations of the present human society is fragmenting and falling apart. Our lives are haunted and hunted by the problem of fundamentalism, casteism, racism, terrorism, consumerism, etc. Looking at the grim reality around him, John Britto Chettimattam propounds in his book, *Patterns of India Thought* that the world is moving rapidly. The scientific and technological progress poses threat to the whole living being. Any Atom-Bacteria-Chemical warfare will wipe away us all.¹ What we

¹ Britto Chettimatam, *Patterns of India Thought*, (Bangalore: Dharmaram College, 1971) 5.

need is strategic ideas how to get our thought straight, and polish our perspective properly.

1.2 The Existential Fact of Our Existence

Our day today personal experience of existence is very complex and confounded. At certain times we feel it is explainable and enhancing, at other time elusive and enigmatic, shallow and subtle, futile and fulfilling, helpless and hopeful. There are moments when we feel profound and there are moments when we feel thrown out. This is paradoxical, even at times parallel and polarizing. Looking from the spatio-temporal dimension, our existence is limited, finite and relative. Spatially, we are not the totality of reality, but only a part of it. We participate in a limited way. Temporally as a living being, we are born and will die one day leaving everything behind us. We exist in relation to other beings and thus we limit each other. The moment we speak of the state of our existence we have to remember what Sartre, a radical existentialist, thought of it; that we are condemned to exist and our existence is absurd². Definitely our existence is contingent, not necessary. Our existence is enigmatic. That means our existence needs to be explained. What is the foundation of my own existence? Is knowledge of all the beings given to me? We shall deal with it in the following passage.

1.3 The Drawing of the Depth Dimension of Life

Human beings, being profound in themselves, have been grappling with reality which is inexhaustive, elusive and enigmatic. Those aspects of reality that is unknown, unexplored and unexamined will always draw us closer to peruse in our attempt to encounter it in its totality. We will be time and again beckoned to be interdependent, appropriate and timely. All the more if we are receptive, reflective, researching and redefining our day to day events, emotions, and experiences, we will be grounded and groomed by this depth dimension of life.

1.4 Objectives

The profound being next to God is human being. This intelligent being, having faced with and plagued by those profound and perennial questions about the realities -

² Jean Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, Tran. L. Alexander, (New York: New Directions, 1956) 171.

visible as well as intelligible, attempts to rationally reflect and respond to them. Philosophy is such an enquiry into the realities such as God, man and the world. Humans attempt relentlessly to comprehend them in their ultimate principles and to conceive the meaning of life in the light of that understanding. Victor Frankl concluded thoughtfully that human being as a *meaning seeking animal*,³ we search for the basic understanding of being which is essential to comprehend the totality of reality within/around us. What is the meaning and the message of our life? What is the vision and mission of our existence? Why should we live at all? Is there any purpose in life? Having wondered we would have strived to make sense of out all these questions. Moreover our aim would have been for a comprehensive vision of life and reality which can enable our existence sensible, significant, satisfying and serene here and now.

Everyone has his/her philosophy, implicit or explicit. Carl Rogers being a reflective person has certainly got his own. His assumption and approach have catalytic impacts on the practice of psychotherapy. This is because of his perspectives on person, which colours the typical spectrum of a “humanistic movement” or “encounter movement” which is the creation of his single handed effort. Having seriously doubted the validity of many established diagnostic and treatment methods he propounds person-centred therapy which is an outstanding contribution. He urged to establish a personal relationship between a therapist and a client and accompany him/her closely without interference. We shall look at Carl Rogers’s conceptual orientation, guiding norms, and path-paving achievements in the following pages. I am sure he is an interesting personality today. We focus on these and more in this thesis.

1.5 The Procedure

The second chapter deals with the philosophical notion of life, person and personhood. This is to begin with or to establish conceptually that there is being which can be metaphysically known and affirmed; and to explain that personhood and personality are essentially different. Then with the biographical profile of Carl Rogers

³ Cyril Desbruslais SJ, *The Philosophy of Human Person*, (Pune: Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, 1997) 32.

we discuss about him in the third chapter as the first person who has initiated an approach to understand person in a humanistic way and the formative background of this pioneering journey. In chapter four we specifically elaborate on Rogerian conception of person. This is the sum and substance of his philosophy of person which is existential, experiential, phenomenological, realistic, naturalistic and evolutionary. We give a systematic presentation of the conception of the self as explored by Carl in his writings which are mostly on therapy. In the fifth chapter we critique his points of views in order to bring out the salient features of his vision, mission and his limitations as well. We attempt to evaluate and distinguish the significance and contribution of his endeavour. And then we conclude with a personal comment in the final chapter.

2. NOTION OF LIFE, BEING AND PERSONHOOD

2.1 Introduction

Behold we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall,
At last – far off- at last, to all
And every winter change to spring.
So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying in the light:
And with no language to cry.
(Alfred Tennyson, *In Memoriam*)

Human being is a highly dynamic being. The dynamism of human is manifold: biological, emotive, logical, technological, cultural, social, economic, political, religious, etc. The only one-way to discover who a human being is to enter into the mysterious profoundness of his/her being: the way that passes through the study of his/her dynamism, his/her action. From action, from the quality and the level of his/her action, we will be able to transcend towards the being which is their source, and to infer the greatness, the quality, the level, the nobility, and the possibility of human's being. Of all the forms of human action, the most elementary and fundamental one and the one that at the same time emerges as the most complex and rich with content is life⁴. For human's being, life is essential. It is an activity that cannot be interrupted without putting in crisis, indeed, without destroying his/her own being.

Nature is beautiful and bountiful. Life unfolds itself profoundly. We come across difficult juncture of life when numerous queries arise in our minds. This chapter explores the basic philosophical notion of life. Is our existence factual? What is a being and its constitutive elements? How do we affirm it? What is the starting point our intellectual expression? Are there difference between being (existence) and entity (existent)? How beings are graded? What is the nature of a person, and whether a human being can be called “a being” or “a person”? Finally having considered and categorized about person and personhood, personhood and personality.

2.2. Notion of Being

⁴ Cyril Desbruslais SJ, *The Philosophy of Human Person*, (Pune: Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, 1997) 13.

2.2.1 Existence is a Fact

In our daily living we experience various kinds of events and things, visible materials and intelligible physical realities. As conscious beings we can not escape from knowing the world that exists. What I experience is something and not nothing. I may doubt the existence of the external world. But I can not doubt my own the existence. I have to be there existentially to question anything, as Descartes claimed. This is an existential factual experience.

2.2.2 Direct Judgment as a Starting Point

In every experience we experience something i.e. “Being”. Experiencing the existence of things is an inevitable encounter in our daily life. What has been experienced through the senses are either affirmed or denied. We attempt to affirm or deny that something exists or not. This is direct judgment. For instance, “this is a pen”; “this is not a pencil.” Whereas statements such as, “there is no soul”, and “there is God”, are not direct judgment, for we cannot immediately affirm or deny them. We cannot deny the existence of direct judgment, for even to deny we have to make a direct judgment.⁵ If we state “there is no such thing as a direct judgment,” it is a direct judgment; an immediate denial that something exists.

In every direct judgment we say about two kinds of things: WHAT it is (its essence, its this-ness) and THAT it is (its existence). In reflection we recognize that these two elements are not merely juxtaposed side by side. Essence is a kind of limitation or a limiting principle. To be “this” means “not to be that”, i.e. to be a ‘cow’ is a limitation from to be a “horse”. Therefore the “is” element is actually limited by “this” element.

When I make an existential judgment and say *this is*, I am expressing that the unlimitedness of “to be” is restricted to being the “to be” of just this particular essence. On the other hand existence does not imply any limitation by itself. “To be” means just to be and the only thing it opposes by itself to is “not to be” i.e. nothing. If existence is limited, it is limited by something other than outside of itself, the essence. Thus it is not a limitation rather I am tending to the unlimited existence. Whenever I experience limit means there is an intrinsic tendency to go beyond that limit.

⁵ Desbruslais, 26.

2.2.3 Meaning of Being

“Being” is the most fundamental concept in our effort to understand the realities.⁶ Only having understood what ‘is’ means we can state. Being refers to all existents including absolute entities like numbers and universals. Everything is being. Every being is constituted of being principle which remains at the core of a thing and brings different layers of the object together. It is specific to that individual entity. This specificity or particularity of being principle gives existence, unity and identity to it. It is not the property that makes an object existent. All entities possess existence, essence and difference⁷. That is to say every entity is unique and universal. We further discuss about constituents of being.

2.2.4 Difference between Being (existence) and Entity (existent):

Being is the first principle. And as the first principle it is eternal and ultimate but our impressions are temporal and finite. Existents mean specific ways of existing. It is against being unspecified ways of existing. Beings can not exist as an entity but makes entities. The act of being is called as entity or existent.⁸ What we empirically experience is existent (entity) and not existence (being). We intellectually abstract the idea of being. Without understanding that a thing exists we can not know it.

2.2.4.1 Existence

Existence or being is the most basic idea in conceiving the world. Existence is “*is-ness*” of a thing. There is *no being per se* but only beings; there is *no existence as such* but only existents. Being exists only as being of beings, being as such has no actual existence, but only conceptual, or theoretical. It does not mean that it exists only in the order of our thought. Being exists in /as particular being.

2.2.4.2 Essence

Essence is “what-ness” of a thing. Essence defines a thing and makes a thing what it is. Essence is common to the members of the same species. It is the universal aspect common to the members of the same class. For instance humanness / humanity is universal to all humans. But essence cannot be equated with universal. An entity is

⁶ Joseph Kaipayal, *Human as Relational*, (Bangalore: Jeevalaya Institute of Philosophy, 2003) 4.

⁷ Joseph, *Critical Ontology*, 20.

⁸ Joseph, *Human as Relational*, 28.

differentiated from other if its essence is further determined by some uniqueness. Every entity is a unique entity because its self-identity is characterized by essence and difference⁹.

2.2.7 Nature (Mystery) of Being

Being “as such” is not understood as a concept but as the ultimate reality of all realities. It has no limit; rather it is filled with fullness of being. Being encompasses all our knowledge, all reality, the finite as well as infinite. Being is the ultimate principle of reality and of the activity of the mind. Being is present in all our experiences, but we mistakenly identify being with our experience. All reality, any achievement, a great discovery/ invention, a system we devise is being; or rather is a being. No system however great can ever encompass the whole of being. Every individual being is unique in being but all individuals share in being. Being itself is inexhaustible.

We analyze reality in concepts which give us the essence and the substantial characteristics of things. We grasp “what a thing is” in concepts. Our knowledge is built up of “whats” and the “is” escapes us. We discuss and deal with the essence and loose in touch with existence. Being is understood as the “act of existing”. If we attempt to conceptualize “the state of being” we distort it. There is the mysterious “is” in every affirmation and negation. Even though it has limits in itself, it is limited in many ways in the concrete judgments. It is the foundation of all reality and of all objective knowledge. Being is always dynamic and never static¹⁰. It effects all coming and going.

Knowing an entity means knowing its being principle. It is only when we discover a thing’s being principle; we can fully understand a thing and therefore the proper object of the intellect is being principle. All entity- persons, things, actions, absolute entities have their being principle which are transcendent. Their existence is not physical but metaphysical or transcendent. The experience of existence – the experience that I exist and I perceive that the world exists- is the fundamental experience that constitutes my consciousness.¹¹ Absolute value of knowledge is possible only when we found on absolute being.

⁹ Kaipayal, *Human as Relational*, 31.

¹⁰ Desbruslais, 27-28.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

2.2.8 The Grades of Being

Each human being is unique because of his /her unique being principle. On the other hand beings belonged to the same species are essentially similar. And the being principle accounts for that thing is universality and particularity. Each entity is being and the world as a whole is also a being. Each entity has its being principle. Whereas the being principle of a particular entity is graded depending on the *amount of being-ness* they possess. Humans have more of being-ness and their being-principle is higher in perfection than animals. The higher the being principle of a thing, the fuller the onticity of that thing will be. There are generally three types of being *Vegetative being, Sentient being, Conscious being*. Their involvement too depends upon its nature.

2.2.8.1 Properties of Life

The summary of phenomenology shows that living and non-living beings have essentially different properties and that confronting them we can derive a certain idea of life.

Rush says that essence of life is change, the process, the continual activity. Asimov makes life consist of the capacity to discharge a force. According to St. Thomas Aquinas the name of life is given to a substance to which self-movement and the application of itself to any kind of operation, belong naturally. According to Nietzsche life is an ascension and uninterrupted becoming: according to Bergson it is an exceptional impulse to which he assigns the name vital impulse.¹²

Yet the movement, which characterizes life, is not just any movement but has quite precise properties. As for its origin, the movement of life is spontaneous that is, it does not come from the outside, but from within. But it is not totally spontaneous vital action is not an absolute start from all points of view; it depends, on the contrary, on many external factors, conditions and causes. Nevertheless, these factors, these external causes would suffice to produce movement if the being were not already alive.

2.2.8.2 Functions of Animate and Inanimate Life

To the phenomenon of life, we can compare a non-living and living being, as for example a block of marble with a dog. The block of marble is inert, stable, insentient, without reactions, without changes, does not grow, and does not diminish,

¹² Battiista Mondin, *Philosophical Anthropology*, (Bangalore: Theological Publication in India,1985) 38.

and if not exposed to external influences, it does not become ruined or crumbled. This is the nature of nonliving or inanimate beings. On the contrary, the dog moves, ingests other substances and assimilates them, develops, generate other dogs and multiples, reacts to light, noise, and to contact with other bodies, barks, get angry, bites, becomes ill and dies. Since animate beings are endowed within the possibility for growth and development is a reality.

The life of human being is specifically different from that of animals and plants. Ordinary language demonstrates this consciousness when one says that human being lives the life of a beast. Plato declares that to assign pleasure as the end to human life is to reduce man to a mollusc. Human life distinguishes itself from that of animals by the spiritual level, which it obtains, and by the social dimensions which it reaches: for this reason one speaks of spiritual life, intellectual life, affective life, social life, political life, etc. Moreover, human life distinguishes itself by the new attitude that human being puts to herself/himself the problem of life, appraises the beauty of life, desires to better his/her form of life, and tends to transcend the limits of space and time in which his/her life is confined to. Human being is the master of her/his own life, and can in large measure control, direct, and perfect it.

Animals engage in survival. They plod through life breathing, eating, sleeping, defecating and avoiding danger. Occasionally they also engage in play. But our human life encompasses far more. Human being neither operates as a monotonous automaton, nor simply engaging and executing activities nor preoccupied in avoiding dangers of many forms such as physical threat, embarrassment, humiliation, emotional or financial loss of standing.

Human life, some how arranged from a precise genetic code which prescribes the minimum conditions so that it can realize itself, nevertheless constantly displaces the confines indicated by the DNA of homo viven. More than an already finished reality, life is for humans completely a possibility of exploring, discovering and realizing. The life of humans is a life that tends towards the eternal and toward hyperspace, which discharges every force to scorn the chain of space and time. But is there a way which allows humans to reach such ambitious level of life? Or are they not, instead, levels outside his/her reach, fantastic mirages? Eternal and hyper spatial life: is it a pure myth, an impossible possibility, or is it also an effective possibility for humans? We finally decide to confront man directly, to attempt to try to find a

conclusive response for this question. Our actions do indeed define our ultimate meaning of life. It is how we engage in them that ultimately gives our life meaning.

So far no one has unveiled the nature of being in all its totality. Above all this is a dynamic and ongoing encounter which may extend till our death or even more. However we metaphysically expound being. There are aspects that are always elusive and enigmatic to us. This in no way hinders us from being involved in interacting with it. As Kant succinctly puts across that humans are “metaphysical animals” and they have got the nature to ask questions about the ultimate meaning of their existence as well of the world as a totality. This very capacity of human person enhances our life and enables us to make sense of our existence.

2.3 Human Being as a Person

The human individual differs from the individual things whether they are animals, plants or inorganic matters. Human intellective and volitional activities permit self-reflection, self-knowledge and self-determination. Hence the human individual is appropriately called by a special term ‘person’ that is exclusively applicable to the human individual, “homo sapien”¹³, the wise one among all.

2.3.1 Definition

The classical definition of person is given by Boetius. “A person is a substance, subsisting individual, incommunicable and have a rational nature.” Substance here implies that the person exists in itself, that it is supposit. It has subsistence and has an individual and independent existence. It is undivided in itself and divided from others. It is of a rational nature with the ability of volition and intellection. It is incommunicable in the sense that it is singular having complete totality and if communicable, then it would not retain its original personhood. Thus it distinguishes itself clearly both from the essence and nature, it is distinct, subsistent and inclusive of that entire one is. Here it is good to mention that soul is not a person. The soul is an incomplete substance in the order of exercise and is complete only the order of existence. The soul is necessary because of the person’s existence. Thus, a person is a complete substance with a complete nature, subsisting by itself and is for and in itself and separate from all else.

¹³ Carl Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961) 105.

Aquinas thinks in similar line of thought propounds that it is an individual substance undivided in itself and divided from other. It is an individual subsistent being, existing by itself, demanding no subject in which to inhere, and supplying a foundation for all accidents that it possesses as well as ultimate basis for all actions it performs. Man as a person is the most perfect finite being, comprised of matter and form, with the powers of intellection and volition. Person herein forms the substance of his very being.

Modern Psychology defines person as a stream of consciousness, a substance with understanding something that remembers itself; an intellectual substance that can consider itself as itself etc. A conscious being gifted with intellect and memory is a human person

2.3.2 Nature of a Person

A person has a role and he lives out this role. As a substance s/he has his/her own identity, individual components and is of a definite kind. S/he is also subsisting, being whole and complete and with proper existence. S/he is independent having his/her own needs and acts and is open to new actualization. S/he is self-consciousness. This includes, firstly a passive reflection of what goes around. Secondly, self-knowledge where the subject becomes the object and thirdly he regards one's actions as one's own.

2.4. Person, Personhood and Personality

An ovum is alive and has human DNA. Thus, it is a form of human life. Women release each month between puberty and menopause - a few hundred in a lifetime. Almost all of these are destined to die and be ejected from the body. Similarly the sperm are very much alive and kicking. Viewed from a microscope reveals them to be energetic swimmers, whereas they are neither human persons nor human organisms. Because an average man produces thousands of sperm in a second. Hundreds of millions of male sperm are ejaculated during a typical sexual encounter. At most, a very few during his lifetime will be formed into a baby. Although the ovum and sperm are forms of life, there is a consensus that they are not a human person. They only have the potential to join with a spermatozoon produce a human person. The first spermatozoon penetrates the wall of the ovum and forms a new DNA sequence from the DNA contained in the original sperm and ovum. This also is a form

of human life. It is considered by scientists to be the start of a new human organism. Unfortunately, there is no consensus of when human personhood starts.

There are some others who hold all together different opinion. About 24 weeks, when the fetus becomes viable, (i.e. able to live outside the womb). When medical ethicist Bonnie Steinbock was interviewed by Newsweek and asked the question "So when does life begin?" she answered: "If we're talking about life in the biological sense, eggs are alive, sperm are alive. Cancer tumors are alive. For me, what matters is this: When does it have the moral status of a human being? When does it have some kind of awareness of its surroundings? When it can feel pain, for example, because that's one of the most brute kinds of awareness there could be. And that happens, interestingly enough, just around the time of viability. It certainly doesn't happen with an embryo."¹⁴

Personhood is the ultimate reality controlling the being of a person. It is the foundation of one's personality. Humans share this in common but persons differ. It is a capacity of feeling, out of which all-psychological modes and stages of development emerge. Because of intellectual and volitional powers, s/he floats from the world and controls her/his activities.

A personality is a structured whole, definable in terms of its own distinctive structural attributes. It is distinguished in terms of qualitative and quantitative difference from other individuals.

"The concept of personhood is neither logical nor empirical: It is essentially a religious or quasi-religious idea, based on one's fundamental (and therefore unverifiable) assumptions about the nature of the world"¹⁵ voices Paul Campos. However there are questions with philosophical, religious and political aspects. Scientific progress and technological development cannot resolve them. Since they have religious component there will always be a wide variety of beliefs among persons of different faith groups. We are mathematically unequal because we are infused with special talents, tempo and disposition. It is personhood that which keeps us all together as gregarious being. We are able to voice against injustice and

¹⁴ Rosenberg Debra, "'When Can It Feel Pain?' For this philosopher, 'viability' makes the moral difference," Newsweek, 2003-JUN-9.

¹⁵ Paul Campos, "*Opinions: PAUL CAMPOS: Abortion and the Rule of Law*," Scripps Howard News Service, 2002-JAN.

inhumanity; and this human identity and dignity which demands us for an equal treatment considering our rights and duties.

3. CARL ROGERS

Having elaborated in the first chapter on the metaphysical aspects of human being we are going to be introduced to a compassionate person called Carl Rogers whose biographical profile reveals the basis for his philosophy of person. He is the first person who has initiated an approach to understand person in a humanistic way. His research has been proved to be very useful while interacting with people. It is relevant to look at the formative factors and background that motivated him to be so innovative in his consideration of person. Definitely this led to him to found humanistic psychology which is an alternative force to behaviouristic and psychoanalytic approaches.

3.1 Personal Profile

3.1.1 His Birth and Upbringing

Carl Ransom Rogers was born on Jan. 8, 1902, in Oak Park, Illinois, a small town near Chicago which was also Ernest Hemingway's home town. Carl's father Walter was a successful civil engineer and his mother was a housewife and devout Christian. Being the fourth of six children he had a close relationship with his mother. Rogers describes his parents as religious, practical, anti-intellectual, and exclusionary. His family was very religious and emphasized the value of hard work.

He had two older brothers and a sister and two younger brothers. His early years were not pleasant, because Carl was a rather sickly, shy, and prone to tears, often the target of jokes and teasing by his older brothers. Carl had no close friends outside the family before college. Thus he grew up in a family with close family ties. When Carl was in high school at 12, the family moved to a 300-acre farm which was about 30 miles west of Chicago, and it was here that he spent his adolescence. With a strict upbringing and many chores, Carl was to become rather isolated, independent, and self-disciplined.

I could sum up these boyhood years by saying that anything I would today regard as a close and communicative interpersonal relationship with another was completely lacking during that period. My attitude toward others outside my home was characterized by the distance and the aloofness that I had taken over from my parents.¹⁶

¹⁶Carl Rogers, *A Way of Being* (Boston: Houghton Muffin, 1980) 28

3.1.2 His Education

His mother and the older children taught him to read at about age four and read many books very young, especially Bible stories. Carl's father had many experts about the farm, and he himself read a number of books of scientific experiments about seeds, feeding and other aspects of agriculture. His education started in the second grade, because he could already read before kindergarten. He was a rather quiet child who spent a lot of time reading. Both agriculture and science which were the family undertaking have influenced him a lot in shaping the world view.

He went on to the University of Wisconsin to major in agriculture. During Rogers' first two years of college at University of Wisconsin, he studied agriculture. However, after attending a religious conference, he decided to enter the ministry and changed his major to history, which he thought would better prepare him for a career as a minister. During this time, he was selected as one of ten students to go to Beijing for the World Student Christian Federation Conference for six months. That new experience so broadened his thinking that he began to doubt some of his basic religious views. Then in August 28, 1924 after marrying childhood friend Helen Elliott, moved to New York City and enrolled in Union Theological Seminary, a famous liberal religious institution. Found it too dogmatic and transferred to Columbia University where in 1928 completed his M.A., in Teachers College, where he received his doctorate in Psychotherapy in 1931.

3.2 Professional Profile

3.2.1 His Career

In 1928 he joined as the staff member & then in 1929 was appointed as the director of Rochester, N.Y. Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the Rochester Child Study Centre where he remained till 1940. From 1940-1944, he spent his life in Ohio State University. He became President of the American Psychological Association in 1946. In 1957 he was a professor in departments of psychology and psychiatry in the University of Wisconsin. He was elected as the member of executive committee, University of Wisconsin in 1960. In 1971 his D.H.L. was in the University of Santa Clara, his D.Sc. in University of Cincinnati in 1974, his D.Ph. in University of Hamburg in 1975, his D.S.Sc. in the University of Leiden in 1978 and his D.Sc. North-western University in 1984. Having travelled extensively in the U.S.,

Europe, Latin America, Russia, Japan, and South America he facilitated Person-Centred Approach workshops in 1985 and The Rust Peace Workshop in Austria 1987.

Carl Roger's last decade was devoted to applying his theories in areas of national social conflict, and he travelled worldwide to accomplish this. In Belfast, Ireland, he brought together influential Protestants and Catholics; in South Africa, blacks and whites, in the United States, consumers and providers in the health field. His last trip, at age 85, was to the Soviet Union, where he lectured and facilitated intensive experiential workshops fostering communication and creativity. He was astonished at the numbers of Russians who knew of his work. A massive heart attack devoured him in San Diego, California in 1987.

3.2.2 His Writings

The birth of Client-centered therapy was in 1940, December 11 as Carl addressed the University of Minnesota's Psychological Honors Society. 1942, *Counseling and Psychotherapy* is published. *Client-Centered Therapy* is published 1954. *Psychotherapy and Personality Change* (with Rosalind Dymond and others) is published 1956, *On Becoming a Person* is published Global Influence 1964. *The Therapeutic Relationship and It's Impact: A Study of Psychotherapy with Schizophrenics* is published 1968. *Man and the Science of Man* (with William Coulson) is published 1968. *Person to Person* (with Barry Stevens) is published 1968-1977. *Freedom To Learn: A View of What Education Might Become* is published 1970. *Carl Rogers on Encounter Groups* is published 1972, *Becoming Partners: Marriage and Its Alternatives* is published 1977. *Carl Rogers on Personal Power: Inner Strength and its Revolutionary Impact* is published 1979. *Freedom To Learn for the 80's* is published 1980, *A Way of Being* is published 1975-1985.

There are many books posthumously published after Carl's Death. *The Carl Rogers Reader*, edited by Howard Kirschenbaum and Valerie Henderson, is published 1989, *Carl Rogers Dialogues: Conversations with Buber, Tillich, Skinner, Bateson, Polanyi, May and others*, edited by Howard Kirschenbaum and Valerie Henderson, is published 1994, *Freedom To Learn* is revised by H. Jerome Freiberg and is published 1995, *A Way Of Being* is re-published 2002, *Carl Rogers: The Quiet Revolutionary, an Oral History* is published. Two of his books have been published posthumously: *The Carl Rogers Reader*, a collection of his most influential writings, and *Carl*

Rogers Dialogues, which features interchanges with such other giants in the field as Paul Tillich, B.F. Skinner, Gregory Bateson, and Rollo May.

3.2.3 Awards and Acclaims

Recognition of his work has come through dozens of honorary awards and degrees bestowed on him from around the world. In 1955 Carl was honoured with the Nicholas Murray Butler Silver Medal. Becoming the First President of American Academy of Psychotherapist and the special contribution award were the milestone in 1956 from the American Psychological Association. He received the APA's first Distinguished Contribution Award in 1957. In 1962 he is a Fellow in the Centre for Advanced Study in the Behavioural Sciences. He was selected as the humanist of the year, American Humanist Association in 1964. In 1968 he was conferred the honorary doctorate by Gonzaga University. Carl was hailed as the distinguished professional psychologist award in 1972 by the Division of Psychotherapy. On January 28, 1987 he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Congressman Jim Bates. The most prestigious are the American Psychology Association Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award and the American Psychology Association Distinguished Professional Contribution Award.

3.3 Schools of Psychology: a Bird's Eye View

Our perspective over the development of various schools of psychology broadens understanding and significance of Carl Rogers. Wilhelm Wundt is considered to be the one who founded the first psychological laboratory in Leipzig in 1879 and regarded as the beginning of psychology as an independent discipline.¹⁷ His subject matter of psychology is conscious experience which is to be studied by introspection. In the early 20th Century structuralism, which is propounded by Titchener, studied the structure of mind as its subject matter. It was criticized in many grounds, especially for its restricted definition of psychology. William James developed, as a reaction against the former school, functionalism which investigated the mental functioning, and practical problems. John B. Watson, the proponent of behaviourism, argued that psychology should be restricted to the study of phenomena

¹⁷ Mark Cummings, *The Encyclopaedia of American*, (Vol.22 Danbury: Groleir Incorporated, 1829) 728.

that can be observed. He believed that all important behaviour could be moulded and shaped through conditioning and learning. Even though B.F. Skinner made this school popular and had impact in making American psychology experimental, objective, empirical, reductionistic and environmentalistic¹⁸, it has been criticized as overtly simplistic because it could not explain well about language acquisition, reasoning, creativity and self-actualization. In Germany Gestalt Psychology was originated. The Gestaltists argued that human behaviour cannot be meaningfully analysed into artificial, atomistic components and human beings are active in trying to understand and cope with the environment. Then came to the arena is Psychoanalysis which is formulated by Sigmund Freud who believed that human behaviour is irrational, rooted in basic biological drives such as sex and aggression and governed by unconscious motives. Though it became influential in many fields of psychology, it has been criticized for its vague and difficult aspects of the theory, illogically interrelated set of concepts and assumptions. At this juncture Carl Rogers makes his presence felt through his “humanistic psychology or encounter movement.”¹⁹

3.4 Humanistic Psychology: the Third Force

“During the first half of the twentieth century, the psychoanalytic and behaviourist approaches were dominant in psychology. In 1962, however, a group of psychologist founded the Association of Humanistic Psychology. They saw it as a third force which is an alternative to the two other approaches.”²⁰ The most important representatives of humanistic movement are Abraham Maslov, Carl Rogers, Victor Frankl, Rollo May. Humanistic Psychology named after its belief in the basic goodness and respect of humankind. Its roots are based in existential psychology or the understanding and acceptance of one's own existence and responsibility. Specifically, two American psychologists, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, paved the way for this new approach in understanding of personality and improving the overall satisfaction of individuals²¹. It is a simplistic theory that has become one of the most popular topics in self-help style books and man's struggle for meaning which has been and will always be a major part of literature and entertainment.

¹⁸ Cummings, 729.

¹⁹ Cummings, 736

²⁰ Carol Wada. ed., *Hilgard's Introduction to Psychology* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace College, 1981) 468.

²¹ Wada, 468

Humanistic psychology differs from behaviourism because it maintains that we, the humans can choose our own life, and that we are not only determined by our environment. Our distorted experience and conditions of worth may cause us to behave in certain manner which cannot be taken as representing our real self. Even though humanistic psychology is inspired by psychoanalysis in their conceptual frameworks, it departs from it because of its insistence of freedom which is a contrast to psychic determinism. It asserts that we have the power to choose our destinies, even when fate delivers us into tragedy. Humanistic psychologists do not entirely base their theories on clinical observations (contrast to psychoanalysis) but uphold that clinical observations are important in gaining insight into human personality and problems but such observations are subjective and controlled. However, humans may be determined, e.g. by conditions of worth so in the humanistic perspective humans are both free and determined.

3.4.1 Inspiration from Existentialism

Humanistic psychology is human potential movement which has its foundation in existentialism which inspired by Soren Kierkegaard, a Danish and the French existentialists Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. They hold the doctrine that human beings have a free will, freedom of choice, responsibility for our actions, and the most important source of authority is within you (including the burden of responsibility, a price in anxiety and despair, which is why so many people try to escape freedom into narrow certainties and blame others for their misfortunes). Rollo May (1909-94) an existential psychologist focused on difficult aspects of human condition, for example: loneliness, anxiety, alienation. Existential psychologists emphasise the universal struggle to find meaning in life, to live by moral standards, and to come to an understanding of suffering and death. Existential and humanistic psychologies maintain that our lives are not entirely determined by our parents, our pasts, or our present circumstance.

3.4.2 The Four Principles²² of Humanistic Psychology

1. The experiencing person is of primary interest. Humans are not objects of study. They must be described and understood in terms of their own

²² Wada, 468.

subjective views of the world, their perception of self, and their feeling of self-worth. The central question each person should face is “who am I?” in order to learn how the individual attempts to answer this question, the psychologist must become a partner with that person.

2. Human choice, creativity and self-actualization are the preferred topics of investigation. People are not motivated only by basic drives like sex, or aggression or physiological needs like hunger and thirst. They feel a need to develop their potentials and capabilities. Growth and self-actualization should be the criteria of psychological health, not merely ego control or adjustment to the environment.
3. Meaningfulness must precede objectivity in the selection of research problems. Humanistic psychologies argue that we should study important human and social problems, even if that sometimes means adopting less rigorous methods. And while psychologists should strive to be objective in collecting and interpreting observations, their choice of research topics can and should be guided by values. In this sense research is not value-free.
4. Ultimate value is placed in the divinity of the person. People are basically good. The objective of psychology is to understand, not to predict or control people. Psychologists who share these values come from diverse theoretical backgrounds. For example, the trait theorist Gordon Allport was also a humanistic psychologist. We have already pointed out the several psychoanalysts, such as Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Erik Erickson held humanistic views of motivation that diverged from Freud's view. But it is Carl Roger and Abraham Maslow whose theoretical views lie at the centre of the humanist view.

The present is the most important aspect of the person and therefore humanists focus on the here and now rather than looking at the past or trying to predict the future. Humanistic theory is reality based and to be psychologically healthy people must take responsibility for themselves, whether the person's actions are positive or negative. The individual, merely by being human, possesses an inherent worth. Actions may not be positive but this does not negate the value of the person. The goal of life should always be to achieve personal growth and understanding. Only through

self-improvement and self-knowledge can one truly be happy. These are basic assumptions of humanistic psychologists.

3.4.3 Strengths of Humanistic Theory

Humanistic theory is not one that was easily researched in the beginning because of the prominence of psychoanalysis and empirical evidence given by behavioral psychology. There are few tests that humanists had to undergo. Like every theory, some people find the humanistic approach to be valid while others look at it as having numerous inherent flaws. Some of the strengths²³ are as following:

- This theory focuses on both the positive nature of humankind and the free will associated with change. Unlike Freud's theory and the biological approach, which focus on determinism or our lack of power over ourselves, but Maslow and others see the individual as very powerful.
- Many of its aspects fit well with other approaches. Many therapists have adopted a humanistic undertone in their work with clients. While they may argue humanistic theory does not go far enough, they see the benefit of the core components in helping people change.
- The benefits of humanism carry over into different professions. If you take a health class, you are likely to discuss Maslow's hierarchy. If you study economic or business, you will also focus on moving upward in our lives in order to be more aware of who we are and where we fit in with the world. The same holds true with other professions, including literature, criminology, and history, among others, as the basics of humanistic thought strike an undertone in all of what is considered human.
- ✓ “It draws sharp contrast between the humanistic portrait of human personality and the portraits drawn by the psychoanalytic and behaviourist approaches.
- ✓ The biological and environmental variable can influence behaviour, but they emphasize the individual's own role in defining and creating his or her destiny, and they downplay determinism. Only an individual who is growing toward self-actualization can be said to be psychologically healthy. In other words psychological health is a process, not an end state.

²³ <http://proinwarno/huan/htm> on humanism.

- ✓ Anything that retards the fulfilment of individual potential - that prevents any human being from becoming all s/he can be – should be challenged.
- ✓ The rhetoric of liberation movements – such as women’s liberation and gay liberation – echoes the language of humanistic psychology.”²⁴
- ✓ “The study of personality was given importance because of the emergence of humanistic approach. The theories of Rogers and Maslow concentrate on the whole healthy person and take a positive, optimistic view of human personality.
- ✓ Even though they do not have rigorous methods to study important problems, they went on investigating them.
- ✓ They have succeeded in devising new methods of assessing self-concepts and conducting studies that treat the individual as equal partner in the research enterprise.”²⁵

3.4.4 Weaknesses of Humanistic Theory

With the good, always comes the bad, and this theory is also without that exception. Some critics even question the quality of the evidence in support of the humanistic claims. Humanistic assessment is that you know more than the client does about his or her own thoughts, behaviors, and emotions. This in itself would be a contradiction of humanistic belief. Some of the criticisms²⁶ are:

- The crucial criticism is that humanistic thought appears to lack the concrete treatment approaches aimed at specific issues. With the basic concept behind the theory being free will, it is difficult to both develop a treatment technique and study the effectiveness of this technique.
- There are those who believe humanistic theory falls short in its ability to help those with more severe personality or mental health pathology. While it may show positive benefits for a minor issue, using the approach of Roger's to treat schizophrenia would seem ludicrous.
- Humanistic theory makes some generalizations about human nature that are not widely accepted as complete. Are people basically good or are there some

²⁴ Wada, 472.

²⁵ Ibid., 473.

²⁶ http://proinwarno/huan/htm_on_humanism.

individuals who are not capable of this? Can we adequately argue that everyone follows the same levels as Maslow explained, or are these levels, and even what they stand for, be determined by the individual? Why do some people seem to make negative choices even when positive solutions are staring them in the face? These questions plague humanistic thought and the difficulty in researching the theory does not provide any freedom.

- “Some critics ask the evidence of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. To what extent are the characteristics of self-actualizers a consequences of a psychological process called self-actualization and to what extent are they merely reflections of the particular values systems held by Rogers and Maslow.
- They build their theories solely on observations of relatively healthy people. Their theories are best suited to well-functioning of people whose basic needs are met. Whereas they are not applicable to malfunctioning or disadvantaged individuals.
- Many observers believe that Americans are already obsessed with the individual and show little concern for the welfare of the larger society. It provides a “sanction of selfishness” (Wallach & Wallach, 1983).²⁷

Despite these problems, humanistic theory has been incorporated into many differing views on psychotherapy and human change. Many argue now that a humanistic undertone in treatment provides a nice foundation for change. While it may not be sufficient, it may still be necessary for a significant personality change to occur. It is wise to be aware of its feet of clay in order to utilize judiciously.

4. THE ROGERIAN CONCEPT OF PERSON

4.1. Unfolding Movement of Personhood

Rogers focuses the whole person or the totality of the personhood while enquiring into human nature. The only drive, for him, that has been perennial is the drive toward self actualization. This propels anyone on the way to actualize one’s optimum.

²⁷ Wada, 473.

Below the level of the problem situation about which the individual is complaining – behind the trouble with studies, or wife, or employer, or with his own uncontrollable or bizarre behaviour or with his frightening feelings, lies one central search. It seems to that at bottom each person is asking, “Who am I *really*? How can I get in touch with this real self, underlying all my surface behaviour? How can I become myself? What is the goal the individual most wishes to achieve, the end knowing or unknowingly peruses is to become himself. Drop the false fronts, or the masks, or the roles, with which he has faced life. He appears to be trying to discover something more basic, something more truly himself. At first he lays aside masks which he is to something more truly using²⁸.

He insists that humans are active participants in their development. They freely choose to become what they are capable of being. They are not determined or finished products. Their life is not fatalistic⁷ whereas it is in the process of flowering and unfolding to its utmost. When a person is aware of her/his action, s/he is in the process of realizing themselves.

4.2 Awareness in Rogerian Theory of Personality

Rogers explains that “when a person adds to ordinary experience the full and undistracted awareness of his experiencing- of his sensory and visceral reactions, he ceases, or at least decreases, the distortions of experiencing in awareness. He can be aware of what he is actually experiencing, not simply what he can permit himself to experiencing through screening through a conceptual filter. In sense the person becomes for the first time the full potential to the human organism, with the enriching element of awareness freely added to the basic aspect of sensory and visceral reactions. The person comes to be what he is,... what this seems to mean is that the individual comes to be- in awareness- what he is – in experience. He is, in other words a complete and fully functioning human organism.”²⁹ He further enunciates that we have the gift of a free and undistorted awareness. Our organism is complete and it is beautifully and constructively realistic.

The basic discovery of psychotherapy is: ... that we do not need to be afraid of being “merely” Homo sapiens. It is the discovery that if we can add to the sensory and visceral experiencing which is characteristic of the whole animal kingdom, the gift of a free and undistorted awareness of which only the human animal seems fully capable, we have an organism which is beautifully and constructively realistic. We have then an organism which is as aware of the demands of the culture as it is of its own physiological demand for food or sex- which is just as aware of its desire for friendly relationship as it is of its desire to aggrandize itself- which is just as aware of its delicate and sensitive tenderness toward others, as it is of its hostilities toward

²⁸ Carl Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961) 108.

²⁹ Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, 105.

others. When man's unique capacity of awareness is thus functioning freely and fully, we find that we have not an animal whom we must fear, not a beast who must be controlled, an organism able to achieve, through the remarkable integrative capacity of its central nervous system, a balanced, realistic, self-enhancing, other-enhancing behaviour as a resultant of a these elements of awareness. To put it another way, when man is less than full man- when he denies to awareness various aspects of his experience- then indeed we have all too often reason to fear him and his behaviour, as the present world situation testifies. But when he is most fully man, when he is his complete organism, when awareness of experience, that peculiarly human attribute, is most fully operating, then he is to be trusted, then his behaviour is constructive. It is not always conventional. It is not always conforming. It will be individualized. But it will be socialized³⁰.

4.2.1 Levels of Awareness

Without awareness the self-concept and the ideal self would not co-exist. Rogers defined awareness as "the symbolic representation of some portion of our experience."³¹ He used the term synonymously with both consciousness and symbolization. From the above passage we cull out three levels of awareness: Subconscious; Accurately Symbolized; Distorted in human being.

4.2.1.1 Subconscious Level of Awareness

This is level where the material is not brought into awareness. Nothing is filtered or ignored. Sights and sounds are outside of consciousness. Whatever the material processed comes in conflict with self-concept. Certain things are not brought into awareness but they can influence our behaviour. Denial is possible at this level. First, some events are experienced below the threshold of awareness and are either *ignored or denied*. Ignored experiences can be illustrated by a woman walking down a busy street, an activity that presents many potential stimuli, particularly of sight and sound. Because she cannot attend all of them, many remain ignored. An example of denied experience might be seen in a mother who never wanted children, but out of guilt she becomes over solicitous to them. Her anger and resentment toward her children may be hidden to her for years, never reaching consciousness but yet remaining a part of her experience and cloning her conscious behaviour toward them. Rogers also used the term subceived to refer to experiences that are perceived but yet not accepted into awareness. Subceived refer to experiences that are perceived but yet

³⁰ Ibid., 105.

³¹ Ibid., 198

not accepted into awareness. Subception refers to the process of perceiving stimuli without an awareness of the perception, and includes experiences that are denied.

4.2.1.2 Freely/Accurately Symbolized in Awareness

A person is freely aware of all that happens at this level. Here experiences are consistent with self concept. They are not threatening any more. For instance, if a person recognizes a personal weakness, s/he is able to 'hear' feedback about that weakness and being aware of it s/he overcomes progressively. Rogers hypothesized that some experiences are accurately symbolized and freely admitted to the self-structure. Such experiences are both non-threatening and consistent with the existing self-concept. For example, if a pianist, who has full confidence in his piano – playing ability is told by a friend that his playing is excellent, he may hear these words, accurately symbolize them, and freely admit them to his self-concept.

4.2.1.3 Distortions

The material which is inconsistent with self-concept is 'modified' before being allowed into consciousness. This third level of awareness involves experiences that are perceived in a distorted form. When our experience is not consistent with our view of self, we reshape or distort the experience so that it can be assimilated into our existing self-concept. If the gifted pianist from above example were to be told by a distrusted competitor that his playing was excellent, he might react very differently than he did when he heard the same words from a trusted friend. He may hear the remarks but distort their meaning because he feels threatened. Thus an individual may distort positive or negative information. And this distortions lead to increased incongruence. For example, compliment on one's appearance, "I don't deserve it; I'm ugly" is self concept. "They don't mean it" is a distortion.

4.3 Needs

As we have seen, Rogers believed that people possess an inherent tendency to move toward actualization. Experiences that are seen as either maintaining or enhancing that movement are positively valued; those that are not negatively valued. The basic needs of all of us, therefore, are *maintenance* and *enhancement*.

4.3.1 Maintenance

“The need for maintenance of our organismic self involves the satisfaction of basic needs such as food, air, and safety, but it also includes the tendency to resist change and to seek the status quo.”³² The conservative nature of maintenance needs find expression in our desire to protect our current, comfortable self-concept. We fight against new ideas; we distort experiences that do not quite fit; we find change painful and growth frightening.

4.3.2 Enhancement

Even though we have a strong desire to maintain the status quo, we are still willing to learn and to change. This need to become more, to develop, and to achieve growth is called *enhancement*.³³

The need for enhancing the self is manifested in our willingness to learn things that are not immediately rewarding. Other than enhancement, what motivation does a child have in learning to walk? Crawling can satisfy the need for mobility, whereas walking is associated with falling and with pain. Rogers’ position is that we are willing to face threat and pain because of a biologically based tendency for the organism to fulfil its basic nature.

Enhancement needs are expressed in a variety of forms, including curiosity, playfulness, self-exploration, maturation, and friendship. Even food and sex are usually expressions of the organism’s need to enhance itself. Both might also be maintenance needs, particularly when they are largely unsatisfied. However, for most people, the pursuit of food and sex is conducted in ways that enhance the self-concept.

4.3.2.1 Positive Regard

“As the awareness of self emerges, the infant begins to develop a need to be love, liked, or accepted by another person, a need Rogers referred to as positive regard.”³⁴ The need for positive regard is found in all human beings and remains a strong and persistent motivator throughout our lives. We value those experiences that satisfy our needs for positive regard. Unfortunately, the positive regard we receive from a significant other may be more powerful than the reward we receive by meeting

³² Duane Schultz, *Theories of Personality* (California: Brooks Cole Publishing, 1981), 543

³³ *Ibid.*, 543

³⁴ Jess Feist, *Theories of Personality* (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1994), 646.

our organismic needs. For example, a child who, on an organismic level is afraid of a large dog, may hear his father say, ‘show me how brave you are. Go ahead and touch the dog.’ The child may then deny or distort his fear in order to receive the praise (positive regard) from his father.

4.3.2.2 Self - Regard

After the self emerges, we begin to develop the need for self-regard as the result of our experiences with the satisfaction or frustration of our need for positive regard. In the above example, when the child receives praise from his father for courage behaviour, he may acquire positive self regard for being brave, and negative self-regard for acting cowardly. If the child generally dislikes himself, then he will develop feelings of negative self-regard. But if he likes himself independently of others’ attitudes toward him, then he will continue to have positive self-regard.

How do we acquire positive self-regard? Originally, the need is dependent upon the perception that others, especially significant others, care for, prize, or value us. If we perceive that we are liked or loved by others, then our need to receive positive regard is at least partially satisfied. Positive regard is a prerequisite for self-regard, but once positive self-regard is established it becomes independent of the continual deed to be loved.³⁵ The source of positive self regard, then, lies in the positive regard we receive from others, but once established, it is autonomous and self-perpetuating.

4.4 Two Basic Human Tendencies

‘We are responsible for our own life’ which is extolled and embodied in existentialism. This idea is also exemplified in the works of Carl Rogers. However his approach is extremely optimistic. Rogers believes that “the organism has one basic tendency and striving- to actualize, maintain, and enhance the experiencing organism”³⁶.

During a vacation weekend some months ago I was standing on a headland overlooking one of the rugged coves which dot the coastline of northern California. Several large rock outcroppings were at the mouth of the cove, and those received the full force of the great Pacific combers which, beating upon them, broke into mountains of spray before surging into the cliff-lined shore. As I

³⁵ Ibid., 647

³⁶ Carl Rogers, *Client-Centre Therapy*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951) 487.

watched the waves breaking over these large rocks in the distance, I noticed with surprise what appeared to be tiny palm trees on the rocks, no more than two or three feet high, taking the pounding of the breakers. Through my binoculars I saw that these were some type of seaweed, with a slender "trunk" topped off with a head of leaves. As one examined a specimen in the interval between the waves it seemed clear that this fragile, erect, top-heavy plant would be utterly crushed and broken by the next breaker. When the wave crunched upon it, the trunk bent almost flat, the leaves were whipped into a single line by the torrent of water, yet the moment the wave had passed, here was the plant again erect, tough, resilient. It seemed incredible that it was able to take this incessant pounding hour after hour, day after night, week after week, perhaps, for all I know, year and year, and all the time nourishing itself, extending its domain, reproducing itself; in short, maintaining and enhancing itself in this position which, in our shorthand, we call growth. Here in this palm like seaweed was the tenacity of life, the forward thrust of life, the ability to push into an incredibly hostile environment and not only hold its own, but to adapt, develop, and become itself.³⁷

What are the basic assumptions of person-centered theory? Rogers postulated two broad assumptions – the formative tendency and the actualizing tendency- which are the two basic human tendencies.

4.4.1 A) Formative Tendency:

The tendency for things to move from disorganization to organization is called formative tendency. Rogers believed that there is a tendency for all matter, both organic and inorganic, to evolve from simpler to more complex forms. For the entire universe, a creative process, rather than a disintegrative one, is in operation. For instance, complex galaxies of stars form from a less well-organized mass; crystals such as snow flakes emerge from formless vapour; complex organisms develop from single cells; and human consciousness evolves from a primitive unconsciousness to a highly organized awareness.

4.4.2 B) Actualizing Tendency:

An interrelated and more pertinent assumption is the actualizing tendency, the tendency within all human beings to move toward completion or fulfilment of potentials.³⁸ Individuals have within themselves the creative power to solve problems, to alter their social-concepts, and to become increasingly self-directed. The source of psychological growth and maturity resides within the individual and is not found in

³⁷ Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, 102.

³⁸ Jess Feist, *Theories of Personality* (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1994), 640.

outside forces. Individuals perceive their experiences as reality, and they know their reality better than anyone else. They do not need to be directed, controlled, exhorted, or manipulated in order to spur them toward actualization.

Rogers is confident that the goal of existence is to maintain and enhance life. This desire to preserve and enhance oneself is on one level: Physical - staying alive by eating, keeping warm, avoiding physical danger etc. On a higher level: Psychological-self-actualization is about testing and fulfilling our capabilities; seek out new experiences, master new skills, quit boring jobs and find more exciting ones etc. To the extent that the learned self-actualizing tendency remains unified with the organismic actualizing tendency, the individual is psychologically well-adjusted.

This tendency to actualize is in one's inherent potentialities. This potential exists in all living organisms, even in plants. Humans possess an additional form - the attempt to actualize the self - called self-actualization. This is an innate tendency to develop our constructive capacities, and to grow in ways that maintain or enhance our total organism. This is the fundamental motive underlying all human behaviour. This tendency enables us to actualize that portion of experience represented by the self-concept. It is similar to the Maslow's Approach.

4.5 Rogers' View of the "SELF"

According to Rogers the self is constantly evolving. One of the basic important facts is that one's inherent potentialities are genetically determined, whereas the self-concept is socially determined. Thus, there is the possibility of a difference between the two. Some call Rogers as a self-theorist. The reason is that he assumes that the self doesn't exist at birth but that infants gradually differentiate self from non-self. They conceive it as they begin to interact with others in the society.

4.5.1 The Good Life: a Direction or a Destination

Before reflecting over what/how Rogers conceives of self, we must deal with the very notion of life itself. According to Rogers, "The good life is a *process* not a state of being. It is a direction, not a destination"³⁹. He believed that at a basic level, human beings are good and trustworthy. The more the fully-functioning a person is

³⁹ Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, 186.

the more that basic nature will be evident. Our life as long as it has existence grows, and unfolds. That is the very fabric of life. The remarkable constitutive characteristics of life are ongoing, ever unfolding, bringing forth, and moving ahead, finding fullness and wholeness of life.

4.5.2 The Notion of Self

The self or self-concept is the central concept in Rogers's theory of personality. It is also important to understand what Rogers means by organismic self. The self-concept includes all those aspects of one's being and one's experiences that are perceived in awareness by the individual. The self-concept is not identical with the organismic self. Portions of the organismic self may be beyond our awareness or simply not owned by us. My stomach is part of my organismic self, but unless it malfunctions and causes concern, it is not likely to be part of my self-concept. Similarly, I can disown certain aspects of my self, for example, experiences of dishonesty, when they are not consistent with my self-concept.⁴⁰ We have a systematized classification and clarification of the concept of self in the lines. Rogers himself explains in the following lines.

“The individual moves toward being, knowingly or unknowingly, the process which he inwardly and actually is. He moves away from being what he is not, from being a façade. He is not trying to be more than he is, with the attendant feelings of insecurity or bombastic defensiveness. He is not trying to be less than he is, with the attendant feelings of guilt or self-depreciation. He is increasingly listening to the deepest recesses of his physical and emotional being, and finds himself increasingly willing to be, with greater accuracy and depth, that self which he most truly is.... To be what he is, this is the path of life. ... free to move any direction. It not the simply intellectual value choice, but seems to be the best description of the groping, tentative, uncertain behaviours by which he moves exploringly toward what he wants to be.”⁴¹

4.5.2.1 Organismic Self

It is the sum of all our experiences, including feelings, perceptions and wishes. All our experiences are known to us by our own frame of reference, our subjective reality (phenomenology).

4.5.2.2 Self Concept

⁴⁰ Jess Feist, *Theories of Personality* (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1994) 642.

⁴¹ Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, 175.

The concept of self is pivotal to Roger's theory of person which is about the person's consciousness of who and what s/he is. The self consists of all the ideas, perceptions, and values that characterize "I" or "me"; it also includes the awareness of "what I am" and "what I can do."⁴² The concept of self gradually emerges through experiences with verbal labels such as "I" or "Me". It is a phenomenological reality which deals with a person's private perception of reality (whether or not it agrees with objective reality).

"This perceived self, in turn, influences both the person's perception of the world and his /her behaviour."⁴³ If you think you are not good-looking or smart, this is part of your self concept regardless of reality. It is a learned, conscious sense of being separate and distinct from other people and things. "The self-concept does not necessarily reflect reality: a person may be highly successful but still view himself/herself s a failure."⁴⁴ Rogers calls the real self which is the aspect of our being that is founded in the actualizing tendency, follows organismic valuing, needs and receives positive regard and self-regard.

4.5.2.3 The Actual (Real) Self and Ideal Self

Another way of looking at the different aspects of the self is: *the ideal* and *the actual*. The real self is founded in the actualizing tendency which follows organismic valuing, requires and receives positive regard and self-regard. The actual self is what we are now or even what we think we are because remember from this perspective it's all about subjective perceptions; the real self is what we "are", our entire being. It is the evaluation of our own characteristics; the subjective self. On the other hand, to the extent that our society is out of synch with the actualizing tendency, and we are forced to live with conditions of worth that are out of step with organismic valuing, and receive only conditional positive regard and self-regard, we develop instead an ideal self which is something not real for Rogers. This is something that is always out of our reach, the standard we can aim to meet. The ideal self is the person we'd like to be. It may differ from real self. If there is conflict between self-concept & ideal self, Roger calls it as incongruence. When there is high incongruence one's personality is

⁴² Carol Wada, ed., *Hilgard's Introduction to Psychology* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace College, 1981) 469.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

unhealthy. When we are self-actualized then there is congruence (i.e. harmony or agreement) between the real and the actual selves. That is we become more like the self we want to be.

There is a second kind of congruence and that is between the actual self and experience. That is the experiences in life should fit with the type of person we think we are. So there will be incongruity if we think we are generous but find ourselves being mean to someone or if we think we are ruthless and we find ourselves being soft and mushy. If we think we are clever and do badly in a test there will be incongruence. Incongruence is bad and means there is a breakdown in our unitary sense of self. Incongruence leads to anxiety, whether the incongruence is between actual & real self or between actual self and experience. Rogers believed we defend ourselves against incongruence or even the perceptions of incongruence. Incongruence is a discrepancy between one's total organismic experience and a self-concept burdened by conditions of worth.

4.6 Organismic Valuing Process and Conditions of Worth

In the course of pursuing self-actualization, people engage in what Rogers called the organismic valuing process. It is an innate capacity to value positively those experiences that are perceived as actualizing, and to value negatively all those perceived as non-actualizing. Experiences that are perceived as enhancing to oneself are valued as good and are therefore sought after. Experiences perceived as not enhancing are valued as bad and are avoided. In other words, we know what's good for us. These are the basic, positive, human and social values that appear to be common to all people at a deep level. These tend to emerge as a person becomes more open to his or her deep experiences. Rogers tells us that organisms know what is good for them. Evolution has provided us with the senses, the tastes, the discriminations we need. When we hunger, we find food, not just any food but the food that tastes good. Food that tastes bad is likely to be spoiled, rotten, and unhealthy. That is what is good and bad tastes are learned through our evolutionary lessons. This is called organismic valuing.

A person acquires "conditions of worth" when s/he receives from his/her significant others a positive regard that is conditional, rather than unconditional by

appropriating the desired values, and making them his/her own. His/ her self-concept then becomes based on these standards of value rather than on organismic evaluation. These conditions of worth disturb the "organismic valuing process" which is a fluid, ongoing process whereby experiences are accurately symbolized and valued according to optimal enhancement of the organism and self.⁴⁵ The need for positive self-regard leads to a selective perception of experience in terms of the conditions of worth that now exist. The self-concept then becomes based on these standards of value rather than on organismic evaluation. Those experiences in accordance with these conditions are perceived and symbolized accurately in awareness, while those that are not are distorted or denied into awareness. This leads to "incongruence" between the self as perceived and the actual experience of the organism, resulting in possible confusion, tension, and maladaptive behaviour.

Over time, this conditioning leads us to have conditional positive self-regard as well. We begin to like ourselves only if we meet up with the standards others have applied to us, rather than if we are truly actualizing our potentials. And since these standards were created without keeping each individual in mind, more often than not we find ourselves unable to meet them, and therefore unable to maintain any sense of self-esteem. The "Conditions of Worth" simply means the individual's belief that he/she is worthy of affection only when expressing desirable behaviours. Rogers first elaborates the defective approach and then the appropriate way of be in relationship to others.

4.7 The Concept of Congruence

It is a healthy state of harmony between one's total organismic experience and a self-concept free of conditions of worth. Rogers writes, "I have found, in my relations with persons, which in the long run it does not help to pretend to be something I am not". "The term congruent is one I have used to describe the way I would like to be. Be this I mean whatever feeling or attitude I am experiencing would be matched by my awareness of that attitude. When this is true, then I am a unified or integrated person in that moment, and hence I can be whatever I deeply am"⁴⁶. An

⁴⁵ Carl Rogers, *Client-Centre Therapy*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951) 55.

⁴⁶ Carl Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, 50.

open, authentic communication in which the way we present ourselves to the world matches with what we think and feel at a deeper level.

4.8 This Concept of Incongruence and Defenses

“According to Rogers, the individual evaluates every experience in relation to his/her self-concept. People want to behave in ways that are consistent with their self-image; experiences and feelings that are not consistent are threatening and may be denied entry into consciousness.”⁴⁷ The inherent potentialities of the actualizing tendency can suffer distorted expression when maladjustment occurs, resulting in behaviour destructive to oneself and others. The actualization and self-actualization tendencies can be at cross purposes with each other when alienation from the true self occurs, so there is organismic movement in one direction and conscious struggle in another.

Incongruence is when there is a split between organismic experience and self-concept. It prevents self-actualization and leads to defensive behaviour. Incongruence is similar to Jung's persona, or wearing a ‘mask’. It may be conscious deception or unconscious self-deception. The ‘Organismic Self’ is against ‘Self-Concept’. True experience may conflict with self-concept. As the result the experience may be denied or distorted. For instance a person is attracted to another person while in committed relationship. “Attraction” is True Self / Organismic Self. "I'm Faithful" is Self-Concept. "Other is Seductive” is Distortion. The wrong with incongruence is the discrepancy between Organismic Self and Self Concept and the discrepancy between Self-Concept and Ideal Self.

When we are in a situation where there is an incongruity between our image of ourselves and our immediate experience of ourselves (i.e. between the ideal and the real self), we are in a threatening situation. For example, if we have been taught to feel unworthy if we do not get A's on all our tests, and yet we aren't really all that great a student, then situations such as tests are going to bring that incongruity. When we are expecting a threatening situation, we will feel anxiety. Anxiety is a signal indicating that there is trouble ahead, that we should avoid the situation. One way to avoid the situation, of course, is to pick ourselves up and run for the hills. Since that is

⁴⁷ Wada, 469.

not usually an option in life, instead of running physically, we run psychologically, by using defenses.

Rogers' idea of defenses is very similar to Freud's, except that Rogers considers everything from a perceptual point-of-view, so that even memories and impulses are thought of as perceptions. Fortunately Rogers assumes two main categories of defenses: denial and perceptual distortion. This concept of defenses is very similar to the psychodynamic concept.

4.8.1 Two Kinds of Inconsistency

Rogers is of the opinion that we “may develop two kinds of inconsistency. One is between the self and the experience of the reality; the other between the real self and the ideal self.”⁴⁸ Maladjusted persons experience inconsistency between their self-concept and their feelings and thought. Since they do not match, a gap is created. When this gap widens they defend against the truth because truth results in anxiety. If inconsistency is too wide the individual experiences other forms of emotional breakdown and disturbance. On the other hand “a well adjusted person has a concept that is consistent with his/her thought, experience, behaviour; the self is not rigid but flexible and can change as it assimilates new experiences and ideas.”⁴⁹

4.8.2 Distortion of Experience:

It is an example of rationalization which means creating a plausible but untrue reason for why something is the way it is; or another distortion of experience is when we try to change our perception of an event from what we really know it to be. Analogically stating it, we go out with someone other than our partner but tell ourselves that it doesn't matter because our partner won't mind.

4.8.3 Denial (repression):

Denial serves the function of preventing threatening experiences from reaching awareness at all. Ultimately, defences are there to maintain the congruity or integrity of self. Defences protect and enhance our self-esteem. Denial means very much what it does in Freud's system. We block out the threatening situation altogether. An example might be the person who never picks up his/her test or asks

⁴⁸ Wada, 470.

⁴⁹ Wada, 470.

about test results, so s/he doesn't have to face poor grades. Denial for Rogers does also include what Freud called repression: If keeping a memory or an impulse out of your awareness, refuse to perceive it, we may be able to avoid a threatening situation.

4.9 The Two Types Persons

Carl Rogers while commenting on how a therapist should approach a client explains that

“Person who is in the process of becoming... Martin Buber, the existentialist philosopher of the university of Jerusalem, has a phrase, “confirming the other”, which has a meaning to me. He says “confirming the other” means... accepting the whole potentiality of the other ... I can recognize him, know in him, the person he has been... created to become ... I confirm him in myself, and then in him, in relation to this potentiality that.. can now be developed ca evolve”. If I accept the other person as something fixed, already diagnosed and classified, already shaped by his past, then I am doing part to confirm this limiter hypothesis. If accept him as a process of becoming, then I am doing what I can to confirm or make real his potentialities”⁵⁰.

Rogers puts forth two types of persons: Fully Functioning Person and Maladjusted Person. The former is one where the self-actualizing tendency is vigorously functioning and the latter is one where it is not. Rogers’ Self-theory is that the self which is the conscious of itself and the fully functioning people show ‘congruence’ which means harmony between self and organism, and they are warm, trusting and open and not defensive and intolerant. They have realistic beliefs about themselves. If the self and the organism are in conflict, there is incongruence.

4.9.1. The Fully Functioning Person

Rogers, like Maslow, is just as interested in describing the healthy person. It is Rogers' term for an "ideal personality" or "fully-functioning person." He used the term fully functioning person for someone who is self-actualizing. S/he is open to her own experience, lives in the moment in an existential fashion, and is fully connected to her own stream of consciousness, which is constantly changing. S/he trusts his/her organism and does what "feels right" in a situation. S/he feels threatened by those feelings no matter what they are. S/he lives a life full of meaning, challenge and fulfillment.

To be "fully functioning" is not a finished state, but a direction we can be moving in. According to Rogers the goal in life must be to achieve the "Ideal Self" and thus be a fully functioning person. The ideal, having received unconditional

⁵⁰ Rogers, *On Becoming a Person.*, 55.

positive regard, has few conditions of worth, and has congruence between self & potentialities. A fully-functioning person has got the following qualities. "...a personal description of what it seems like to accept oneself as a stream of becoming, not a fixed product. It means that a person is a fluid process, not a fixed and static entity; a flowering river of change, not a block of solid material; a continually changing constellation of potentialities, not a fixed quantity of traits.... The sensation is that of floating with a complex stream of experience, with the fascinating possibility of trying to comprehend its ever-changing complexity.”⁵¹

4.9.1.1. Characteristics of Fully Functioning Person.

Rogers claims that the following characteristics explained are not possessed by anyone person. “No one person would fully exemplify these characteristics trends which I see, no one person fully achieves the description I will give, but certain generalization which can be drawn, ...”⁵²

1. Openness to experience: This is the opposite of defensiveness. It is the accurate perception of one's experiences in the world, including one's feelings. It also means being able to accept reality, again including one's feelings. “The individual becomes more openly aware of his own feelings and attitudes as they exist in him at an organic level... he sees not all trees are green, not all men are stern fathers, not all women are rejecting, not all failure experiences prove that he is no good, and the like... this openness of awareness to what exists at this moment in oneself and in the situation is,... ”⁵³ Feelings are such an important part of openness because they convey organismic valuing. If you cannot be open to your feelings, you cannot be open to actualization. The hard part, of course, is distinguishing real feelings from the anxieties brought on by conditions of worth.

2. Existential living: This is living in the here-and-now. Rogers, as a part of getting in touch with reality, insists that we do not live in the past or the future- the one is gone, and the other isn't anything at all. The present is the only reality we have. This doesn't mean we should not remember and learn from our past. Neither does it mean we should not plan or even day-dream about the future. We recognize the things for what they are: memories and dreams, which we are experiencing here in the present.

⁵¹ Ibid., 122.

⁵² Ibid., 115.

⁵³ Ibid.

Existential Living is living fully in each and every moment. It is opposite to rigidity rather it is flexible, adaptable, and spontaneous.

3. Organismic trusting⁵⁴: According to Rogers we should allow ourselves to be guided by the organismic valuing process. It is based on the belief that our "...own organism is trustworthy, that it is a suitable instrument for discovering the most satisfying behavior in each immediate situation." We should trust ourselves, do what feels right, what comes natural. "A person has relatively accurate perception of this external situation in all of its complexity. He is better able to permit his total organism, his conscious thought participating, to consider, weigh and balance each stimulus, need, and demand, and its relative weight and intensity."

It may be misunderstood as being natural means- if you are a sadist, hurt people; if you are a masochist, hurt yourself; if the drugs or alcohol make you happy, go for it; if you are depressed, kill yourself.... This certainly doesn't sound like great advice. In fact, many of the excesses of the sixties and seventies were blamed on this attitude. But Rogers meant trust our real self and we can only know what our real self has to say if we are open to experience and living existentially. In other words, organismic trusting assumes we are in contact with the actualizing tendency. Organismic trusting is intuitive living i.e the ability to accept information from all bases. Here experience is the highest authority. If it feels right, it probably is.

4. Experiential freedom: Rogers felt that it was irrelevant whether or not people really had free will. We feel very much as if we do. This is not to say, of course, that we are free to do anything at all. We are surrounded by a deterministic universe, so that, flap our arms as much as we like, we will not fly like supermen. It means that we feel free when choices are available to us. Rogers says that the fully-functioning person acknowledges that feeling of freedom, and takes responsibility for his choices. Experiential freedom is the freedom to choose among alternatives.

5. Creativity: If we feel free and responsible, we will act accordingly, and participate in the world. A fully-functioning person, in touch with actualization, will feel obliged by their nature to contribute to the actualization of others, even life itself. This can be through creativity in the arts or sciences, through social concern and parental love, or simply by doing one's best at one's job. Creativity as Rogers uses it is very close to

⁵⁴ Ibid., 118.

Erikson's generativity. Creativity is the ability to produce new and effective ideas and things.

Rogers is content to summarize the process of ongoing discovery of one self. "The stranger who has been living behind these masks, the stranger is himself. ...my picture of the characteristic attributes of the person who is more open to all of the elements of his organic experience; a person who is developing a trust in his own organism as an instrument of sensitive living; a person who accepts the locus of evolution as residing within himself; a person who is learning to live in life as a participant in a fluid, ongoing process, in which he is continually discovering new aspects of himself in the flow of his experience."⁵⁵

4.9.2.1 The Maladjusted Person

Having received conditional positive regard s/he develops conditions of worth. There is incongruence between self and potentialities. The "maladjusted person" is the polar opposite of the fully functioning individual. The maladjusted individual is defensive, maintains rather than enhances his/her life, lives according to a preconceived plan, feels manipulated rather than free, and is common and conforming rather than creative.

4.9.2.2 Characteristics of Maladjusted Person:

- A. Defensive Living - Not open to experience
- B. Live According to preconceived plan - generally laid down by parents.
- C. Disregards organism - not intuitive
- D. Feels manipulated - not free to choose
- E. Common and conforming

Rogers's philosophy of person is implicitly phenomenological, existential, empirical, realistic, naturalist and evolutionary. His initiative to understand person in a humanistic way is commendable. While Maslow remained more of a theorist, Carl Rogers was more of a therapist. His professional goal was more on helping people change and improve their lives. He was a true follower of humanistic ideation and is often considered the person who gave psychotherapy its basic humanistic undertones.

⁵⁵ Rogers, *On Becoming a Person.*, 123.

Rogers believed in several key concepts that he believed must be present in order for healthy change to take place. His Client or Person-Centered-Therapy gives importance to the individual, rather than the therapist or the treatment process as the center of effective change. He comes across as a genuine seeker and ready stroll the untroden path.

5. A CRITIQUE ON CARL ROGERS

5.1 Rogerian Horizon and Hope

Carl Rogers comes across to us through his writings as a person who is ready to risk, find new horizon of looking at things for which he constantly and relentlessly experiments his ideas and insights and dares to be different even though he was thought to be odd and opaque. He is intuitive in his perspectives to things and persons and innovative in his approach. The followings are a few of his path findings which is unique to approach.

5.1.1 Experience: Edifying and Educating Authority

Rogers is a person who relies on the validity and verification of the first hand experience. According to him personal experience is the touchstone of validity. He asserts that neither any dogma nor the popularity of any theory would give him certainty. He is very vocal while putting forth his encounter.

Experience is, for me, the highest authority. The touchstone of validity is my own experience. No other person's ideas, and none of my own ideas, are as authoritative as my experience. It is to experience that I must return again and again, to discover a closer approximation to truth as it is in the process of becoming in me.⁵⁶

In other place he mentions that

neither the Bible nor the prophets ~ neither Freud nor research ~ neither the revelations of God nor man ~ can take precedence over my own direct experience". Still further elaborates that "[...] my experience is not authoritative because it is infallible. It is the basis of authority because it can always be checked in new primary ways. In this way its frequent error or fallibility is always open to correction."⁵⁷

He expresses about his experience of the real world follows extract:

A few weeks ago, I was sitting alone, late at night, on the deck of a beach in northern California. As I sat there for several hours, a bright star on the horizon moved upward into clear view. A brilliant planet moved with the same slow, majestic speed from directly above me to a point well on my right. The star and the planet were accompanied in their movement by the Milky Way and all other constellations. Obviously, I was the center of the universe, and the heavens were slowly revolving about me. It was a humbling experience (How small I am) and an uplifting one (How marvelous to be such a focal point!). I was looking at the real world.

Yet in another corner of my heart, I knew that I, and the earth beneath me, and the atmosphere surrounding me were moving at the breathless speed- faster than a modern jet plane- in the direction I called east, and that the stars and planets

⁵⁶ Rogers, R. Carl. *On Becoming a Person*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961) 23.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

were, relative to the earth, comparatively motionless. Although I could not see what I've just described, I knew that this -not the more obvious perception- was really the real world.

At some other level, I was aware that I was an infinitesimal speck on an insignificant planet in one of the minor galaxies (of which there are millions) in the universe. I knew that each of these galaxies was moving at an incredible speed, often exploding away from the other. Was this reality, too? I was confused.

But at least there was one reality of which I could be sure: the hard wooden chair on which I sat, the solid earth on which the deck rested, the stainless steel pen I held in my hand. This was a reality that could not only be seen, but also felt and touched. These objects could sustain weight and pressure. They were solid⁵⁸.

5.1.2 A Copernican Revolution in Counselling

Rogers originated and developed the 'nondirective or client-centred' approach to psychotherapy in the 1940s, used it with soldiers returning from World War II. He emphasized a person-to-person relationship between a therapist and a client. Roger always sought ways and means to provide a conducive, growth promoting relationship in his entire attempt of helping out people who came to him. He expresses clearly his opinion in *On Becoming a Person* "...In my early professional years I was asking the question: How can I treat, or cure, or change this person? Now I would phrase the question in this way: How can I provide a relationship which this person may use for his own personal growth?"⁵⁹ He felt that the individual will discover within himself the capacity to use this relationship for growth. It is definitely a 'u' turn in psychotherapy; a radical path breaking in anyone's attempt to accompany people toward their wholeness.

5.1.3 Phenomenological Method

Rogers was committed to the phenomenological method as the basis for developing a science of persons: the data (or phenomena) of consciousness help to understand the subjective world of the person. His phenomenological orientation as a method of examining the empirical validity of theoretical concepts was essential to his approach. Here the therapist tries to enter into the worldview of the client and let the client work out solutions to his/her own problem. Phenomenological psychology is especially appealing to the clinician because of the empathy and use of subjective experience. "...that psychotherapy is a process whereby man becomes his organism-

⁵⁸ Rogers, R. Carl. *A Way of Being*. (Boston: Houghton, Muffin Company, 1980.) p.97.

⁵⁹ Rogers, R. Carl. *On Becoming a Person*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961)P.32

without self-deception, without distortion... at an experiential level- a phenomenon which is not easily put into words, and which, if apprehended only at the verbal level,...⁶⁰”

5.1.4 Three Modes of Knowledge

Rogers distinguished three modes of knowledge. The first is the objective mode where we try to understand the world as an object. The second is a subjective mode consisting of a person’s own subjective knowledge of personal conscious experience, including intention and sense of freedom. The third is a subjective mode that is the subjective knowledge as an attempt to understand another person’s subjective inner world. The clinician must master this third mode. Roger’s believed that the clinician can only help the client if he/she understands the client’s personal world and subjective self and he hoped that psychology eventually could find systematic ways to know the personal experience of other people, so that therapy could be even better.

5.2 Rogers’ Philosophy of Interpersonal Relationship

Our society also leads us astray with conditions of worth. As we grow up, our parents, teachers, peers, the media, and others, only give us what we need when we show or prove that we are worthy of something. We get a drink when we finish our class, we get something sweet when we finish our vegetables, and most importantly, we get love and affection if and only if we behave properly as wished by our elders. An insightful lesson for all those who work in the field of human relationship is this and it also a crucial enterprise in today’s world. “If we are thoughtfully trying to understand our tasks as administrators, teachers, educational counselors, then we are working on the problem which will determine the future of this planet. For it is not upon the physical sciences that the future will depend. It is upon us who are trying to understand and deal with the interaction between human beings – who are trying to create helping relationships”⁶¹. Getting positive regard on condition Rogers calls conditional positive regard. Because we do indeed need positive regard, these

⁶⁰ ibis. P.103.

⁶¹ibid. p.56.

conditions are very powerful, and we bend ourselves into a shape determined, not by our organismic valuing or our actualizing tendency, but by a society that may or may not truly have our best interests at heart. When treated this way a boy or girl may not grow healthy.

Rogers is of the opinion that relationship should be that of growth promoting. "One of the participants intends that there should come about, in one or both parties, more appreciation of, more expression of, more functional use of latent inner resources of the individual. Relationship covers up a range of things: facilitates growth. This is that of mother and child, of physician and patient, a teacher and the pupil, etc. This interaction in which there is a purpose of promoting development and more mature and adequate functioning⁶².

5.2.1 Conditional Positive Regard

The dispositions such as liking and accepting another person only if that individual's feelings and self-concept meet with one's own standard is conditional positive regard. It is the typical way in which parents behave toward a child. The granting of love and approval only when behaving in accordance with parent's wishes, or when parents withdraw love if the child misbehaves. This leads to conditions of worth (similar to superego). This is not unconditional love. A person is accepted only if something in return. In this approach "strings" are attached to acceptance and love from others. When internalized s/he distorts self concept.

5.2.2 Unconditional positive regard

It is a person's likes and acceptance of another person's feelings and self-concept; a non-judgmental and non-possessive caring for, and prizing of another person is growth promoting. It is in granting of love and approval regardless of individual's behaviour. It does not mean lack of restraint. If a child runs out in front of a truck, stop him and tell him it is dangerous, but don't spank him and tell him he is a bad, evil boy. (Rogers is against punishment as a means of controlling behaviour). The need for positive regard, the universal need for acceptance, love, and approval from others is of utmost important particularly during infancy. Self-Regard is when acceptance and approval comes from within the individual and forms part of the self-

⁶² ibid. p.40.

concept. One of the three essential characteristics of the successful therapeutic relationship (along with empathy and genuineness) is unconditional positive regard. It is to give a client or person my full, caring attention without judging or evaluating them. "It is a kind of liking which has strength, and which is not demanding." When an unconditional positive regard is given s/he realizes his/her self-worth then s/he is said to be in agreement with inherent potentialities and his/ her self concept and there are minimal conditions of worth. This alone leads to openness to experience and a fully functioning person. Carl envisages a new field of human relationship,

thus it seems reasonable to hypothesize that if the parent creates with his child a psychological climate ... , then the child will become more self-directing, socialized, and mature. To the extent that the teacher creates... the student will become a self-initiated learner, more original more self-disciplined, less anxious, and other-directed. If the administrator ... then the staff will become more self responsible, more creative, better able to adapt to new problems, more basically cooperative. ...if certain attitudinal conditions exist, then certain definable changes will occur⁶³.

He even has gone to the extent of saying "for it is not up to the physical science that the future will depend. It is upon us who are trying to understand and deal with the interactions between human beings- who are trying to create helping relationships"⁶⁴

5.3 His Significant Contributions

5.3.1 Nurturance of a Caregiver

Rogers's quote speaks of his fundamental assumption that human beings, as well as all living beings, are driven to grow and to strive for optimal health, and this require resiliency in the face of adversity. For Rogers, "self-actualization" is a natural process, yet it requires the nurturance Rogers admits that such a resiliency necessarily develops from the nurturance of a caregiver. It may appear to be contradictory in Rogers' theory.

If "self-actualization" is merely a natural process, then why must it depend on a caregiver for it to occur? This is paradoxical. In spite his individualistic bias, he understood deep down that people need people, that we are radically dependent on others for our existence, and that so-called "individuation-separation" involves a more differentiated and mature relationship with others rather than a lack of interdependence with others. In any case, Rogers felt that "unconditional positive

⁶³ *ibid.* p. 37.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 57.

regard" is necessary for "self-actualization." That is, human growth requires the experience of being valued for oneself regardless of the degree to which specific behaviors are approved or disapproved. On the other hand, self-actualization is thwarted by "conditional positive regard": when acceptance is dependent on the positive or negative evaluation of a person's actions. "Conditional positive regard," Rogers felt, leads to "conditions of worth," which, in turn, can lead to alienation from true feelings and, thus, to anxiety and threat, which blocks self-actualization.

5.3.2 Documentation on the Client-Therapist Interaction

Rogers is one of the first ones who provided documentation on the client-therapist interaction. He has evolved his approach to psychotherapy through his experience and intuition. It is remarkable that he stood alone in the midst of prominent Freud and his outstanding contemporaries. We consider some of the essential features of his contribution. For Rogers social factors play a vital role in the development of the individuals. Every constant and encouraging feedback shapes their view of self. Human nature is such as that if necessary conditions exist or are provided healthy development will be progressive. "In therapy the individual has actually become a human organism, with all the richness which that implies. He is realistically able to control himself, and he is incorrigibly socialized in his desires. There is no beast in man. There is only man in man..."⁶⁵

5.3.3 Person Centered Therapy: an Alternative

The person centered therapy was an alternative to the psychoanalytic method, and it was an important step in the establishment of clinical and counselling psychology in the post-war period. Rogers came in conflict with behaviourism because of his approach with empathic understanding of the client. Rogers thought that behaviourism treated humans like animals, as machines whose behaviour could be predicted and controlled without any attention to consciousness. During the 1950s, Skinner and Rogers debated the relative adequacy of their points of view. Rogers argued that behaviourism limits itself exclusively to the objective mode of knowledge, and so limits psychology to certain techniques and theories (and not allowing for other ways of seeking knowledge) that behaviourism treats human beings like objects

⁶⁵ Ibid. 105.

(and not like experiencing subjects in their own right), for example Skinner who only accepts physical causality (environmental influences in form of contingencies of reinforcement). According to Skinner, behaviourism does not accept the uniqueness of humans including free will, consciousness, subjectivity, and autonomy. Burgenthal, 1964: *Man is aware...man has choice...man is intentional* inspired him and voiced that humans experience freedom of choice, also in therapy; that in science he accepted the term determinism, but in therapy he accepted freedom. The two exist in different dimensions.

Carl Rogers was most interested in improving the human condition and applying his ideas. His person-centered therapy may well be his most influential contribution to psychology. Rogers' pervasive interest in therapy is what clearly differentiates him from Maslow, despite some similarities in their ideas. The person-centered approach has had impact on domains outside of therapy such as family life, education, leadership, conflict resolution, politics and community health. In my opinion, Rogers greatest contribution may lie in his encouraging a humane and ethical treatment of persons, approaching psychology as a human science rather than a natural science.

5.3.4 Death of a Therapist

Rogers made the role of a therapist insignificant as the initiator in therapy. He declared the death of a therapist. He practiced a non-directive psychotherapy in which the client sat face-to-face with him rather than lying on the couch. In the larger scheme of things, this was a radical move by Rogers. This is a revealing message to the client that they are collaborators and that the therapist is not the one who 'knows,' but is there to facilitate the client's growth which can only come from 'within,' so to speak.

5.3.5 Qualities of Therapist

Finally, Rogers held to the strict criteria that genuineness, empathy and unconditional positive regard are essential on the part of the therapist if the client is to be healed and "self-actualize." For growth to occur, an individual must have experience with significant others who show i. Genuineness, ii. Unconditional Acceptance, and iii. Empathy. These allow, and do not cause actualization. If "genuineness, unconditional acceptance, empathy" not present, the path toward

actualization can be distorted. Requirements above are similar to those for successful treatment.

3.3.3 Maslow, a Theorist and Carl Rogers, a Therapist

Maslow believed that we are aware of our motives and drives for the most part and that without the obstacles of life, we would all become psychologically healthy individuals with a deep understanding of ourselves and an acceptance of the world around us. His most well known contribution is the Hierarchy of Needs which is often used to summarize the belief system of humanistic psychology. The basic premise behind this hierarchy is that we are born with certain needs. Without meeting these initial needs, we will not be able to continue our life and move upward on hierarchy.

While Maslow remained more of a theorist, Carl Rogers was more of a therapist. His professional goal was more on helping people change and improve their lives. He was a true follower of humanistic ideation and is often considered the person who gave psychotherapy its basic humanistic undertones. Rogers believed in several key concepts that he believed must be present in order for healthy change to take place. His approach to treatment is called Client or Person-Centered-Therapy because it sees the individual, rather than the therapist or the treatment process as the center of effective change.

5.4 Appraisal of Rogers

The self is now recognized as a meaningful area of research and as a useful explanatory construct in accounting for human behaviour. Roger is very influential in providing an intellectual climate in which research on the self-structure has flourished. This is phenomenological theory the self an object of respectable empirical investigation. He is the first therapist to record and transcribe therapy sessions verbatim which became a standard practice later on. His contribution is ever green in all fields of human endeavour.

Positively Rogers' theory has stimulated valuable research, performed by Rogers and his colleagues as well as by others on the nature of psychotherapy and the form and substance of the client-therapist interactions. Most of his writings have been directed toward his therapy and therefore has written little in the way of a formal statement of the full dimensions of his personality theory. He has received recognition

and acceptance, particularly his stress on the importance of the self-concept had a greater impact on both theoretical and empirical definition of the self.

5.4.1 Limitations

There are some inherent limitations in Rogers's approach to persons. If these are taken care his concept as well as his theory would be very influential.

- “Client centered therapy has got the following limitations “it appears to be successful only with individuals who are fairly verbal and are motivated to discuss their problems.” There are people who are reluctant to disclose themselves. How to help them out?
- It uses client's self-report as the only measure and it ignores behaviour side of the therapy.
- Individuals who feel insecure and ineffective in their interpersonal relationships often need more structured help in modifying their behaviour.⁶⁶
- Criticism of his theory has been directed primarily at two aspects of it. First, Rogers has been criticized for failing to state, in precise terms, what constitute the innate potentialities to enhancement and actualization that occupy such a central position in his theory. The second major criticism refers to Rogers' insistence that the only way to explore personality is through the examination of a person's subjective experience.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Carol Wada. ed., *Hilgard's Introduction to Psychology*, (Orlando: Harcourt Brace College, 1981) 581.

⁶⁷ Duane Schultz, *Theories of Personality* (California: Brooks Cole Publishing, 1981) 547.

6. CONCLUSION

Carl Rogers is the most influential psychologist in American history. He is a model for compassion and democratic ideals in his own life, and in his work as an educator, writer, and therapist. His contributions are outstanding in the fields of education, counselling, psychotherapy, peace, and conflict resolution. As a founder of humanistic psychology, he has profoundly influenced the world through his empathic presence, his rigorous research, his authorship of sixteen books and more than 200 professional articles. His lifetime of research and experiential work focused on demonstrating the psychological conditions for allowing open communication and empowering individuals to achieve their full potential. He pioneered in moving away from traditional psychoanalysis, and developed client-centered psychotherapy.

Rogers is a person who relies on the validity and verification of the first hand experience. Personal experience is the touchstone of validity. "No other person's ideas, and none of my own ideas, are as authoritative as my experience." Rogers' philosophy of interpersonal relationship is laudable. His assumption, attitude and approach give an insightful lesson for all those who work in the field of human relationship and this also a crucial enterprise in today's world. Another salient feature of his idea is unconditional positive regard which is a non-judgmental and non-possessive caring for, and prizing of another person is growth promoting. When a person experience that s/he is accepted, affirmed, cared for, what s/he is, there a world of difference in him/her.

Rogers has gone to the extent of saying that it is not up to the physical science that the future will depend rather it is upon us who are trying to understand and deal with the interactions between human beings- who are trying to create helping relationships. Rogers appeals that human growth requires the experience of being valued for oneself regardless of the degree to which specific behaviours, approved or disapproved. We have to shun "conditions of worth," which lead to alienation from true feelings and, thus, to anxiety and threat, which blocks self-actualization.

Rogers is very influential in providing an intellectual climate in which research on the self-structure has flourished. The self is now recognized as a meaningful area of research and as a useful explanatory construct in accounting for human behaviour. This is a phenomenological theory that the self is an object of

respectable empirical investigation. His self-theory is that the self which is the conscious of itself and the fully functioning people show 'congruence' which means harmony between self and organism, and they are warm, trusting and open and not defensive and intolerant. They have realistic beliefs about themselves. If the self and the organism are in conflict, there is incongruence.

"The good life, according to Rogers, is a *process* not a state of being. It is a direction, not a destination". He believed that at a basic level, human beings are good and trustworthy. It is an innate capacity to value positively those experiences that are perceived as actualizing, and to value negatively all those perceived as non-actualizing. These are the basic positive human and social values that appear to be common to all people at a deep level. These tend to emerge as a person becomes more open to his or her deep experiences.

His approach to treatment is called 'Client or Person-Centered-Therapy' because it sees the individual, rather than the therapist or the treatment process as the centre of effective change. Therapy is a process of a self-exploration where the therapist is the guide rather than the director. The client has the answers and the direction. Each client has within himself/herself the vast resources for self-understanding, for altering his/her self-concept, attitudes, and self-directed behaviour and that these resources can be tapped by providing a definable climate of facilitative attitudes. Therefore he is a land mark in psychotherapy and remains a catalyst in the field of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships.

He used the term fully functioning person for someone who is self-actualizing. S/he is open to her own experience, lives in the moment in an existential fashion, and is fully connected to her own stream of consciousness, which is constantly changing. S/he trusts his/her organism and does what "feels right" in a situation. S/he feels threatened by those feelings no matter what they are. S/he lives a life full of meaning, challenge and fulfilment.

His initiative is definitely a 'u' turn in psychotherapy; a radical path breaking in anyone's attempt to accompany people toward their wholeness. Rogers's 'person-centred' approach has impact on domains outside of therapy such as family life, education, leadership, conflict resolution, politics and community health. In my opinion, Rogers's greatest contribution may lie in encouraging a humane and ethical treatment of persons, approaching psychology as a human science rather than a

natural science. He is a model of philanthropist. Our world today requires many more Carl Rogers to help, heal, and accompany people. I feel that it is timely I have encounter Rogers who has assisted to unlearn many teaching and observe the unfolding moments and movements of life as I sail on grappling with reality which is inexhaustive, elusive, enigmatic and evolving. I hope that having time and again beckoned to be interdependent, appropriate and timely, I may be receptive, reflective, researching and redefining my day to day events, emotions, and experiences, and be grounded and groomed by this depth dimension of life. I am sure as long as life is there Rogers will remain an ever contemporary as Shakespeare who is because of his monumental literary works.