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BEYOND QUESTION AND ANSWER
THE CHALLENGE TO FACILITATE FREEDOM

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"Person-Centred Counselling and Psychotherapy Today: Evolution and Challenges"
International Conference, Athens, 24-28 June 2009
Person-Centered Psychotherapy is ...
1 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS
2 ESSENTIAL FOUNDATIONS
3 DIALOGUE
4 FREEDOM TO RESPOND
You only hear the questions that you are able to answer.

Friedrich Nietzsche
1 DEVELOPMENTS
# The emergence of the relational dimension of PCT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. R. Rogers</td>
<td>‘therapy as relationship or encounter’</td>
<td>1962</td>
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<tr>
<td>P. F. Schmid</td>
<td>‘therapy as the art of personal encounter’</td>
<td>1989</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. Pfeiffer</td>
<td>‘relationship as the central effective factor in PCT’</td>
<td>1989</td>
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<tr>
<td>R. van Balen</td>
<td>‘Rogers’ development towards dialogue’</td>
<td>1990</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Thorne</td>
<td>‘intimacy’</td>
<td>1991</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. O’Hara</td>
<td>‘relational humanism’</td>
<td>1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. Holdstock</td>
<td>‘interdependent, not individuocentric nature of self’</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>U. Binder</td>
<td>‘empathy versus cognitive social perspective taking’</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. Prouty</td>
<td>‘pre-symbolic experiencing, contact &amp; pre-therapy’</td>
<td>1994</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. Barrett-Lennard</td>
<td>‘client-centered relational psychotherapy’</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Mearns</td>
<td>‘dialogical model of self’</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. Warner</td>
<td>‘contact &amp; fragile and dissociated process’</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. Behr</td>
<td>‘interactive resonance’</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Bohart</td>
<td>‘the client as active self healer’</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. Cooper</td>
<td>‘relationally-orientated approach to therapy’</td>
<td>2004</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PCT - a dialogical understanding

Peter F. Schmid

(1989) Personale Begegnung
(1991) with Rogers: Person-zentriert
(1994) Autonomie & Solidarität
(1996) Die Kunst der Begegnung
(2006) with Mearns: Being with and being-counter, in: PCEP 5, 3 & 4
(2006) PCE Conference Potsdam: Psychotherapy is dialogue or it is not psychotherapy
(2008) PCE Conference Norwich: How person-centred is dialogical?
THE HANDBOOK
OF PERSON-CENTRED
PSYCHOTHERAPY AND
COUNSELLING

Includes work by Carl Rogers
Published in English for the first time

Edited by
Mick Cooper,
Maureen O'Hara,
Peter F. Schmid
and Gill Wyatt

Palgrave,
2007
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ESSENTIALS
Some essential foundations and characteristics of PCT

- Person
- Encounter
- Fundamental We
- Presence
- Personalization
- Group
Essentials

- **Person**
  - substantial-relational nature
  - independence & interconnectedness
  - image of the human being: personal anthropology, phenomenological, existential
Essentials

- **Encounter**
  - the Other
  - epistemology of alterity
  - Thou-I-relationship
Essentials

- **Fundamental We**
  - co-responding to the existential situation
  - encounter as core of a co-creative process
  - bi-polar model of psychotherapy: agency of the client & presence of the therapist
Essentials

- **Presence**
  - to be fully there
  - authenticity, acknowledgment, comprehension
  - *the core condition of being-with and being-counter*
**Essentials**

- **Actualizing process as personalization**
  - *energeia-dynamis / act-potency efficient cause (causa efficiens)*
  - dialectical understanding of the actualizing tendency
  - actualizing tendency as *social* construct (no development totally-by-itself)
  - personalizing tendency: freedom & creativity
Essentials

- **Group**
  - „the Third“
  - the primary locus of therapy
  - the interface of individual & society
  - PCA is a group approach
3

DIALOGUE
### Different meanings of ‘dialogue’ in PCT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. Finke &amp; L. Teusch</td>
<td>the dialogical must be amended by a functional relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Lietaer</td>
<td>dialogical working alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Tudor &amp; T. Merry</td>
<td>dialogue is ‘a precondition for therapy &amp; the therapy itself’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Bohart</td>
<td>co-constructive dialogue as meeting of minds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Tudor &amp; M. Worrall</td>
<td>dialogue is the practice and mutuality is the outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Sanders</td>
<td>dialogue is the co-created relationship between the helper and the person</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>helped</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not a school of therapy, but the idea that therapy is dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Mearns &amp; M. Cooper</td>
<td>working at relational depth:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘state of profound contact and engagement between two people in which each</td>
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<td></td>
<td>person is fully with the Other ...’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>specific moments of encounter &amp; a particular quality of a relationship</td>
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</table>
What does ‘dialogue’ mean?

* Greek ‘δια-λεγειν’
δια = between (inter)

λεγειν, διαλεγεσθαι
pick up, gather, collect; talk, speak
to put something apart by thinking over it

λογος = word, meaning, significance
‘between words’ → flowing of meaning
Dialogue: the conventional meaning

- human conversation face to face, mutual exchange, discourse, interchange in talking
  v. entre-tien (conversation), inter-course (social communication)

- symmetry and equality

- a meeting of the one with the other
Dialogue: Socrates

- pro-active search for wisdom
- εὖ ζῆν: to live a good and truthful life
- μαεστικη – a pedagogical instrument

469 – 399 v. Chr
Dialogue: Martin Buber

Interpersonality → Dialogue

“The sphere of the interpersonal is the opposite-to-each-other; its unfolding is what we call dialogue.” Buber, 1948

I-Thou relationship

469 – 399 v. Chr
Dialogue: Emmanuel Levinas

- of original im-media-cy
- not a consequence of experience
- primary occurrence
- dissymetric: The other comes first.

469 – 399 v. Chr
Dialogue: Emmanuel Levinas

Dialogue → Interpersonality

“It is precisely because the Thou is absolutely different from the I that there is - from the one to the other - dialogue.”

*Levinas, 1981*

Thou-I relationship
Dialogue: Emmanuel Levinas

- Solidarity is a basic human condition.
- It means to say: “Here I am.”
- This dissymmetry is the origin of ethics.
- The I is constituted by his/her responsibility.
Dialogue

Self-consciousness → dialogue

Dialogue → self-consciousness
The human person is dialogue.
What does a dialogical understanding of PCT mean?

- A true humanistic therapy is not „egology“.
- Being concerned with the therapist attitudes above all = „therapist-centredness“.
- The client comes first.
What does a dialogical understanding of PCT mean?

Psychotherapy means to enter dialogue.

enter - inter - entrer - intrare - unter (zwischen) - δια
What does a dialogical understanding of PCT mean?

Psychotherapy means to enter dialogue.
What does a dialogical understanding of PCT mean?

- Dialogue is in the very beginning of therapy.
- The persons engaged in therapy *are* dialogue.
Therapy as dialogue?

Psychotherapy → dialogue

Dialogue → psychotherapy
What does a dialogical understanding of PCT mean?

- Dialogue is in the very beginning of therapy.
- The persons engaged in therapy are dialogue.
- Therapy is the unfolding of dialogue.
- Presence is an expression of the fundamental “Here I am”.
- Encounter is the realization of dialogue.
- Ethically therapy is a way of “being for” the client.
Psychotherapy is dialogue or it is not psychotherapy.
4
RESPOND
Freedom to respond

- Psychotherapy is the freedom to respond.
- Call ⇔ Response
Traditional definitions of „answer“

„Filling a gap in one‘s knowledge.“

“A reply to a question or is a solution, a retaliation, or a response.”

“Replies act as a way of conveying relevant information and continuing a conversational exchange.“

_Wikipedia_
„Antwort“ (German)

- „Gegenrede“ — „counter-statement“

- ant- + Wort (* lat. verbum = word)

- Antwort = encounter face to face
„Answer“

- anti- + swear
- „solemn affirmation in rebutting a charge“
- v. answerable
- ant- = „opposite, against“

  * Greek αντί = „facing“
  * Latin ante = „before“
  * Indo-Germ. ant-s = „front, forehead, face“

→ answer = to encounter somebody face to face
„Response“

- French répondre
- „to answer an engagement, a promise; to give a solemn counter-promise, take up a challenge“
- * Lat. respondere = orig. „correspond, being reliable“
- * spondēre = „to solemnly promise, commit oneself, bind oneself by contract“
- v. sponsus / sponsa = „spouse“
- → responsible (for a promise)

→ respond = make a solemn engagement, promise
„Reply“

- French repliquer; German Replik
- „un-fold, dis-cover, re-flect“
- * Lat. replicare = re + plicare (*πλεκω)
  „back + fold = unfold“

→ reply = unfold, open up, discover
Answer / respond / reply

- face, encounter
- be a counterpart
- promise & engage
- discover, open up
The responsive structure of our behavior

... RSVP...
The responsive structure of our behavior

→ the attitude/approach of responding
The responsive structure of the person

Bernhard Waldenfels

- Responsive phenomenology and ethics

born 1934
The responsive structure of the person

- We respond by our behavior to the challenge of a given situation.

- Human beings encounter each other by responding to each other and a common world.

- Facing our situation we encounter the strange. ("Das Fremde")

*extraneus, extra ordinem: extra-ordinary*
The systems of order and the strange (xenology)

- The strange is the extra-ordinary.
- The strange $\Leftrightarrow$ the own.
- Unaccessible, not only unknown.
- We are strangers to ourselves.
- Horror alieni: The strange frightens us!
- The stranger disturbs us, because they question our order.
CHAOS ALARM !
Dealing with the strange

Either:
- mobilise defense
- monopolise
- reject
- distort
- deny

Or:
- respond existentially
Response - content and attitude

- The given answer — the act of responding.
- The act of responding is more than the given response (answer).
- „Facilitative responsiveness“.
- To respond is a creative act: to respond means to invent.
The responsive difference

- There is a fundamental dissymmetry.
- A response respects the fundamental otherness of the claim of the Other.
- The circle of question and answer avoids the necessary existential response.
To be a person means to be an existential response

- To respond means to confirm somebody in their personhood.
- The human being is addressed and responding from the very beginning of his/her life.
- In the beginning he/she is in dialogue.
- To respond means: To be a person to a fellow person.
The demand of the Other is disarming, because it precedes all intentions and models; by questioning the Self it opens the freedom to respond.

_Bernhard Waldenfels_
Responding creates freedom

- To respond brakes an order.
- Freedom originates in response.
- To respond thwarts expectations.
- To respond means to acknowledge.
- „Freedom to learn“ – „Freedom to respond“
Freedom as independence

*versus*

Freedom as intersubjective practice
Freedom

- *free*
  * Indo-German. *prāi-*
  = protect, take care of, love

related to *friend* and *Friede* (=peace)
Freedom

- Freedom as intersubjective practice is founded in the preceding We.

- It is a way of giving freedom.
Therapy as freedom to respond

- Psychotherapy is the practice of freedom.
- To be a therapist means to be an existential response.
Homo respondens

- „The human being is a responding being.“.  
  
  B. Waldenfels

- Each responding human being is a therapeutic human being.

- The realization of dialogue is creation of freedom.
Psychotherapy is dialogue — the freedom to respond.
Psychotherapy is dialogue — the freedom to respond as a human being.
Responding is a way of speaking and doing that by responding to demands of Others surprises itself.

Bernhard Waldenfels