

Reconnecting our fragmented world: An inquiry into wholes, synergies and nature, as a step to develop ‘cultural therapeutics’.

Gill Wyatt

Creating Synergies, Devon, UK.

(2013, Not to be circulated without consent from the author)

A human being is a part of a whole, called by us ‘universe’, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest... a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. (Einstein, 1901)

Abstract

The current situation is presented both, as a crisis and an opportunity for cultural change. Carl Rogers’ pioneering work, is the starting point for my trans-disciplinary exploration. I offer key themes, to provide a glimpse of the underlying process that brought us to our current level of fragmentation. I suggest the shift required, is a change of worldview – to an interconnected world, which involves an expanded consciousness. The role of wholes, synergies and nature highlights a possible way forward and a tentative first step towards identifying cultural therapeutics to facilitate the shift. The new capacities and sensitivities involved are a development of Rogers’ therapeutic conditions and the formative tendency that come into play as the arena extends from therapy to the whole of life within an interconnected world.

Key Words

Cultural turning point; expanded consciousness; synergy; interconnected worldview; collective; individuality; person-centred approach; cultural therapeutic.

The arena I cover is vast – the state of the world, cultural history, the role of wholes, synergies and nature in reconnecting our fragmented world and developing cultural therapeutics that can facilitate societal transformation. Underlying every inquiry is ‘a basic set of beliefs’ about the nature of reality, how it can be known and how it ‘guides action’ (Guba, 1990, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 19). I am attempting to write from a holistic-participative worldview, which provides an expanded frame or container – our interconnected world. This creates sufficient space to ‘accommodate the topic of enquiry’ (Anderson, 1998, p.19). Person-centred theory and practice informs me, but I need to go beyond therapy and psychology into social, political and ecological territories. This requires a trans-disciplinary approach.

Writing from a holistic-participative frame, means I integrate different perspectives and different forms of knowledge – the rational and logical, the experiential and the subjective with the intuitive, evocative and aesthetic. There is no limitation to what knowledge is valid – ‘the arena is everything’

(Braud, 1994, p. 31). I'm recounting the story of my inquiry, painting broad strokes upon a large canvas, expressing my ideas, illustrated by my personal experiences and supported by the existing literature. Much has been written about the validity of story telling (Heron, 1998; Ellis and Brochner, 2001; Wilkins, 2000, Wyatt, 2004). It is about conveying a personal truth rather than stating facts that need to be proved that stimulates deeper questions rather than providing answers. Personal truth in this holistic-participative worldview emerges from the depth of our participation. As Carl Rogers' said 'what is most personal is most universal' (Rogers, 1967)

THE CRISIS AND OPPORTUNITY: A CULTURAL TURNING POINT

We live in complex and challenging times. Over the last 50 years there have been so many advances. Life has become easier for many, as we have shared in the benefits of better housing, transport and healthcare; a proliferation of consumer goods and the expansion of global communication. Yet alongside these advances and benefits there have been overwhelming costs. Ecologically our planet is crippled by pollution, the depletion of natural resources and climate chaos. Many believe we are facing the sixth mass extinction as experts estimate rates of extinction to be between 1000 and 10,000 times higher than the natural background rate and suggest 'a single species – ours – is wholly responsible' (2007, IUCN).

Our economic, political and societal systems are failing (Rogers, 1980, Berry, 1999; O'Hara and Leicester, 2012). Desmond Tutu speaks of a 'radical brokenness of all existence' (cited in Wheatly, 2002, p. 4) The global monetary collapse of 2008 has only worsened the situation with bankers still awarded million £ bonuses while countries are on the brink of bankruptcy and individuals face government austerity measures. Governments remain committed to growth-based capitalism and the dominance of credit-based money despite the strong case for the end of global economic growth, as the era of cheap energy has finished (Heinberg, 2011). Representative democracies are struggling as many voters have little faith in any political party, as governments appear overly influenced by businesses and banks rather than being 'for the people'. Societies seem to value material wealth rather than ethics and caring (Gerhardt, 2010; Fisher, 2013), so we live in a world where 48 out of 100 people live on under 2\$ a day and 1 in 2 children live in poverty (100people, a global education tool that provides a portrait of the world as if it was a 100 people).

Within every crisis, there is a potential, an opportunity for learning and transformation. Rogers spoke of this when he said 'we are going through a transformational crisis, from which we and our world cannot remain unchanged ... the very difficult crises of tomorrow represent equally great opportunities' (1980, p. 339). The 'tomorrow' that Rogers spoke of *is now*. If we see the crisis held within '1 in 2 children live in poverty', with its profound wrongness, and feel the pain (ours and the worlds), then it can awaken within us the opportunity and the demand to be different. Rogers referred to a 'quiet revolution' (1978, p. 290) being underway in every field and spoke of 'a person of tomorrow' (1980, p. 350) who would be able to respond to the crises

and find the opportunities they contain. They would be able to challenge the materialistic and authoritative power-based society with their openness and authenticity; seek wholeness rather than divisions; value process, intimacy, non-judgmental caring and the ecological; respect a trust in inner authority rather than external authority; and prize spiritual meaning beyond simply the personal and the material (ibid).

People inspired by differing ideas – including person-centred philosophy, systems theory, complexity and chaos theory, Buddhism and other wisdom traditions, ecology, new economics and ecopsychology – are working in a myriad of different ways to make our world a better place (Hawken, 2007). These ways include holistic, trans-disciplinary education; establishing local food, renewable energy and nature-based learning initiatives; campaigning against political, social and economic injustices; seeking spiritual meaning; developing sustainable economics and co-operative ownership models; and introducing participative decision making and community budgeting.

The prevalence of these wide-ranging crises and so many innovative initiatives has led to the 21st Century being recognized as a time of profound change. Joanna Macy refers to it as the ‘Great Turning’ (2007), Thomas Berry as the ‘Great Work’ (1999) and Maureen O’Hara as a ‘world in transition’ (2013). Bill Plotkin, a depth psychologist and facilitator of cultural transformation says it is ‘the most sweeping and radical transformation ever to occur on Earth’ (2008, p. 2). Any transformation involves destruction and creation – the crises are the dying of the old systems and the opportunities are the potential places for newness. The stress and chaos we are experiencing can be likened to contractions experienced during childbirth – in this case the birth could be seen as a new order for earth.

Identifying key themes of the underlying process: Highlighting the need for an interconnected worldview

Before seeking a way forward that can facilitate this ‘cultural turning point’, it is important to *know* the context. I want to briefly identify key themes of the evolution of human consciousness and the history of cultural development – from tribal hunter-gatherers, to agriculture-based, to feudal and to our more recent industrial-growth society, which I see have contributed to the development of increasing separation and disconnection. (Abram, 1997; Gebser, 1985; Wilber, 2001)

Language and the differentiation of self from other

The development of language provided a new form of articulation, which enabled art, religion, philosophy and culture to develop. Language is an abstraction; it presents something and is separate from that something, particularly when it is written. Once culture developed scripts, our senses became entwined with the written word rather than as they had been, with nature and the whole of life (Abram, 1997). Also a fixity and separateness now exists between the author and the written word. This is the start of object (other) and subject (self), as the self develops self-awareness and reflexivity. Human cognition emerged as individual consciousness developed. This

'aware-self', now has a separate existence from itself, its body and from the other (ibid).

Perspective, rationality and reductionism.

This process continues as humans developed the awareness of spatial perspective. Gebser suggested that instead of immersion within the whole, humans' perception now confronts and separates, creating 'a distance between man and objects' (p. 19), a sense of possession (p. 12) and an 'isolating fixity' (p. 94). It brings about a more objective consciousness and 'expansion of the ego-sphere' (p. 19). The gains include an ability to grasp space rationally and control what is external. Technical drafting becomes possible, which opens the potential for the industrial and technological age. However, now 'the part outweighs the whole' (p. 18). The world becomes 'sectored' and 'sectors that lie adjacent, beyond or even behind' (ibid) are forgotten. The stage is set for Descartes' dissociation and elevation of mind over matter. Gebser suggests Descartes adherence to abstraction, quantification and rationalism was the beginning of reason becoming 'exaggerated rationalism' (p. 97). The image for the world became a machine and this mechanism led to reductionism – the taking apart to understand. Capacities for observation, measurement and rational thought were valued and thus strengthened in contrast to the realm of the subjective – feelings, experience, intuition, values, meaning and purpose. Humans have become blind to the degree of abstraction and fragmentation present in the world, which include national boundaries, medical specialism, academic subjects, partisan political parties. We've forgotten about the original wholeness, before we made the divisions.

Societal power and values

As societies have developed from feudal to industrial and now to our global technological informational age, societal power and values have shifted as individuals have broken free from conformity imposed by state, religion and landownership. The rapid industrial and technological progress, the divisions and objectivity of materialistic science and the rise of consumerism with its emphasis on material wealth has elevated and separated science and technology from art and aesthetics. Subjective qualities and beauty are intrinsic to being morally responsible and Ken Wilber shows how the exclusion of art and aesthetics from science, and hence business and government policy, creates a 'flattening' as the depth dimension of the world is lost (2001).

Andy Fisher goes further and names the development of the capitalist system that underpins our technological growth society, as the elephant in the room. 'Capitalism unavoidably creates conditions that thwart interior development and that disintegrate or dissociate consciousness' (2013, p. 236). He talks about 'a commodity-driven culture', which has a 'moral vacuum' as 'money becomes the standard of universal value' (p. 238). Consumption becomes our ethical duty driven by 'a chronic state of dissatisfaction' (Kovel 2007, p. 82) that relieves tension as an addiction does. We've ended up with a radically broken societal fabric with an underlying immaturity and social pathology. Bill Plotkin writes 'The industrial growth society is simply incompatible with collective human maturity and Sue Gerhardt (2010), speaks of our 'selfish

society' and our inability to 'take other people into account ... the end product of decades of individualism and consumerism, which has eroded our social bonds' (p. 13).

Perception, thought and culture

The role of perception and thought also plays a significant part. Is there one external reality or multiple socially constructed worlds? David Bohm, a quantum physicist and philosopher clarifies how what we take to be direct perceptions of reality, originating within the individual, are instead manifestations of collective human thought, culturally determined, shaped by the dominant cultural values, principles and assumptions. They are articulations by cultural-specific sensitivities. 'Perception *presents* something and then our thought *re-presents* it' as a culturally determined abstraction (2003, p. 55). He advocates the real dilemma is perception and thought, rather than the crises themselves. He spoke of a 'pervasive incoherence' and of 'a systemic fault' (1994, p.19) regarding thought itself. Our thought and perception fragments the world and by doing this, the parts lose their connection with the whole. 'Thought doesn't know what it is doing'. We've forgotten that it is 'we' who have cut the world up and now we don't know how to undo it and refind the wholeness of life. Any solution is shaped by this incoherence, which means the problem remains and represents itself. Unless this process is understood and we gain new capacities to reconnect and think afresh, then everything we think and do simply reproduces more of the same.

The characteristics of the expanded interconnected world

Albert Einstein much quoted message 'No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it' (quoted in Plotkin, 2008, p. 9) shows us the nature of the cultural shift that is needed and Bill Plotkin further clarifies 'A viable plan for transforming our culture will not come from the worldview or the values that produced it'. There is an emerging interconnected worldview in contrast to the old worldview of scientific materialism where political and societal systems support capitalism and technological growth.

- It's a holistic and participative world where multiple realities and a plurality of truths are recognised rather than one reality and one truth. Science involves holism *and* reductionism. Knowledge is multidimensional – valuing the qualitative (intuition, experience, feelings, imagination, myths, meanings) alongside the observable and measurable quantitative (rational, analyses, deductive).
- Its creative, participative nature means there is a dynamic, evolving non-local/mutual causation of living systems, which replaces the static, determinism and local/linear causation of mechanisms. There is now an entanglement between knower and known rather than a separation of subject and object.
- Science and society is morally informed and ethically responsive with eco-centric values for the good of all, instead of being value free and socially neutral.

- Outcomes are emergent and synergistic rather than predictable and controllable.

Our world is in crisis and within this crisis is our opportunity to evolve. We are at a cultural turning point, with the evolutionary possibility of embracing this expanded worldview, which entails a 'comprehensive change' in our consciousness (Berry, 1999). Can humans reinvent ourselves so our relationships are mutually enhancing and our behaviour, instead of being destructive, augments the world? What new sensitivities and capacities are needed? Rogers' was a pioneer of this process, what part can Rogers' therapeutic conditions and the formative tendency play in developing 'cultural therapeutics' that might facilitate this shift in consciousness that will reconnect societies fragmentation and facilitate the emergence of the new interconnected and participative worldview?

THE ROLE OF WHOLES, SYNERGIES AND NATURE

In this section, the significance of 'wholes' in reconnecting our fragmented world and expanding our consciousness is explored. A journal extract of mine illustrates the nature of 'wholes' and our interconnected world and how nature both embodies and facilitates 'wholeness'. One aspect of wholes – synergies is outlined and explored regarding its particular relevance for cultural transformation.

A whole is made up of interconnected parts in relationship with one another. Our interconnected world is full of interrelated entities rather than separate material objects. Mae-Wan Ho, a geneticist & biophysicist, refers to how quantum theory at the small-scale of particles, and relativity theory at the large-scale, has led to the evolution from the mechanical world to the 'organic' world. She says 'Instead of solid objects with simple locations in space and time, one finds delocalised, mutually entangled quantum entities evolving like organisms' (1998). Here the new holistic science is supporting Rogers' organismic theory that Ivan Ellingham has clarified and strengthened (Rogers, 1980; Ellingham, 2001). This interconnected wholeness is also the nature of reality from the perspective of Eastern philosophy and spirituality. All phenomena are manifestations of unity, oneness, a cosmic whole where everything is interrelated, interdependent and inseparable. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist and spiritual leader calls this 'interbeing' (2003, p.175).

The natural world embodies 'wholeness'. Ecology, since the mid-nineteenth century, has provided evidence of nature as a web of interwoven relationships and subtle interdependencies that creates an interconnected whole. For example, a plum tree is a part of a whole, it cannot be understood in isolation, it needs to be seen as one of its species and within its ecosystem. The make-up of the soil, underlying rocks and geology, amount of moisture from rainfall (overall climate) and run-off, the insects that pollinate the flowers and others seen as pests, the fruit as food for other species, and those that spread the seed; each of these cannot be understood without the whole within which it is connected. John Muir eloquently speaks of this when he said 'When we try to

pick out anything by itself we find that it is bound fast by a thousand invisible cords that cannot be broken, to everything in the universe.' (Quoted in Fox, 1981, p. 291).

A personal experience to illustrate

The following journal extract illustrates an experience of my disconnection and my process of refinding wholeness. There are many ways to bring about such a shift; being in nature is a particularly powerful way for me.

Today I feel uneasy; disturbed even, by some intangible or undifferentiated sensation that I do not understand. I have a particularly difficult task that's hard to face, I do bits and pieces that both clear the decks and avoids. I ring my mobile phone provider concerning a difficulty and end up feeling not heard, knowing my irritation and shortness played a significant part in the unproductive outcome. I now feel bad, alone with a familiar sense of failure and resentment.

I try to force myself to attend to the task as yet not faced. I feel blank initially and then overwhelmed as a feeling of panic begins to take hold. I try again to push through but the panic just gets worse.

I give up and decide to go for a walk. As I walk along the beach, I am surprised at how quickly I feel calmer as my panic and feeling bad begins to lift. As I walk I start to feel my body, each leg moving forward in turn and as each foot finds the ground, I feel the earth push back in response. The movement of walking feels good and comforting. I start to breath more deeply; my gaze takes in my surroundings and extends out to the horizon. I sigh. I feel soothed as I walk on the damp sand with the sounds of the waves and the sea birds, the occasional feeling of the sun's warmth on my body, as the grey clouds race across the sky. ... I feel freer, more alive, more connected within myself and with my surroundings ... they seem more alive, more colourful ... I feel a part of nature and the Earth, ... a remembering that brings joy and sense of peace, of being centred – whole. And from this place I feel more confident. I know – an inner heart-knowing that I will be able to face the task despite its difficulty, or even because of it.

Finding wholeness through embodied kinship with nature

Before I go for a walk, I'm scared, trapped in an alienated 'limited' self and disconnected from the world. As I walk and take in my surroundings, I am able to sink into my 'felt sense' (Gendlin, 1981) and I experience a shift from feeling restricted and disconnected to feeling a sense of belonging and feeling a part of a whole. My senses reconnect with the world around me and I remember I am nature. This illustrates the importance of 'synaesthesia' in the process of reconnecting back to wholeness. David Abrams describes 'synaesthesia' a central concept of Merleau-Ponty's work, as 'the overlap and entwining of the senses' (1997, p.124). He elucidates how our different senses meet one another as we perceive and experience the world that surrounds us. Our body is an open system and it is 'primarily by engagement with what is *not* me that I effect the integration of my senses and thereby experience my own unity and coherence (p. 125). My senses soared free within the sensuous, enlivened landscape – the feel of my body as I walked; seeing the waves forming, cresting, breaking and the tantalising hint of an arc at the horizon; hearing excited children running free and the sound of the

waves; smelling the damp sand and ozone aliveness. I refound my coherence and felt whole and ensouled (Plotkin, 2008) as I felt my kinship with the earth.

Reconnecting through the qualitative nature of participation

The nature of wholeness in our interconnected world means participation is central, as every act of participation creates both the self who participates and the whole. Thomas Berry says 'every being of the universe articulates some special quality of the universe in its entirety. Indeed nothing in the universe could be itself apart from every other being in the universe' (1999, p. 32). This is the mutual causality of co-creativity. The quality of our participation shapes both our inner and outer landscape as each reflects the other. When I felt bad, alone and a failure, my restricted, scared, inner world shaped my experience – the way I perceived, thought and behaved to the customer services consultant. I was short and abrupt and critical, while he was unhelpful and misunderstood me. Together we co-created the dislocation between us. Walking in nature allowed me to shift from 'me against the world' (my restricted-self) to 'me in and of the world' (my whole-self). In finding my 'whole-self', like a whole-person version of congruence (Seeman, 2001; Ellingham, 2001; Wyatt, 2001) my experience profoundly changed as the way I perceived and thought altered. Rogers' concept of congruence can be defined as the matching between a person's experience, awareness and behaviour (Rogers, 1986). A whole-person conceptualisation emphasises the 'organismic integration' both within a person and interpersonally. Connectedness is fundamental to facilitate a 'free flow of communication, within our whole being, at all levels of functioning' (Seeman, 2001, p. 211).

The quality of my participation profoundly shifted as I refound my 'connected-up' self. I shifted from the smallness and criticalness of my restricted self that resides more in the disconnected, materialistic world to the openness, warmth and potential of the expanded interconnected world. I knew and took responsibility for my part in the difficulty. Here was an example of the participative nature of the interconnected world – our internal and external world intricately connected.

The formative tendency: The natural evolutionary process of the interconnected world.

The nature of our interconnected universe is of wholes and parts evolving in greater complexity (Corning, 2003). The atoms making up our bodies used to be gases, rocks, plants and other animals. Many philosophers and scientists have posited a forward directional tendency, a flow, and a vital force shaping evolution. Thomas Berry called this 'cosmogensis' (1999). Rogers' calls this the formative tendency, present 'at every level of the universe' (1980, p. 124). He saw it as 'an evolutionary tendency towards greater order, greater complexity, greater interrelatedness.' (p. 133).

In Rogers' exploration of the formative and actualising tendency he speaks of the ability to focus conscious attention, 'as a tiny peak of awareness, of symbolising capacity, topping a vast pyramid of non-conscious organismic functioning' (1980, p.127). This non-conscious organismic functioning he sees as being guided by the evolutionary flow, the growth tendency of his formative

tendency. He believed that when the therapeutic conditions were present a person's self-awareness could become more congruent with their organismic functioning. He says 'With greater self-awareness, a more informed choice is possible, a choice more free of introjects, a *conscious* choice, that is even more in tune with the evolutionary flow' (ibid). The person is open to more fully sense the totality of his whole being, feeling the unity of all that is non-conscious rather than being limited by the self-conscious 'self concept'. This person will be more connected to the larger whole, our interconnected world.

It was as if walking along the beach allowed me to sink into myself, and in opening to myself I experienced an authentic respectful acceptance. It was as if being connected with nature allowed me to offer Rogers' conditions to myself. I could bring a little more of my non-conscious functioning into the conscious me. I felt more whole, a kinship with the earth, as my perception expanded. I felt my potential and the living energy – the creative force within the world – and as I was part of the world, it was in me too. I had a difficult task ahead and instead of fearing failure I stayed focused and open, seeing my abilities more accurately, knowing a way forward would emerge. This is being a part of the universal evolutionary process, the world bursting forth into ever-greater complexity through total participation.

Synergies: Wholeness through self-differentiation and integration

Synergy is this process of evolving complexity as a more complex order of organisation forms (Corning, 2003). It's often described, as the whole being greater than the sum of the parts. There are emergent properties at the new level of organisation that cannot be predicted by the capacities of the parts. Using words and a sentence to illustrate – each individual word has a specific meaning and when a sentence is created (a synergy) a new meaning emerges with no comparison to all the separate meanings of each word. Presence, (Geller, 2013) in a therapeutic relationship could be seen as the synergy that emerges when a therapist is able to be empathic, accepting and congruent, and relational depth (Mearns and Cooper, 2005) as the synergy from the relationship between therapist and client when all of Rogers' six conditions are present.

This process of a more complex order of organisation with emergent properties happens at different levels – atoms become molecules and cells become organisms. Arthur Koestler, a Hungarian-British author and journalist, used the term 'holon' (1967) to describe an entity that is both a whole at one level of organisation and a part at the next more complex level of organisation. Holon's have two characteristics – a self-asserting function that self-differentiates to maintain its autonomy as a whole and an integrating function that connects and co-operates allowing it to function as a part of a larger whole. Synergy requires a healthy-dynamic balance between the self-assertion function and the integrating function.

When we're considering people, organizations and societies, synergies are not so easy to achieve as humans seem to struggle with the dual-ability necessary to realise this dynamic balance between self-differentiation and working together, integrating to become a whole, but they do occur. People

speak of work teams, training courses, community projects where the group experience is extra special (Wyatt, 2012, O'Hara and Leicester, 2012). They describe both stepping into their uniqueness more than ever before, at the same time as feeling a sense of communion, of being part of the whole group; people mention a type of non-possessive love. There's a 'connecting-up' within the individual, that facilitates their self-differentiation *and* a 'connecting-up' between them so that the group works together with a heightened ability for wiser, more effective and creative functioning'. This connecting-up is like a multiplier effect (Wyatt, 2012, p.106). Members of sports teams sometimes recount becoming like a one '11-headed unit', intuitively knowing what was needed of them and finding their ability lifted to achieve it. Rogers' refers to 'unity out of separateness' as sometimes occurring in large groups (1980, p. 190).

The cultural turning point that we are currently facing can be seen at least in part, as an imbalance between the individual and the collective – being able to be part of a whole and work together for the good of the whole. Bill Plotkin uses the term 'ego-based consciousness', which he describes as 'our greatest liability as well as our greatest power' (2008, p. 11). During healthy development, an individual has its relational needs met which allows self-differentiation and a widening of our 'circle of identity'. Our 'circle of identity', or 'sphere of empathy' (p.70) is that which is essential for our existence and to which we can extend our care and empathy, it is the community to which we feel we belong too. Initially this will be self and carer, which then widens to include the immediate family, and then to include our community to eventually including the ecological and our interconnected world. But in our present-day goal-orientated materialistic society we are far from maturity and the prevalence of what Plotkin has called 'egocentric patho-adolescents' (ibid) means we seldom develop a circle of identity beyond our immediate circle.

When I was struggling, feeling bad, alone and a failure I stepped into feeling a victim, I had lost my confidence and my ability to self-differentiate. And when I was speaking to the Customer Services consultant I was selfishly pre-occupied and was both unassertive with regards to not helping him to understand my difficulty and also aggressive, over-assertive when I was abrupt and disrespectful. When I was walking along the beach I connected up, felt whole and coherent and was able to re-find a wiser more empathic, caring me who knew and regretted that the ego-bound, scared 'limited' me had behaved badly. I was able to empathise and see the world through the other's eyes as well as my own, balancing my dual-ability to both self-differentiate and to integrate. My connected-up whole self's coherence, meant I had the ability to extend my 'circle of identity' with its caring, ethical responsibility. My extended 'circle of identity' was an emergent property of the synergy of me connecting-up and finding my whole self.

Using the extract from my journal to inquire into wholes, synergies and nature, the expanded interconnected world and its relational and participative nature has highlighted to me that there is no natural fragmentation only what humankind has created. In wondering about the process of expanding our consciousness to be able to embrace an interconnected view of the world I

am left with the following questions, which I suggest clarifies the cultural transformation necessary to heal the present day crises arising from the level of disconnection and dissociation.

- How can we see and experience wholes so our consciousness expands to embrace an interconnected worldview?
- What qualities can we bring to our participation so we both potentiate as individuals and the world too bursts into being?
- How can we step away from the 'small sense of self' and find our whole sense of self allowing us to both fully self-differentiate AND integrate, co-operate with others, becoming parts of a larger whole?
- What sensitivities do we need to strengthen our social bonds so our circle of identity extends to the ecocentric and cosmocentric?

CONCLUSION: DEVELOPING 'CULTURAL THERAPEUTICS'.

The questions above and their answers provide a step in identifying the new sensitivities and capacities that will facilitate a societal transformation. 'New sensitivities are new windows which enlarge the horizons of our world; they are also the vehicles by which we carry on the evolutionary journey, and through which we make ourselves into more human and spiritual beings' (Skolimowski, 1994, p. 22).

The following three interrelated sensitivities and capacities develop Rogers' therapeutic conditions and the formative tendency as the arena extends from therapy to the whole of life within an interconnected world. I offer this as a step in the development of 'cultural therapeutics'. I propose the following definition – Cultural therapeutics facilitate societal transformation by acting on societal structures and processes to reconnect disconnection and dissociation so policies and actions taken are life-enhancing

Relational capacities – the qualitative nature of participation

Rogers' therapeutic conditions (1957) involve the qualities of authenticity, care, respect, acceptance and empathy and the ability to be in contact, relate to another and understand the significance of whether the other perceives the conditions. We know these relational capacities are facilitative for therapy and in encounter groups, as they enable us to grow and step into more of our potential. Do Rogers' conditions provide the relational qualities that will help to facilitate the cultural transformation?

Learning about the significance of how relational qualities shape our participation and the co-creativity of the interconnected world enables us to understand the intricate interwovenness of our inner and outer landscapes and how they co-create our experiences and the world. We need relational sensitivities so we can recognise the qualitative nature of our communication and behaviour and its effect – the nature of mutual causality.

When Rogers' conditions are present all together as a whole, I think maybe they can provide a qualitative foundation for the cultural transformation – whether we call this presence (Geller, 2013), relational depth (Mearns and

Cooper, 2005), encounter (Schmid, 2001) or tenderness (Thorne, 1991). The synergy of the conditions, all together, with its multiplier effect is profound (Wyatt, 2012) and this profoundness is further extended, if our intention is to aspire to live the wholeness of Rogers' conditions in all of our lives – moment by moment. Of course this is unachievable, my experience with customer services illustrates that, but the intention of extending *the wholeness of Rogers' conditions* outside of the therapy hour is a step towards a cultural therapeutic. It encourages us to confront a societal structure or process we experience as 'unfair' or 'wrong'. For example choosing to invest savings in a community co-operative rather than a commercial bank.

These capacities are not unique to the person-centred approach; they are spiritual qualities that have been long recognised by wisdom and spiritual traditions. When present as a whole, I believe other qualities emerge – love, wisdom, courage, integrity, reverence, humility, meaning. To realise these capacities can be a life long task, people are inspired by these capacities and aspire towards them. We need to grow the capacities so the wholeness of the conditions can shape our relating and also develop the ability to live the conditions in all of our lives. So these emergent qualities inspire our participation and help us to fully step into this evolutionary opportunity to come together to create a life-enhancing society.

Seeing wholes

Seeing wholes is an antidote to thinking in silos and the 'systemic incoherence' (Bohm, 1994) of our fragmented world. It involves shifting from our long-established mode of analysis, linear thinking and seeing things in isolation, to being able to see the natural context and intrinsic relatedness of wholes. Our thinking can become joined-up and our inquiries become trans-disciplinary. It involves indwelling – a receptive mode of consciousness, an attentive receptivity of emptiness or 'active absence' (Bortoft, 1996). This is similar to an embodied empathy. This creates a space where the intrinsic connections and the 'innate relatedness' of the original whole, before it was taken apart, are revealed (ibid). Henri Bortoft, a philosopher, physicist and practitioner of Goethian science calls this 'seeing comprehensively' (ibid, p. 290). We experience and learn to see wholes and we develop new sensitivities with new organs of perception, which expands our consciousness, as we become a part of the wholeness of the interconnected 'web of life'. Brent Robbins suggests Goethian science 'can potentially restore ... the wholeness of those who practice it' and that it could 'be restorative for our entire culture' if it is 'taken up as a cultural practice' (2005, p. 114). We start to be able to sense the living energy of the universe, Rogers' formative tendency and organismic functioning. These new sensitivities can call forth a new world – 'the power of sensitivities is the power of co-creation' (Skolimowski, 1994, p. 14). Gradually life's purposes can be revealed and synchronicities attracted to realise them.

Expanding perception and consciousness by learning to see wholes helps our circles of identity to keep widening. Within these ever widening circles, relational responsiveness grows – capacities and sensitivities for authenticity, respect, acceptance and empathy extend into the expanded circles of identity.

As these relational qualities grow this capacity transcends polarities and disconnection. Instead of the alienation of 'us' and 'them', the diversity of different people with different views is welcomed knowing the whole is co-created by the many. Seeing wholes and feeling part of a larger whole allows caring ethical responsibility to develop for others and the current state of the world. Seeing wholes shows us a world of beauty that we belong to and are a part of. Understanding develops regarding if others are harmed we are harmed and when others are enhanced we are enhanced.

The dual-ability to both self-differentiation and integration

In part this involves normal human development to gain psychological maturity and undergoing therapy or other types of personal development to heal childhood traumas and issues. We do the work, learn to offer Rogers' conditions to ourselves and provide secure and loving inner-support to break free from our limiting 'self concept' to grow a connected-up whole sense of self. And as we individuate we are able to come together with others, to cooperate, to fully participate as parts of larger wholes, to widen our circle of identity and extend a sense of caring ethical responsibility outwards. But the fragmentation of our materialistic and individualistic world makes developing this dual-ability of connecting up within our selves and with others, difficult.

Finding ways to connect with the living energy of the universe, Rogers' formative tendency, helps us become more fully ourselves. The more we are able to experience aesthetics and beauty – whether in nature, or through music, art, poetry, dance, meditation – the more our senses are connected to the world, the more we become whole – ensouled, in touch with who we are and our deeper purpose. James Hillman calls this 'aisthesis', a 'breathing in' of the world through our heart so that meaning emerges (1992, p.47). This sensitivity seems to both take us more deeply into individuating to find our 'ecological self' (Naess, 1985) *and* enable our circle of identity to extend to include all people and all of the earth. This is the difference between individualism and individuality and it may be 'at the core of the evolutionary task of the 21st century. Individualism comes from the "conditioned self" or the "small sense of self", which weakens social bonds, whereas "individuality", the connected up, fully differentiated self, allows people to join together to become groups and assemblies of people, with a wider 'circle of identity' who take account of each other and the natural world' (Wyatt, 2012, p. 111).

To conclude, I am tentatively offering a possibility of extending Rogers' conditions and formative tendency to develop 'cultural therapeutics' that facilitates the evolution of the 'whole self' or the 'ecological self' and a mature ensouled society with extended circles of identity that will heal and revitalise societies social bonds. It requires seeking the wholeness of Rogers' conditions rather than simply the individual conditions and it involves intending to live them moment-to-moment, rather than only in the therapy session. Growing the new sensitivities of seeing wholes, understanding the qualitative nature of relating and being able to both individuate and join with others as collectives are part of the process to realise the expanded consciousness necessary to heal the disconnection and truly embrace an interconnected

world. We then may be able to discover collective actions that will be good for all people, all of the non-human world and our earth.

References not completed

References

- Abrams, D. (1997). *The spell of the sensuous*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Berry, T. (1999). *The great work: Our way to the future*. New York: Bell Tower.
- Bohm, D. (1994). *Thought as a system*. London: Routledge.
- Bohm, D. (2003). *On dialogue*. Edited by L. Nichol. London: Routledge.
- Bortoft, H. (1996). *The wholeness of nature*. New York: Lindisfarne Press.
- Einstein, A. (1901). *Letter to Winteler, 1901*. Retrieved (2013) from http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Albert_Einstein
- Ellingham, I. (2001). Congruence as an organismic not a Freudian concept. In G. Wyatt (Ed.), *Rogers' therapeutic conditions: Evolution, theory, and practice. Vol. 1: Congruence*. Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books, pp. 96-115.
- Fox, S. (1981). *John Muir and his legacy: The American Conservation movement*. Boston: Little Brown and Company.
- Gerhardt, S. (2010). *The selfish society*. London: Simon and Schuster.
- Hillman, J. (1992). *The thought of the heart and the soul of the world*. Putnam, Connecticut: Spring Publications Inc.
- Ho, M. (1998) Organism and psyche in a participatory Universe. In D. Loye's, *The evolutionary outrider: The impact of the human agent on evolution*. Westport: Praeger Publishers.
- Koestler, A. (1967). *The ghost in the machine*. Suffolk: The Chaucer Press.
- Macy, J. and Young Brown, M. (2007). *Coming back to life: Practises to reconnect our lives, our world*. Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers.
- Nhat Hanh, T. (2003). *Creating true peace*. New York: First Free Press.
- O'Hara, M. and G. Leicester. (2012). *Dancing at the edge*. Axminster: Triarchy Press.
- Plotkin, B. (2008). *Nature and the human soul: Cultivating wholeness and community in a fragmented world*. Novato: New World Library.
- Rogers, C.R. (1957). The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 21, 95-103.
- Rogers, C.R. (1978). *Carl Rogers on personal power: Inner strength and its revolutionary impact*. London: Constable.
- Rogers, C.R. (1980). *A way of being*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Wheatley, M. (2002). *Turning to one another*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Seeman, J. (2001). On Congruence: A human system paradigm. In G. Wyatt (Ed.), *Rogers' therapeutic conditions: Evolution, theory, and practice. Vol. 1: Congruence*. Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books, pp. 200-212.
- Wilbur, K. (2001). *A brief history of everything*. Boston: Shambala.
- Wyatt, G. (2001). Congruence: A synthesis and implications. In G. Wyatt (Ed.), *Rogers' therapeutic conditions: Evolution, theory, and practice. Vol. 1: Congruence*. Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books, pp. 79-95.
- Wyatt, G. (2012). *Group Relational Depth*. In Knox, R., Murphy, D., Wiggins, S., and M. Cooper (eds) *Relational Depth in Practice: New perspectives and developments*. London: Palgrave.

Arne Naess (1985) Identification as a source of deep ecological attitudes. In M. Tobias, Ed., *Deep Ecology* (Avant Books,1985), pp.256-270 (quoted in Bragg [3])

Thorne, B. (1991). *Person-Centred Counselling: Therapeutic and Spiritual Dimensions* Wiley-Blackwell