
**Title: The Perspective of the Person and the Counselling
Relationship in the Humanistic Tradition**

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Contents

1.	Title	1
2.	Table of Contents	2
3.	Acknowledgement	4
4.	Abstract	5
5.	Introduction	6
5.1	Context of the Study	6
5.2	Rationale and Objectives of the Study	7
5.3	Approach and Methodology	8
5.4	Structure of the Study	9
6.	Approach and Methodology	10
6.1	Introduction	10
6.2	Research Strategy	10
6.3	Research Methodology	12
6.4	Selection of Core Texts	13
6.5	Perspective of the Researcher	13
6.6	Quality of the Research	15
6.7	Ethical Issues	15
7.	The Humanistic tradition	16
7.1	Introduction	16
7.2	The Question of terminology	17
7.3	Early Perspectives of the Person	17
7.4	The Emergence of Modern Existentialism	18

7.5	The Evolution of the Humanistic Tradition in Psychotherapy	24
7.6	The Unique Perspective of the Person	26
7.7	The Humanistic Tradition – The Blurring of Boundaries	28
7.8	Conclusion	29
8.	The Counselling Relationship	30
8.1	Introduction	30
8.2	The Development of the Counselling Relationship	31
8.3	Models of the Counselling Relationship	33
8.4	The Counselling Relationship in the Humanistic Tradition	35
8.5	The Role of the Therapist and the Client	37
8.6	The Counselling Space	39
9.	The Main Therapeutic Approaches	41
9.1	Introduction	41
9.2	The Relationship in Person-Centered Therapy	41
9.3	The Relationship in Existential Therapy	42
9.4	The Relationship in Gestalt Therapy	43
9.5	Summary	44
10.	Discussion of Findings	46
10.1	Introduction	46
10.2	Key Findings	46
10.3	Key Issues and Questions	47
11.	Conclusion	50
11.1	Introduction	50
11.2	Further Research	50
	Bibliography	51

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4. Abstract

The Humanistic tradition in counselling and psychotherapy has its roots in a broader philosophical tradition most particularly in Existentialism. The writings of Kierkegaard and Heidegger and the perspective of the person that they proposed, especially the concept of *Being* and *Nonbeing*, had a fundamental influence on the founding fathers of this third force in psychotherapy. The perspective of the person that emerged from this philosophical worldview is of an organism that accepts the existential givens of life and chooses their own essence through the exercise of courage and free will. In so doing, the person accepts responsibility for their choices. This philosophical worldview was transitioned into the field of psychotherapy by a number of theorists most notably by Maslow and Rogers, and given life and meaning in the therapeutic approaches within the Humanistic tradition most particularly Person-Centered, Gestalt and Existential therapies. These approaches are characterised by a shared perspective of the person which distinguishes the Humanistic tradition from the other two main therapeutic traditions, psychoanalysis and behaviourism. This shared perspective is of an organism that endeavours to find meaning and fulfilment in the world through its inherent tendency to reach its potential in relationship with others. This shared perspective of the person permeates these approaches and is given life and meaning in the counselling relationship in the tradition in general, and in these approaches in particular. The importance of the therapeutic encounter in the Humanistic tradition is acknowledged, especially the Real Relationship where both client and therapist meet in a co-constructed space that is distinguished by the presence of each participant both intrapersonally and interpersonally. Each of the foundational approaches within this tradition has developed its own individual approach to the counselling relationship which is informed by the fundamental principles underpinning the Humanistic tradition. The study also considered the question of the Humanistic tradition and the concept of the unconscious and whether the former can accommodate the latter. The study concludes by considering the broader question of how a particular worldview circumvents and sets the boundary of a particular tradition and its constituent therapeutic approaches, in this instance the Humanistic tradition and the possible implications of this proposition.

Key words: Humanistic tradition, Humanistic approaches to psychotherapy, the perspective of the person, the counselling relationship, the counselling space, philosophical basis, Existentialism

5. Introduction

5.1 Context for the Study

This quotation from Martin Buber's seminal work, *I and Thou* (2010), captures the essence of this research study. This study is an exploration of the proposition that the unique perspective of the person in the Humanistic tradition endows the counselling relationship and the counselling space with characteristics that are particular to the approaches within this tradition. The Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy was first described by Maslow in 1950's when he identified a "third force" in psychology. In presenting this alternative third force, Maslow believed that a new vision of the potential of human kind was emerging based on the work of a number of seminal figures in this field of psychology and psychotherapy including Carl Rogers and Rollo May. He believed that as a result it was, at that time, becoming possible to describe a view of the person by a

"single, comprehensive system of psychology even though much of this has arisen as a reaction against the limitations (as philosophies of human nature) of the two most comprehensive psychologies now available –behaviourism (or associationism) and classical, Freudian psychoanalysis" (1999, p. 211).

Maslow was tentative in naming this third force, initially using a number of descriptors including Humanistic which in time has become the accepted term within the field of counselling and psychotherapy (1999). The key point to note in this instance is that Maslow distinguished this third force from the two prevailing traditions of psychoanalysis and behaviourism by reference to the former's more positive and holistic view of the person (Schmid, quoted in Raskin, Rogers and Witty, 2005, p. 142). McLeod in describing this tradition in psychotherapy characterised it as one *"that would have a place for human capacity for creativity, growth and choice"* (2009, p 169). The influence of the broader Humanistic tradition and European Existentialist philosophy in particular on the development of this tradition in psychotherapy is acknowledged (Watson, Greenberg and Lietaer, 1998; McLeod, 2009; Cain, 2008). Both of these movements suggest a particular view of the person

which has informed and indeed has set the parameters, including the boundaries, of the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy and, consequently, the approaches within this tradition.

McLeod notes that the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy does not consist of a single, coherent theoretical formulation but rather comprises a broad school of approaches that are connected by “*shared values and philosophical assumptions*” (2009, p. 169), acknowledging the relationship between this tradition and its philosophical roots. There is some discussion as to exactly which approaches can be termed Humanistic but it is commonly accepted that Existential psychotherapy, Gestalt therapy and Person-Centered therapy are well established and accepted as being the foundational approaches within this tradition (McLeod, 2009; Cain, 2008; Raskin, Rogers & Witty, 2005). It is through these approaches that the shared values and philosophical assumptions of this tradition in psychotherapy including its perspective on the person are given meaning and relevance in the therapeutic encounter. Consequently, these approaches were selected for consideration in this study to identify in practical terms how this perspective of the person manifests itself in the counselling relationship in these approaches and how the philosophical principles, the worldview, underpinning the Humanistic tradition in general and in psychotherapy in particular are translated into practical approaches to therapy.

The counselling relationship has long been considered one of the critical common factors that brings about change and healing in the client and, indeed, in the therapist (Bachelor and Horvath, 1990; Sexton and Whitson, 1994; Weinberger, 2002; Clarkson, 2008). It is where all theories are tested and brought to life. Consequently, in order to consider and assess the proposition it is necessary to reflect on the nature of the counselling relationship and what Clarkson has referred to as the “*creative space between*” the client and the therapist (2008, p. xvi) in relation to the Humanistic tradition and its constituent approaches. In addition, the relationship in the three foundational therapeutic approaches of the Humanistic tradition is also considered to ascertain how this is influenced and circumscribed in practical terms by this particular perspective of the person.

5.2 Rationale and Objectives of the Study

The Humanistic tradition is one of the three main traditions in counselling and psychotherapy and it is distinguished by a number of factors including its philosophical roots and most particularly its perspective of the person (Maslow, 1990, Rogers, 1980, Cain, 2008). The counselling relationship is one of the key, if not the primary factor, underlying therapeutic effectiveness, (Grencavage & Norcross, 1990; Gelso and Carter, 1985; Agnew- Davies, 1999). The rationale for this study is to gain a greater understanding of the impact of the former on the latter and how this is manifested in the counselling relationship in the Humanistic tradition and its core constituent approaches. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To describe what constitutes the Humanistic tradition in counselling and psychotherapy.
2. To identify the essence and characteristics of the unique perspective of the person in the Humanistic tradition.
3. To describe and understand the counselling relationship and the counselling space in this tradition by reference to this perspective of the person;
4. To identify how this perspective impacts on the relationship in the three core approaches in this tradition.

5.3 Approach and Methodology

In order to consider the proposition, the study examined each aspect of the proposition including the Humanistic tradition, its perspective on the person, the nature and characteristics of this perspective, the counselling relationship and the counselling space in general and by reference to the approaches within this tradition. The study presents a discussion of the findings that emerged from this examination in order to assess the validity of the proposition. A theoretical qualitative research strategy was used to undertake this study as it sought to explore and understand the proposition. A hermeneutic methodology, based on description, analysis and most importantly interpretation, was used to explore a number of texts that related to each aspect of the proposition. This methodology took into account the Humanistic perspective of the researcher while the quality of the study was addressed by following McLeod's (2006) suggestion that the qualitative researcher should focus on their rhetorical skills to present the interpretation leaving it to the reader to form their own opinion on what is

being offered. The ethical dimension of the study focused on ensuring that study was conducted to the highest standard so that the researcher could meet his obligation to his colleagues and the profession (Gillespie, 1994).

5.4 Structure of the Study

The remainder of this study is structured as follows:

Chapter 6 presents a more detailed exposition of the approach and methodology used in this study.

Chapter 7 investigates the Humanistic tradition, its philosophical roots and its relationship to psychotherapy.

Chapter 8 examines the counselling relationship its development, selected models of this relationship and the correlation between the Humanistic tradition and the counselling relationship.

Chapter 9 explores the counselling relationship by reference to three main Humanistic approaches.

Chapter 10 presents a discussion of the key findings from the study.

Chapter 11 sets out the conclusions from the study and suggests further areas for research.

6. Approach and Methodology

6.1 Introduction

The choice of research design strategy is very much determined by the nature of the research question that is being addressed (Cooper, 2008). Quantitative research and related methods are more suited to studies in which a particular question or issue is being examined by reference to a large group of people and where statistical methods can be used to analyse the data (McLeod, 2008). Typically, it involves examining the interaction between a set of variables and determining cause and effect between these variables. The instruments used include questionnaires, rating scales and surveys. Statistical analysis tools and coding systems are typically used to support this type of research (ibid). This approach was not considered appropriate in this case as this study was concerned with exploration and understanding and not statistical analysis of large volumes of information.

Dallos and Vetere (2005) maintain that a qualitative approach is most appropriate when the *“research question is oriented towards the exploration and understanding of meaning, rather than the direct testing of a concept or a hypothesis”*, (2005, p. 49). McLeod identifies the primary aim of qualitative research as being *“to develop an understanding of how the world is constructed”* (2006, page 2). Consequently, qualitative research is more suitable when the question being researched relates to non numeric data and focuses on a more in-depth analysis of the issue being researched rather than on its breadth (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2010). This enables the researcher to gain a better understanding of the situation under consideration and how it is constructed. It provides a level of focus and depth in relation to particular situations that is not available in quantitative research where the focus tends to be more on generalities (McLeod, 2006). Cooper describes qualitative research as *“language based in which experiences, perceptions and observations are not reduced to numerical form”* (Cooper, 2008, p. 8).

6.2 Research Strategy

This study was concerned with exploration and understanding. Consequently a theoretical qualitative research strategy was selected as the most appropriate in this instance based on the review of the literature set out in the previous paragraphs.

McLeod suggests that there exists a generic qualitative research method “*out of which different traditions (such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, ethnography and grounded theory) have emphasised particular aspects for their own purposes*” (2006, page 130). He goes on to outline the content of this generic method in terms of suite of activities and a repertoire of data collection methods that can be deployed by the researcher. This facilitates the *researcher - as- bricoleur* so that they can be more flexible in selecting a method or a combination of methods that is most suitable to the particular study while at the same time ensuring that it meets the criteria for ensuring the quality of the research. In choosing a qualitative research strategy, the researcher is cognisant that such a strategy is “*generally considered to be the optimal staging ground within which to situate most person-centered inquiry*” (Schneider, Bugental and Pierson, 2001, p. 228). It is this type of inquiry which is the primary focus of this study.

The researcher is following a long tradition of using this type of research strategy, albeit on a limited scale in this instance, in humanistic psychology (Wertz (2001)). In a review of the qualitative research tradition and its relationship to humanistic psychology, Wertz notes that Dilthey originally articulated the view that the research approach adopted for physical sciences was not necessarily appropriate for the human sciences quoting his famous dictum “*We explain nature, we understand psychic life*” (p. 233). Wertz continues by noting that Dilthey’s approach reversed the research hierarchy by placing qualitative methods first as he considered that they were “*a preferred way of knowing psychological subject matter*” (ibid), a view which is echoed by Cooper (2009) who notes that the humanistic values of the therapeutic profession places a question mark over the value of what he terms “*nomothetic data*”, i.e. data pertaining to general laws. McLeod, in contrast, makes the point in opening a symposium on qualitative approaches to research in counselling and psychotherapy that “*the qualitative research expedition has finally arrived at the clearing marked 'counselling'*” (1996). He continued his address by identifying the challenges that face researchers using a qualitative strategy in the area of counselling and psychotherapy including the challenge of methodological choice which is of particular relevance in this instance. McLeod notes the constructivist nature of the human sciences also pose a challenge in that within these sciences there are few certainties. This point is also taken up by Wertz (2001) who notes the emergence of social constructivism which gave rise to a number of qualitative research methodologies that were adapted from other

disciplines to meet the needs of research in counselling and psychotherapy including hermeneutic methods (McLeod, 1996). In considering the question of humanistic research methods, Wertz (2001), again quoting Dilthey, notes the importance of description and analysis in qualitative research in the Humanistic tradition.

Research Methodology

- 6.3** In selecting a research methodology for this study, the researcher took into account the literature and observations set out in the preceding paragraphs. The methodology that was used in this study was in essence hermeneutic in the sense that it involved interpretation of texts (or parts thereof) with both description and analysis being used as part of the methodological process. Hermeneutics is defined by McLeod, referencing Taylor, as “*an act of interpretation which brings to light an underlying coherence or sense within the action, behaviour or utterances of a person or group*” (2006, page 22). He goes on to further expand on this definition by noting that hermeneutics is an interpretative act that has “*as its goal the achievement of understanding*” (ibid). The object of study may be “*speech or actions, a written text, a work of art or any other form of cultural artefact*” (1998). Cushman in commenting on his use of this approach in his own work refers to what he terms the hermeneutic circle which involved “*tacking back between the part and the whole*” so as to provide, in his case, a context for psychotherapy which he maintains is not transhistorical or apolitical in nature but rather must be seen and studied “*in the world in which it was born and in which it currently resides*” (1995, p. 22). In making this assertion Cushman refers to Heidegger and Gadamer, who he maintains “*argued that it is not possible to exist as a human being outside of a cultural context*” (p. 20). While accepting Cushman’s general proposition, the limited nature of this study did not permit an extensive culturally historic perspective to be adopted in this instance. However, given the importance of describing and understanding what constitutes the Humanistic tradition, the counselling relationship and the approaches within this tradition the researcher considered it necessary to provide a level of cultural context, most particularly philosophical, as this was considered a critical factor in the emergence of this tradition. In adopting this methodology the researcher acknowledges that the use of the hermeneutical approach in this instance is limited and specific recognising that this methodology has more extensive and widespread use in a variety of fields including philosophy. Indeed Saas (1989) has argued that there are significant differences between what he terms

ontological hermeneutics as described by Heidegger and Gadamer and humanistic psychology as developed by Allport, Rogers and Maslow. The core of Saas' argument appears to be that the hermeneutical perspective of human existence sets the person in what he terms "*the communal, social or traditional context*" as compared to the "*humanistic glorification of subjectivity and individuality*" (p. 35). In essence this makes the argument that a person cannot be viewed in isolation but rather must be seen within the context of what could be described as relationship to self, other, society and their historic tradition. This was considered an important factor and was taken into account in the methodological approach adopted to this study.

Finally, in relation to the methodological process McLeod (2006) distinguishes hermeneutics from simple interpretation by noting that the former is a culturally and historically informed method. It takes place within the context of the tradition in which the action, behaviour or utterance takes place. In addition, he also maintains that to work properly as a system for producing "*reliable and practical knowledge*", the data which is interpreted must be publically accessible. This study meets both of these criteria.

6.4 Selection of Core Texts

The choice of texts for consideration was based on the following "*signposts*", which was the approach that was used by Cushman (1995):

1. The Humanistic tradition.
2. The perspective on the person within this tradition.
3. The counselling relationship and the counselling space.
4. The therapeutic approaches within this tradition.

These signposts were consistent with and reflect the objectives of the study and so were deemed appropriate to determine the choice of texts used in this study.

6.5 Perspective of the Researcher

Cushman makes a persuasive argument in relation to the role and involvement of the researcher in a hermeneutic study noting that Gadamer has argued that "*the research agenda is always framed by the shared understanding and limits of the researcher's clearing*" (1996, p.22) which in essence refers to the researcher's particular culture and tradition. The relationship between the interpreter and what is being interpreted, or the researcher and the text in this instance, is well articulated by Friedman when he notes,

referencing Gadamer, *that the passage of time not only changes perspectives but connects them* (2000, p. 3). He goes to compare the meaning of a text to a piece of music that comes alive to each listener anew. Therefore, meaning is both old and new, old in the sense of the intention of the original author, new in the sense that the reader (or researcher) of a text brings it to life by reference to their own tradition, history and perspective through the task of interpretation. Consequently, in using this methodology, the researcher is not an objective observer once removed but rather is an intrinsic part of the research process. Martin Buber addressed this issue in relation to interpretation when he observed that

“I know that no interpretation, including my own coincides, with the original meaning of the text. I know that my interpreting, like everyone else’s is conditioned through my being. But if I attend as faithfully as I can.....I have found something. And if I show what I have found I guide him who lets himself be guided to the reality of the text.” (Anderson and Cissna, 1997,p. 1)

From a different but complimentary perspective, McLeod (1996) and Moustakas (2001) each in their own way make a compelling case for more direct involvement of the researcher in the research with the former maintaining that it is *“necessary for qualitative researchers to engage in reflexive examination of the assumptions and biases that they bring to a piece of research”* (p. 309). McLeod continues by observing that all qualitative approaches share, to greater or lesser extent, a constructionist approach to knowledge. Constructivism maintains that individuals (and indeed groups and cultures) *“construct the inter-subjective reality that they experience”* (ibid) a point that is echoed by Wertz who noted that during the second half of the 20th century constructivism gained *“greater authority in opposition to the dominant natural science approach”* (2001, p. 240). Knowledge that is created in this manner is, in essence, created from the perspective of the creator, in this instance the researcher. Moustakas in describing his heuristic methodology argues for what Wertz describes as *“passionate indwelling and first person involvement on the part of the researcher”*, (2001, p.241). At a practical level Moustakas questions the absence of the use of the word *“I”* in research studies where this is appropriate arguing that from the outset heuristic research *“involves self-search, self-dialogue and self-discovery”* (2001, p. 263). In keeping with the spirit of these writers, the researcher in this instance wishes to acknowledge that he practices within the Humanistic tradition.

6.6 Quality of the Research

The researcher acknowledges the concept of trustworthiness and the four related criteria that were identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as important in evaluating the quality of theoretical qualitative research. This involved, inter alia, establishing credibility as an evaluation criterion. This criterion, as described by Lincoln and Guba, is satisfied in the sense described by Buber above. The researcher presents his interpretation and it is for the reader to determine their response to this interpretation. This point is well made by McLeod who suggests that the researcher who adopts a qualitative approach should not be overly concerned with the evidence and paper trail as in the case of the quantitative approach but rather *“concentrate his / her rhetorical skills on conveying just what the interpretation is that they are offering; readers can make up their own minds how useful it is for them”*, (2006, page 25). However, this does not release the researcher from the obligation of striving to ensure that their research methodology is as rigorous as possible and that the approach followed is set out as clearly as possible. This is what the researcher has sought to do in this study.

6.7 Ethical Issues

McLeod (1996) maintains that three key principles of ethical research are informed consent, confidentiality and avoidance of harm while Gillespie (1994) maintains that ethically researchers *“must try to minimise risks to participants, colleagues and society while attempting to maximise the quality of information they produce”* (p. 1). In this instance the study did not have to address the issue of informed consent or confidentiality as the subject matter of the study was publically available information. However, the researcher did recognise and acknowledge his obligation to his colleagues and the profession to ensure that the study was carried out to the highest standard. The researcher made every effort in this study to meet this obligation.

7. The Humanistic Tradition

7.1 Introduction

The Humanistic tradition in the general sense of the term is what Fiero refers to as “*humankind’s cultural legacy - the sum total of the significant ideas and achievements handed down from generation to generation*” (2006, p. xiv). At one level this is a reasonable but rather simple description of what is and has been the complex, multilayered responses of human beings to the environment in which the race has developed, survived and prospered. The major challenges that have been presented, some natural and many man made, have resulted in responses being developed in the areas of philosophy, science, technology and religion to ensure the survival of the race, so well described by Wilbur as “*the beautiful, multicultural, many hued-rainbow of humanity* (2001, p. xv). These responses, in their many and varied forms, have sought to address fundamental issues such as disease and death and are characterised by mankind’s attempt to understand our role in the universe and how we can live in harmony with our natural environment (Fiero, p. xiv). From a practical perspective, these responses have been classified into broad categories and include what is described as the physical sciences and the human sciences (Moss, 2001). It is the latter that this study is concerned as it addresses the individual and collective responses to our *Being* in the world (Tillich, 2000; May 1994).

This study adopts a broad view of the Humanistic tradition arguing that to fully understand the perspective of the person that has evolved and developed in this tradition it is necessary to understand the historical and the philosophical context of this development. It is contended that each era has contributed to the development of this perspective and to understand this in the context of what is described by Maslow (1999) as the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy it is necessary to examine how our understanding of what it means to be human has evolved and how this has transitioned from a philosophical context to a practical therapeutic approach (Cushman, 1995). This point is addressed by Cohn in a discussion on the development of Existential therapy when he maintains that “*All therapy has a philosophical aspect in that it is concerned with the experience of the world, of others in the world, of ourselves in the world*” (2002, p. 114).

7.2 The Question of Terminology – The Person

Before considering the evolution of what it means to be human, it is considered appropriate to clarify the meaning of the term person as it is used in this study. The Martin Buber- Carl Rogers dialogue provides a useful starting point from which to consider this issue (Anderson and Cissna, 1997). Both of these seminal figures, Buber the philosopher and Rogers the therapist, agreed that a person is one who is in “*real contact, in real reciprocity of the world*” (ibid, p. 103). This part of the dialogue was prompted by an article that Rogers had written, which is now chapter eight in *On Becoming a Person* (1991) in which, quoting Kierkegaard, Rogers refers to the concept “*to be the self which one truly is*” and maintains that it is inherent in the nature of the person to move “*toward being, knowingly and acceptingly, the process which he inwardly and actually is*” (ibid, p. 175). Polkinghorne in discussing the self in Humanistic Psychology notes that “*the self is this natural tendency or force to actualise the fullness of an individual’s personhood*” (2001, p. 82). It is not a static being, a mind or a thing but rather a “*propensity, pure process, pure subject, I*” (ibid). Rogers’ considered this as a natural process while Maslow and other more existentially influenced theorists believed that personal courage and will were required to actualise one’s potential (ibid). The meaning of courage in relation to *Being* is comprehensively explored by Tillich who maintains that “*the courage to be is the ethical act in which man affirms his own being in spite of those elements of his existence which conflict with his essential self-affirmation*” (2000, p. 3). Polkinghorne goes on to make an important distinction, between the actual self and the self-concept, the latter describing a person’s understanding of who and what they are (2001, p.83). A person acts and responds on the basis of this understanding, i.e. one’s perception of reality rather than actual reality. This distinction is important as bringing the actual self and the self concept into alignment allows for the actualisation process to operate optimally (Cain, 2008).

7.3 Early Perspectives of the Person

In a review of what he terms “*a prehistory and history*” of the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy, Moss (2001 p. 6) presents a historic context for the development of this tradition. This review shows that the concept of the nature of man has been addressed by seminal figures in philosophy from Socrates, Plato and Aristotle to the founding fathers of the Christianity including St. Paul, St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas

through to the period Renaissance and the Reformation led by Luther. In essence what emerges from this review is the sense of the person which can be characterised as ethical and essentially good. Aristotle in particular “*gave special place in his philosophy to certain kind of change, namely self-realisation, growth, and development*” (Solomon and Higgins, 1996, p. 58). In essence Aristotle maintained that there was purpose to human life and similar to his “*philosophical grandfather*” Socrates this purpose was to realise one’s potential and live the virtuous life in accordance with reason (ibid). Moss noted the impact of Christianity referencing St. Augustine who in his celebrated Confessions described the meaningful life but noted that this life of ultimate value cannot be achieved without God (1973). The influence of Christianity in terms of the nature of man and his dependence on God for meaning highlights the “*finitude of the human condition*” (Cottingham, 2008, p. 778) which, as we shall see, is an important aspect of modern philosophical thought most particularly in relation to Existentialism. Erasmus the leading Christian humanist of the 16th century anticipated some of the core concepts of the modern Humanistic tradition when he emphasised the importance of the human individual maintaining that “*Man stands before God as an individual and takes counsel only of God and his own conscience. Man’s responsibility and ability to live his own life receives all the emphasis*” (Moss, 2001, p. 10). The perspective of the person that emerges from this review of philosophy from the early Greeks to the end of the 18th century, as we shall see, resonates with and connects at a fundamental level with the perspective that underpins the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy.

While the influence of these early thinkers was considerable and still continues to this day it is the period where the question of *Being-in-the world* and existence comes to the fore that is of most relevant in terms of the Humanistic tradition in general and in psychotherapy in particular. In moving to this period beginning in the 19th century, the impact and influence of major figures such as Descartes, Kant and Hegel is noted and acknowledged.

7.4 The Emergence of Modern Existentialism – Being and Existence

Soren Kierkegaard who lived the first half of the 19th century was the first in a line of seminal figures in philosophy most notably Nietzsche and Heidegger and more recently Sartre, Camus and Tillich to address the issue of existence and what it means to be an

person and who it may be said brought a psychological dimension to their thinking (Tillich, 2000; van Deurzen, 2010). It should be noted at the outset that Kierkegaard was a devout Christian so that his philosophy should be considered in this context. He was of the view that we cannot know or prove God's existence but it is a matter of choosing to believe, it was a matter of faith (Solomon and Higgins, 1996). This theistic view of existence compares to the atheistic Existentialism which emerged most strongly in Europe in the 20th century. These two conflicting perspectives continue today in Existential psychotherapy in particular and in the Humanistic tradition in general (Fiero, 2006; Schneider, Bugental and Pierson, 2001) and are reflected in the connections between Maslow and Transpersonal Psychology (Rowan, 2005) in the fields of psychology and psychotherapy.

Kierkegaard's reaction to the focus on knowledge and system by Kant and Hegel respectively, his concern with existence and his desire to reconcile the Christian with the human mode of existence is best summarised in his own words

"My principle thought was that in our age, because of the great increase of knowledge, we had forgotten what it means to exist and what inwardness signifies.....if men had forgotten what it means to exist religiously, they had doubtless also forgotten what it means to exist as human beings: this must therefore be set forth" (Gardiner, 2002, p. 39).

Kierkegaard made it very clear from the outset that he was concerned with the individual, the "I", the doer who in so doing exercised personal choice, individual freedom and responsibility. In Kierkegaard's world this doing is characterised by commitment and passion which is why as a committed Christian he had such difficulty with the established church (ibid). The dynamic nature of the person described by Kierkegaard conveys an essential concept of his philosophy, this is the concept of a person becoming but what he becomes is his own responsibility. The essence of this notion is well described by Gardiner when he observes that Kierkegaard's writings *"portray the structure of the human personality in dynamic and volitional terms"*, (2002, p. 110). This notion of potential and choice is constant, pervasive and endemic to the human condition and as a consequence gives rise to what Kierkegaard described as Angst (anxiety or dread) which is a central concept in psychotherapy of all traditions and Existential psychotherapy in particular (van Deurzen, 2005). Anxiety is not about

something specific, as in the case of fear, rather it is related to “*something that is nothing*” (Gardiner, 2002, p. 113) or as succinctly observed by Tillich, “*anxiety is the state in which a Being is aware of its possible Nonbeing*”, (2000, p. 35). This possibility of *Nonbeing* is fundamental to the Existential philosophy. It is a given of human existence and is present in everyday life (Yalom, 1980). By way of illustration it is given practical expression in bereavement counselling (Worden, 2002). Another key proposition of Kierkegaard’s was the idea of relational truth which in summary maintains that it is how a person perceives a person, thing or event that is important as far as they are concerned. This may or may not coincide with the objective truth of the matter as meaning in essence is based on personal perception which, as noted above, is what Humanistic psychology describes as self-concept (May, 1994; Polkinghorne, 2001; Cain, 2008). Relational truth refers directly to the client therapist relationship in the sense that the latter is not an objective participant in the relationship but is directly involved in a real relationship. However, this direct involvement does not impair the therapist’s “*scientific observation*” (ibid, p. 72) but rather it requires this involvement in order to understand what is happening in the relationship. Kierkegaard’s influence and his key ideas on the individual existence, choice, freedom, passion, commitment and anxiety carried forward into the 20th century and, as will be shown, have had a fundamental influence on the perspective of the person in the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy.

The second key figure of relevance to this study in the 19th century is Friedrich Nietzsche who was described by Freud as a man “*who had a more penetrating knowledge of himself than any other man that had ever lived*”, (May, 1994, p. 83). His writings have impacted on the perspective of the person and, through his influence on the development of Existential philosophy; he has contributed to the development of the Humanistic tradition (Cain, 2008). While the writings of Kierkegaard must be considered in the light of his Christianity, the opposite is certainly true of Nietzsche. He had a fundamental difficulty with Christianity and in particular its perspective of suffering and the concept of sin and salvation believing that this in effect disempowered the individual (Tanner, 2000). This he contrasted to the ancient Greeks personified by pre- Socratic philosophers who faced suffering by living life to the full accepting that human tragedy was inevitable part of the human condition. In this sense he favoured Dionysus to Apollo as the former epitomised what it meant to live life through

passionate participation (Kaufmann, 2000). His view of man is expressed in his concept of the *Übermensch*, the Superman, which is what he urges humans to aspire to rather than simply being “*human-all-to-human*”, which for Nietzsche was personified by compliant obedience and depending on God for salvation and meaning. Consequently, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* he has the Madman proclaim that God is dead (Nietzsche, 1969). In essence this means that in Nietzsche’s view man’s *raison d’être* is not to reach a spiritual nirvana but to live this life to the full with passion and in so doing honour his essential drive to achieve his full potential (Wicks, 2002). This drive is expressed most clearly in his concept of the “*ontological quality of Being*”, where *Being* is an active verb rather than a noun. He believed that *Being* was superior to the notion of *becoming*, a concept he felt was “*hollow, flat and illusory*” (May, 1994, p. 81).

By way of contrast, a crucial development in the defining the perspective of the person during this period was Freud’s concept of the psyche as consisting of the id, ego and super ego and his theory regarding the importance of the unconscious. Freud maintained that the sexual drive or libido and the pleasure principle governed human behaviour. Mental disorders, neurosis and psychosis, resulted from the failure during infancy to resolve the Oedipus complex. May has argued that Freud, though ambivalent towards philosophy, had much in common with Kierkegaard and Nietzsche in the sense that all three addressed issues of anxiety, despair and fragmented personality. He maintains that many of ideas which underpin psychoanalysis are to be found in the writing of these philosophers most particularly Nietzsche. Freud’s genius lay in his ability to translate “*these depth-psychological insights into the natural scientific framework of his day*”, (May, 1994, p. 84). However, May argues that in so doing Freud focused on the “*homo natura*” and in Existential terms addressed the *Umwelt*, the world of man in his biological environment but not but not the *Mitwelt*, man in relationship with others and *Eigenwelt*, man in relationship to himself (ibid, p. 85). Freud, May argues, referencing Tillich, adopted the concept of *technical reason* which he contrasts to the *ecstatic reason* as used in the Enlightenment. The former is “*married to technique.....reason as opposed to existence*” while the latter is broader in meaning and embraces such concepts as ability to grasp the whole, intuition, insight, ethics and justice (ibid). It is May’s contention that present day Existential psychotherapy combines both Freudian scientific technical reason and the deeper

broader view of man as the *Being* as described by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. This is an important point because the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy emerged partly as a reaction to this what its founders considered was the limited view of the person in Freudian psychoanalysis. However, May (ibid) has acknowledged the debt that humanistic psychology owes to Freud whom he describes as a naturalistic humanist.

The 20th century is characterised by many seminal events not least two World Wars, space flight and the accelerated pace of technological development. It is also the century of the development of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. Existentialism as a movement, a philosophy and probably more importantly for this study, as an attitude (Tillich, 2000, Fiero, 2006) came to the fore during the last century and its influence can be found in all areas of life including art, literature and psychotherapy. The concept of *Being* which was central to the philosophy of both Nietzsche and Kierkegaard was addressed in much greater detail by Heidegger. Although both had a clear psychological dimension to their work, Heidegger's engagement with psychotherapy was more direct and complete most particularly through his relationship initially with Binswanger and subsequently and most importantly with Boss, both of whom were practicing psychiatrists. It formed the basis of modern Existential therapy which is one of the main approaches that define and constitute the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy. It also influenced the founding fathers of this tradition Rogers (1980) and Maslow (1999).

Heidegger combined both existentialism and phenomenology, as developed by Husserl, to describe the human person as "*Being-in-the-world*" or *Dasein* (Cohn, 2002, p. 24). Heidegger's concern with *Being* was both ontological in the sense that it is concerned human existence and the givens of the human condition (e.g. embodiment, language, mortality) and ontic responses to these givens which are specific to each individual and which they are free to choose (ibid, p. 109). This is the ever present link between the ontological and the ontic (ibid). For Heidegger "*Being-in-the-world*" has a number of distinguishing and defining characteristics including its understanding and awareness of itself, that its essence lies in existence (*Dasein*) and that it has potential and possibilities which it alone can realise or not realise through choice (Sartre, 2010). The concept of *Being* also allows for the inevitability of *Nonbeing* which is when human beings become aware of their mortality (May, 1994; Cohn, 2002). This *Nonbeing* which is an essential element of *Being* gives rise to "*the natural anxiety of man as man*" which is

the essence of existence (May, 2001 p. 35). However, this awareness of the inevitability of *Nonbeing* and its consequent sense of meaninglessness can be addressed in the secular sense by living creatively and finding projects or undertakings which give meaning to life (Sartre, 2010). Another integral element of "*Being-in-the-world*" is the concept of "*Being with*" described by Cohn as "*our inevitable Being with others*" which in essence describes the person in terms of human relationships (2002, p. 105). Similarly Sartre maintains that "*the other is indispensable to my existence*" (ibid, p.53) which is consistent with the Existentialist idea that being oneself is "*an act of separation in order to make contact*" (Philipsson, 2009, p. 5). This concept of "*Being with*" has important implications for the counselling relationship which are discussed further in Chapter 8.

In recognising the increasing importance of Existentialism in the 20th century mention must be made of an important distinction between the key thinkers in this movement as it has implications for the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy. In general terms Sartre (2005) draws the distinction between Christian Existentialists and Atheistic Existentialists noting that the commonality between both groups is the concept mentioned previously that existence precedes essence, a person is free to choose who he or she becomes. In the case of the former this choice is made within the context of a belief in the existence of God while in the case of the latter this is not the case. This conditionality would suggest to the researcher that the absolute freedom of the atheists is not available to the Christian so that the commonality identified by Sartre is qualified in this very crucial sense. Tillich in considering this aspect of Existentialism notes what he describes as the absence of the "*mystical concept*" in Sartre's more radical existentialism. This enables him to follow through on Heidegger's existentialist analysis so that he can proclaim "*existence precedes existence*" without reference to concept of man being God's creation but rather "*man creates what he is*"(2000, p.150).

In summary, the perspective of the person that emerges from this historic review of the broader Humanistic tradition is one of an ontological being in the world whose nature is characterised by awareness and understanding of its *Being* and the inevitability of *Non-being*. The person is free to choose their essence and to respond ontically to individual experience. To exercise this choice requires both courage and will. In so doing the person accepts responsibility for their choices and makes these choices and exercises this responsibility through being in relationship with others. The person can be

considered as either existing within a broader spiritual community or within the human community simpliciter.

7.5 The Evolution of the Humanistic Tradition in Psychotherapy

The worldview that emerges from this review forms the basis of the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy given its influence on Rogers, Maslow, Perls, Allport, Bugental, Yalom to name but a few. While Maslow is credited as first describing the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy (Maslow, 1999), Cain suggests that the origin of humanistic psychotherapies might more correctly be dated to 1940 when Rogers advocated “*the newer approach*” to therapy as one which “*relies more heavily on the individual drive toward growth, health and adjustment*” (Cain, 2008, p. 3). In essence the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy encapsulates this newer approach suggested by Rogers. In reflecting on the origins of this tradition, its debt to humanistic psychology must be acknowledged as indeed must the influence of Alfred Adler, Otto Rank and Carl Jung (Moss, 2001). However, it is Maslow who is most often credited with the emergence of this tradition as the “*Third Force*” in psychotherapy in contrast to the psychoanalytical and the behaviourists’ traditions. Maslow “*envisioned humanistic psychology as a psychology of the whole person based on his study of healthy, fully functioning, creative individuals*” (Moss, 2001, p. 15). He identified a number of like minded individuals who in essence shared a common perspective of the person (Cushman, 1995; McLeod, 2009; Moss, 2001; Raskin, Rogers and Witty). Robbins describes what he terms the four essential principles that characterise the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy namely:

- “1. *The experiencing person is of primary interest.*
2. *Human choice, creativity, and self-actualisation are the preferred topics of investigation.*
3. *Meaningfulness must precede objectivity in the selection of research problems.*
4. *Ultimate value is placed on the dignity of the person*” (1999, p. 10).

The Existential-Phenomenological worldview permeates these principles.

The Humanistic tradition consists of a board set of values and philosophical assumptions rather than a single coherent approach (McLeod, 2009). The more important of these characteristics are outlined in the following paragraphs (Cain, 2008).

Therapists in the Humanistic tradition believe that each person has the right and capability to determine what is best for them and, consequently, they work in a collaborative manner with clients so as to provide the latter with maximum freedom to reach their potential. This involves respecting the clients perception of their own reality so that they can construct what is meaningful for them.

Cain notes that “*sixty years of practice and research in humanistic therapies have established the validity of the powerful growth-inducing power of the therapeutic relationship*” (2008, p. 7). This highlights the importance of the relationship in the Humanistic tradition and it is in engaging in this relationship that the core conditions defined by Rogers (1980) are manifested. The counselling relationship provides that “*definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes*” (Thorne, 2003, p. 27). The counselling relationship is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

Phenomenology as developed by Husserl and adopted by Heidegger is an important concept in the Humanistic tradition. This concept involves considering the essence of “*the fundamental categories of human existence*” without concern for their causes (Cain, 2008, p. 8). In so far as possible, the therapist suspends their beliefs and preconceptions about the client’s experiences which is described rather than explained. In so describing the therapist recognises that the client is the expert on their own lives (Cain, 2008). The difficulty for the therapist in suspending their beliefs should not be underestimated and the researcher would question this requirement in the sense of the impact this would have on the real person being present in the relationship as discussed in chapter 8.

Other key values that define the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy include empathy on the part of the therapist which is critical in understanding the nature of the client’s experience and communicating that understanding to the client; accepting and acknowledging the importance of emotion in human behaviour; the construction of meaning by the client relative to his / her own life based on experience and potential; holism which sees the person as an interconnected mind / body functioning, dynamic whole or gestalt; anxiety as a natural part of the human condition that must accepted

with its attendant limitations most notably the reality of death; within the limits of the human condition humanistic therapists recognise that freedom to choose and responsibility for their choices are essential characteristics of the person (Cain, 2008).

Bugental maintains that the following five basic propositions underpin and inform the Humanistic tradition:

- “1. *Human beings as human, supersede the sum of their parts. They cannot be reduced to components.*
2. *Human beings have their existence in a uniquely human context, as well as in cosmic ecology.*
3. *Human beings are aware and aware of being aware; that is, they are conscious. Human consciousness always includes an awareness of ones self in the context of other people.*
4. *Human being have some choice and, with that responsibility.*
5. *Human beings are intentional, aim at goals, are aware that they cause future events, and seek meaning and value creativity”* (Yalom, 1980, p. 18).

These propositions provide an insight on the perspective of the person that underpins the approaches within this tradition and keep alive the original vision of the founders of this movement in relation to “*the full breath of human nature and human potential*” (Moss, 2001, p. 16; McLeod, 2009).

7.6 The Unique Perspective of the Person – Philosophical and Therapeutic

The Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy emerged in the middle of the 20th century, its worldview being heavily influenced by the writings of Kierkegaard and Heidegger. It was a reaction to what its founders believed was the limited and mechanistic view of the person of the other two major prevailing therapeutic traditions at the time, Freudian psychoanalysis and behaviourism of Skinner and Watson (Cushman, 1995; Moss, 2001; Maslow, 1999). The tradition emerged following the turmoil and uncertainty of the two world wars and the rise of the USSR, the threat of atomic war and annihilation of the species. This gave rise to a sense of existential anxiety and disillusionment described by the existentialists Sartre and Camus (Cushman, 1995) who some maintained

promoted the more negative aspects of existentialism. In contrast to these developments Humanistic psychology, apolitical in nature, proposed a more optimistic perspective of the person (Cushman, 1995, p. 242). This perspective can be considered as a composite of what Maslow described as a self actualising organism and which Rogers described as the fully functioning person. The former Maslow described as *“the desire for self-fulfilment, namely the tendency for the person to be actualised in what he is potentiality.....to become everything one is capable of becoming”* (1943, p. 383). The fully functioning person is *“one who has an underlying and instinctive movement towards the constructive accomplishment of its inherent potential”* (Thorne, 2004, p. 148). This process of movement is the direction that the person will choose when it is *“ inwardly free to move in any direction.....where the person comes to be—in awareness— what he is in experience”* (Rogers, 1991, p. 104). The basic nature of Rogers’ person is one when functioning freely is constructive and trustworthy. In summary, he describes the nature of the person to be

“sensitive, open, realistic, inner directed member of the human species, adapting with courage and imagination to the complexities of the changing situation..... taking continual steps towards being, in awareness and in expression, that which is congruent with one’s total organismic reactions” (1991, p. 181).

The perspective of the person that emerges from the Humanistic tradition is one of an organism that endeavours to find meaning and fulfilment in the world through its inherent tendency to reach its potential in relationship with others.

While acknowledging the positives in Humanistic tradition, Cushman is critical of its depiction of the self claiming that it is overly positive and is *“subjective, often antitraditional, ahistorical and preoccupied with individualist concerns such as personal choice, self –realisation, and the apolitical development of the personal potential”* (1995, p. 243). In this instance Cushman is concerned with the construction of the self in terms of political structure and the materialism of the Western society. From this perspective there may be some validity to his criticism. However, the researcher would argue that the roots of the perspective of the person that is central to the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy can be traced to perspective of the person in the broader Humanistic tradition and most particularly the Existentialist tradition that has been outlined in the preceding sections in this chapter. The emergence of the

Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy represents a transition of the philosophical perspective to the therapeutic perspective of the person that began with Kierkegaard and which came to its fullest fruition in Heidegger (Cohn, 2002). This relationship is acknowledged in the writings of the key figures who were central to the development of this tradition including Rogers (1991), Maslow (1999), May (1994). It is also important to note that similar to Existentialism where there is a recognised division between what can be termed the theistic and the atheistic Existentialists as noted by Sartre, the Humanistic tradition is a broad church in the sense that it includes those who would acknowledge a spiritual dimension to the person (Maslow, 1976; Thorne 2003; van Deurzen, 2010) and those who would not (Yalom, 1980). In the case of the former there is developing relationship with Transpersonal Psychology as described by Rowan (2005).

7.7 The Humanistic Tradition – The Blurring of Boundaries

As has been noted previously the perspective of the person that underpins the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy, while located within humanistic-existential tradition, was also “*a reaction, in part, to the deterministic and pathologising nature of Freudian psychology and the mechanistic assumptions of behaviourism*” (Elkins, 2009, p. 1). In essence a key differentiator between these traditions was more positive perspective of the person proposed by those within the Humanistic tradition as compared to the perceived negative perspective first proposed by Freud and the “*human engineering*” theories of Skinner (Fiero, 2006). This is perhaps an oversimplification necessitated by the limitations of this study and does not necessarily reflect the actual position today. However, it is this very positive perspective that is one of the main criticisms that is levelled at the Humanistic tradition and its constituent therapeutic approaches (Woolfe, 2000). It has been claimed that this perspective downplays the role of the unconscious in the human condition and does not adequately address the dark or shadow side of the person (Cushman, 1995). A full consideration of the criticisms of the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy is beyond the scope of this study, but the researcher would make the observation that perhaps the gap between the three traditions in relation to this perspective is not as great as was originally the case as evidenced by the developments in the role of Mindfulness in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Segal, Williams and Teasdale, 2002) and the influence of Humanistic thinking on Kohut’s Self Psychology and on contemporary Object Relations as

described by Winnicott (Elkins, 2008; Robbins, 1999; Sass, 1989). In addition, Thorne in discussing the criticisms of the Rogerian approach from the psychoanalytical and the behavioural traditions most particularly in relation to its overly positive perspective maintains that Rogers did recognise and accept “*the reality of cognitive conditioning and the existence of the unconscious*” but not at the expense of a person’s freedom to trust their own subjective experience (Thorne, 2003, p. 87).

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter of the study has traced the development the Humanistic tradition in general and this particular tradition in psychotherapy. It has described the unique perspective of the person in this tradition that originally emerged from philosophy and how this was transitioned in the field of psychotherapy. Before considering the affect of this perspective of the person on the counselling relationship within the major approaches in this tradition it is necessary to consider the essence and nature of this relationship within the broader Humanistic tradition.

8. The Counselling Relationship

8.1 Introduction

The counselling relationship is where all theories are tested and brought to life. The second dimension of the research question relates to how the perspective of the person within the Humanistic tradition impacts on the therapeutic relationship, which is the de facto channel through which the counselling process takes place, a place and process so well described by *Lao-tse*:

“It is as though he listened

and such listening as his enfolds us in a silence

in which at last we begin to hear

what we are meant to be.” (Rogers 1980, p. 41)

There are many definitions and descriptions of the counselling relationship. In keeping with the importance of the relational nature of the person within the Humanistic tradition Kennedy and Charles’ observation that a therapist “*must be in relationship to the persons*” with whom they work (1991, p. 24) is worth noting. For the purposes of this study two descriptions are of particular interest. Corry describes the counselling relationship as

“a process of engagement between two persons, both of whom are bound to change.....it is a collaborative process that involves both counsellor and client in co-constructing solutions” (2005. p. 5).

An alternative definition is provided by Sexton and Whiston in their empirical review of Status of the Counselling Relationship, in which they propose

“an operational definition of the counselling relationship is those aspects of the client and counsellor and their interaction that contribute to a therapeutic environment, which in turn may influence client change ” (1994, p. 8).

Both of these definitions strongly suggest the involvement of two people in a particular type of relationship in which both co-construct solutions and in so doing both participants can potentially change. This is consistent with the one of the basic values

of the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy, the relational nature of the person which is a Real relationship as compared to compared to a Transferential relationship (Gelso and Carter, 1994; Clarkson, 2008)

The critical importance of the client therapist relationship as discussed below, “*the definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes*”, (Thorne, 2003, page 27), is widely acknowledged as possibly the single most important aspect of counselling irrespective of which tradition or approach the therapist belongs or indeed if he or she follows an integrative approach, (Sexton and Whitson, 1994, p. 7; Clarkson, 2008, p. xvi). However, this position has been questioned Feltham who summarises some of the objections that have been advanced against placing the relationship at the centre of the “*therapeutic endeavour*” (1999, p. 24). While there is validity in the objections presented by Feltham, it is argued that the relationship remains the place where the encounter takes place and as he suggests

“there are grounds for devoting considerable attention to the therapeutic relationship, to the healing that transpires within it, and to investigating the nature of the atoms of influence” (1999, p. 27).

In this instance the concern is with the two people who are engaged in this relationship and in particular how the perspective of the person that is central to the Humanistic tradition impacts on this engagement.

8.2 The Development of the Counselling Relationship

The importance of the counselling relationship began with Freud. He moved from the “*no nonsense medical stance to an ever growing conviction that the relationship between the analyst and the patient is crucial*” (Kahn, 1997, page 5). Kahn traces the development of the relationship from Freud through some of the key figures in its development including Gill, Kohut and Rogers. Beginning with Freud and notes that one of his major contributions related to the concepts of transference and countertransference, (ibid, page 21). Freud’s focus was on using these concepts to encourage the client to remember past repressed experiences and in so doing to enable the client to address their underlying neurosis or psychosis. He came to the realisation that the counselling relationship could positively facilitate this process. Gill’s contribution was to extend the concepts of transference / countertransference to enable

the client to “*re-experience*” rather than simply “*remember*”, (ibid, page 56). This was important extension of the concept of transference as it suggests that in remembering and re-experiencing the client removes blockages to development of the Self, (ibid) and so bring themselves closer to their essential nature, which as noted previously, is fundamental to concept of the person within the Humanistic tradition in general, and in psychotherapy in particular.

As noted by Kahn, Rogers perhaps more than any other theorist and practitioner since Freud, has had a fundamental impact on the counselling relationship. His influence extends to both the nature of this relationship through his core conditions and its quality

“For a significant portion of the Western world’s psychotherapists Rogers has legitimized the therapist’s concern about the quality of the relationship between the therapist and the client; indeed he has made that quality the therapist’s paramount concern.” (1997, page 38).

Rogers initially put forward six conditions which he maintained were necessary and sufficient for therapeutic change and healing. Over time these have been reduced to three core conditions, congruence, unconditional positive regard and empathy. Tudor et al (2004,) have criticised the demotion of three of the original conditions arguing that so doing compromised the theoretical integrity of Rogers’ approach. However, the researcher would argue that the three demoted conditions are perhaps more self-evident in that they include the following: that two persons are in contact, that the client is in a state of incongruence and, possibly the most challenging of the three, that the client perceives at least to a minimal degree, the congruence, unconditional positive regard and empathy of the therapist. If the last is not successfully communicated to the client then the core conditions will have no impact on the creation of the counselling relationship. Rogers’ objective was to provide a safe and loving environment for the client and the therapist to meet and connect in a manner that is both unique and growth promoting. Rogers has noted in this relationship the client can “*be that self which one truly is*” (Rogers, 1991, 181). Kahn suggests that Rogers was offering a therapy of love or Agape, a term used by the Greeks to describe

“the desire to fulfil the beloved. It demands nothing in return and wants only the growth and fulfilment of the loved one. Agape is a strengthening love, a love that by definition, does not burden or obligate the loved one.”, (1997, page 39).

Gelso and Carter (1994) observe that the core conditions referred to by Rogers are

“therapist offered conditions and as such do not define the relationship.....They are attitudes offered by the therapist alone, are actually ingredients of effective therapy, and say nothing about the client–therapist interaction per se.”

This is an important qualification as the role of the client in creating this relationship must also be acknowledged (Tallman and Bohart, 1999). This is addressed in more detail below as it is the relationship that is of interest in this instance and the two people who enter into and so create this relationship. However, in considering this issue the researcher is aware that the counselling relationship has been addressed by a number of writers and two models have been suggested one by Clarkson and the second by Gelso and Carter which was referred to above, are of particular relevance for this study.

8.3 Models of the Counselling Relationship

Clarkson has put forward a very comprehensive model of the counselling relationship, in which she proposes that there are *“Five types of psychotherapeutic relationship that are potentially present in any psychotherapeutic encounter”*, (2008, p. xx)

In practical terms the researcher views these as interrelated dimensions of the counselling relationship. The first type of relationship identified by Clarkson is the *Working Alliance*, which enables the client and the therapist to work together. The second type of relationship is the *Transferential / Countertransference* relationship, where past experiences are transferred to the therapist relationship (ibid). The *Reparative / Developmental* type relates to the intentional provision by the counsellor of *“corrective, reparative or replenishing ...action”*, (ibid, page 13) where there was a failure by a significant person in the client’s life to do so in the past. The *Person to Person* type *“concerns the authentic humanness shared by the client and the therapist”*, (ibid, page 15). In this regard, it represents what is termed the Real relationship and is, the researcher believes, humanistic in character in the sense that it is concerned with the reality of each participant as people. The final type is the *Transpersonal*, which according to Clarkson *“refers to the spiritual, mysterious or currently inexplicable dimension of the healing relationship”*, (ibid, page 20). This relationship is probably the least addressed facet of the relationship although it is

acknowledged and addressed by practitioners in the Humanistic tradition (Thorne, 2003; van Deurzen and Arnold-Baker, 2005; Maslow, 1994).

Clarkson stresses that

“These are not stages but states in psychotherapy or psychoanalysis, often subtly ‘overlapping’, in and between which a client construes his or her unique experiences”, (2008, page xxi).

While maintaining that these five types of relationship are present in every therapeutic encounter, she emphasises that this is not a hierarchy and which particular facet is to the fore is very dependent on the client, who may *“wish to focus on some rather than explicitly on all these forms of relationship”*, (ibid, page xxi). This is a very comprehensive and compelling model. However, the importance of the model lies, in the researcher’s view, in its recognition that these facets of relationship are present in each encounter. Clarkson sums this up very well when she observes:

“It is time that psychotherapists acknowledged explicitly that these five forms of relationship are intentionally or unintentionally present in most forms of psychotherapy or psychoanalysis. Which types are used and how explicitly and purposefully, may be one of the major ways in which some approaches resemble each other more and differ most from others”, (ibid, page 24).

In the case of Humanistic approaches the researcher would argue that it is the Working Alliance, the Developmental and the Real relationships (Person-to-Person) that are the most relevant. The first is a basic requirement if the relationship to exist and develop while the other two, most particularly the Real relationship, are directly related to the being a person in the terms described by the Humanistic tradition. However, there is greater degree of ambivalence with regard to the Transference / Countertransference type of relationship in the Humanistic tradition (Rogers, 1991; Perls, Hefferline and Goodman, 2009; van Kessel and Lietaer, 1998; Cooper, 2008).

Gelso and Carter (1994) put forward model which contains three of the relationship types described by Clarkson, the Working Alliance, the Transference Configuration (which includes the therapists counter transference) and the Real relationship. The first two dimensions of this model, the Working Alliance and the Transference Configuration are similar to those proposed by Clarkson. In their model, Gelso and Carter describe

the Real Relationship as focusing “*on those features of the relationship that are primarily undisturbed by transference material*” (1994, p. 5). They note that while the Real and Transference relationships exist side by side, each influencing the Working Alliance, these relationships are mutually exclusive. The Real relationship is one where genuineness and perceiving realistically are core characteristics on the one hand and consequently “*transference distortions on the other are incompatible states and reactions*” (ibid, p. 9). These authors also note that as the transference distortions are understood and resolved, realistic perceptions take their place and come to the fore. This suggests to the researcher that as therapy progresses the client becomes more real in the sense that he / she comes fully “*into being*”. This change is not confined to the client as Clarkson has observed the authenticity required of both participants also results in change in the therapist.

“Such authenticity on the psychotherapist’s part may mean that the psychotherapeutic relationship changes the psychotherapist as much as the patient. Jourard (1971) and Jung (1946) both held this as a central truth in all healing endeavour.” (2008, page 19).

This prompts the question as to what is the nature of this change and how is it related to the perspective of the person whose intrinsic nature is towards possibility, potential and growth as proposed by the Humanistic tradition in general and in psychotherapy in particular. Each of these models present a view of the Real relationship as one which is in essence between two people as they perceive themselves, each other and the reality in which they exist in the here and now. Consequently, the researcher is of the view that it is in this type of relationship that the impact of the Humanistic perspective of the person manifests itself.

8.4 The Counselling Relationship in the Humanistic Tradition

Sexton and Whitson in a review of the empirical research on the counselling relationship refer to Gelso and Carter (1985) who

“suggested that, regardless of the therapists theoretical orientation, all counselling relationships are composed of a ‘real’ relationship, an ‘unreal’ relationship (transference / counter transference relationship), and a working alliance between the client and the counsellor”, (1994, page 7).

This observation is probably true of all psychotherapeutic approaches but it is particular so of those within the Humanistic tradition (Rogers, 1980, Wilkins, 1999, Mearns and Thorne, 2004; Yalom, 1980; Perls, Hefferline and Goodman, 2009). The role and importance of the relationship in the Humanistic tradition and the counselling relationship in psychotherapy, primarily through the work of Rogers, has been described previously. While his core conditions may not be sufficient in themselves (Sexton and Whiston, 1994; Gelso and Carter, 1994; Purton, 2004), they are accepted in the approaches within this tradition, and indeed in other non Humanistic approaches, as necessary for forming a therapeutic alliance which is described by Cooper as “*the quality and strength of the collaborative relationship between therapist and client*” (2009, p. 102; Wilkins, 1999; Bachelor and Horvath,). In particular the importance of the core conditions in establishing the Real relationship have been noted (Sexton and Whiston, 1994, Tudor et al, 2004) and it is this type of relationship which is of particular interest in this study.

Gelso and Carter, quoted in Clarkson have noted The Real relationship “*exists in all therapies, and it does so alongside of and intermingled with the ‘unreal’ or transference relationship*” (2008, p. 153). This relationship is characterised by each participant having realistic and appropriate perceptions and interpretations of another’s behaviour, feelings that are genuine and behaviour that is congruent (ibid). In the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy the value and importance of the Real relationship has been acknowledged by writers in the major approaches within this tradition (Yalom, 1980; Polster and Polster, 1974, Rogers, 1980). Over the therapeutic journey, the Real relationship comes to the fore as change and healing take place (Clarkson, 2008, Gelso and Carter, 1994). It is in this aspect of the therapeutic relationship that the two participants, client and therapist, are most real and this realness takes place in the “*here-and-now*” of the therapeutic encounter (Krug, 2009, p. 330). Consequently, it is these participants and how they engage in this particular aspect of the relationship that is of most interest in this instance. How does the primarily positive, growth oriented perspective of the person in the Humanistic tradition impact on how these participants engage in this relationship and how and where does this engagement take place. This issue is considered by reference to the following questions (a) what is the role of each participant in this process and what does each bring to this engagement, and (b) where does this engagement take place, what is the

nature of the here-and-now, “*the in-betweenness- the space*” between the client and therapist (ibid, p. 345).

8.5 The Role of the Therapist and the Client

The researcher suggests that, in accordance with Humanistic thinking, each person, client and therapist comes to this Real relationship, subject to environmental and personal limitations, with their capacity for self-actualisation and their drive to become a fully functioning person with the characteristics of potential, possibility, growth orientation, freedom choice and responsibility (Maslow, 1980, Rogers, 1980, Cohn, 2002, van Deurzen & Arnold-Baker, 2005). Consequently, the therapist, in addition to their other knowledge and life experiences, comes to the Real relationship with the knowledge and experience they have gained of psychotherapy through their training and work. This includes the issues that the therapist, as client, may have had to address during their lives (Rogers, 2002). Similarly the client, in addition to their knowledge and life experiences, comes to the relationship with their expertise of themselves and a level of awareness of the concerns that bring them to therapy (Tallman and Bohart, 1999). In addition, each brings a set of values that underpins how they live their lives. Consequently, to this relationship come two unique and real people each bringing themselves as they are at that moment. This leads to the question as to how they stand in relation to each other and the oft debated issue of mutuality and equality or as it is sometimes presented therapist as expert and client as recipient of this expertise. This issue was specifically addressed during the Buber-Rogers dialogue (Anderson and Cissna, 1997). In response to Rogers’ writings Buber had raised the question of reciprocity and how there could be mutuality and equality between therapist and client in the therapeutic dialogue. It was Buber’s contention that the client and therapist are not equals and can never be such (Thorne, 2003). Anderson and Cissna, (1997) in commenting on this aspect of the dialogue note Rogers’ emphasis on what he terms “*the effective moment*” of the counselling relationship (ibid, p. 30). This is an important qualification which the authors claim was missed or overlooked by Buber and some subsequent commentators such as Friedman. By so qualifying Rogers is suggesting that the whole relationship is not one of equality and mutuality but rather in these “*moments of therapy*” which are described as “*turning points or critical incidents in which the communication is especially involving and from which growth is more likely to come*” (ibid, p. 30). The role of the therapist is to help bring about these

moments during which the issue of equality or mutuality are not relevant (Rogers, 1991). The researcher would concur with this view recognising that the client comes to therapy believing that the therapist has a level of expertise that they do not have (Bachelor and Horvath, 1999). The role of the client, which is equally important in this relationship, is to use what is provided in these moments in particular, and the relationship in general, to address their pain and suffering and facilitate change (ibid). The researcher notes that other writers including May and Van Belle have criticised the nature and substance of the therapeutic relationship as described by Rogers questioning the acceptance by the therapist of all the client says, not giving due recognition to what May refers to as the “*the angry, hostile, negative – that is, evil – feelings of the client*”, (Thorne, 2003, p. 73). Van Belle suggests that rather than become self-supporting, the client may come to rely on the therapist in this relationship on the basis that the therapist at least knows what they are doing (Thorne, 2003). Rogers responded to these criticisms acknowledging that he had come to be more acceptant of the client’s anger when directed towards himself and being prepared to make more use of himself as therapist (ibid).

Tallman and Bohart (1999) in a challenging reflection on what they describe as “*the role of the client as hero*” (p. 93) propose that the client plays a significantly greater role in the therapeutic process than is generally recognised. They acknowledge what the therapist brings to therapy including, inter alia, their facilitative attitude and interventions, an empathetically supportive space, confidence in themselves and the client to enable the latter to transition to “*a process-focused, mastery orientated state of mind*” (ibid, p. 116), engagement in a co-constructive dialogue, a distanced perspective to enable the client examine potential solutions and a corrective emotional experience through the client therapist interaction. However, the same authors put greater emphasis on the role of the client stressing that their active self healing is the key driver behind effective therapy. They describe the key factors as client involvement as it is they who initiate the process, client cooperation and openness, client motivation coupled with clear expectations and associated goals. Other client factors quoted include client reflectivity and the client as agent where they are seen as an “*active thinker who is continually generative and creative in everyday life*” (ibid, p. 110). While these reflections are not made in the context of the Humanistic tradition

specifically, they suggest to the researcher characteristics and roles of each of the participants in counselling relationship which are Humanistic in nature and orientation.

8.6 The Counselling Space

The second question in relation to the here-and-now is what happens in “*the in-betweenness- the space*” between the client and therapist. The researcher suggests that this can be addressed by considering the relationship as one concerned with process and presence (Krug, 2009). Krug addresses these issues by considering the therapeutic approach of two of the leading practitioners in Existential therapy, James Bugental and Irvin Yalom. She describes their contribution as illuminating the therapeutic process in the here-and-now describing this as being concerned with “*what is emerging in the here of the therapy room and the now of the immediate moment*” (ibid, p. 330). This therapeutic space is filled by the presence of the client and the therapist. Krug in discussing this concept in relation to the therapist refers to “*the cultivation of presence*” which, in her view, suggests both the method as being one of cultivation and by presence which locates the method in Existential theory and consequently within the Humanistic tradition (ibid). She describes and contrasts the approach of both practitioners to this concept of presence noting the central role that this places in fostering therapeutic change in this approach. In summary, she maintains that Bugental’s focus is very much on the subjective or the intrapersonal process while Yalom is concerned with the intersubjective or the interpersonal process. Bugental concern is with presence in so far as it relates to the client’s subjective awareness in the immediacy of the therapeutic space, through the idea of self-as-process, so that they can become aware of internalised outside influences that act as constraints to change, growth and development and in so doing enable the client to remove these constraints. Yalom in contrast is concerned with the cultivation through the process of interaction between the client and the therapist wherein the client can address their difficulty with the givens of existence or their “*inability to accept the human existential predicament*” (ibid, p. 349). Yalom places more value on the interpersonal dimension as he believes that a safe intimate relationship between client and therapist is the real agent of change. In recognising the differing viewpoints of Bugental and Yalom, Krug argues for a synthesis of the intrapersonal and interpersonal so as to provide a holistic approach where both perspectives coexist simultaneously and where the emphasis is placed on one or the other depending on the needs of the client. The researcher would agree but

would add that the concept of cultivating presence through the intrapersonal and the interpersonal process involves both client and therapist. In the case of the intrapersonal, the therapist must also cultivate self awareness in the therapeutic space as they are an active participant, as a real person, in this relationship. The creation of the safe intimate relationship so valued by Yalom cannot by its nature be a unilateral process undertaken by the therapist alone. It must also involve the client so that it is a co-created relationship in which presence is co-cultivated by two people who are in a Real relationship, which it is accepted does not necessarily preclude other forms of relationship (Tallman and Bohart, 1999). The presence in this space, the in-betweenness, is occupied by two people who bring to it all that they in the moment in the space which includes their past and their potential and possibility for the future which is true to the perspective of the person in the Humanistic tradition.

In summary, the centrality of the relationship to the therapeutic encounter in the Humanistic tradition is acknowledged. In particular, the importance of the Real relationship is recognised as it is through this type of relationship that healing and change are actualised. It is here in the “*creative space between*” (Clarkson, 2008) where the client and therapist meet as real unique people with all that this implies in relation their past, present and future actuality, possibility and potential for growth as manifested through the self in process exercising freedom, choice and responsibility. Their separate but complementary roles in this relationship are characterised by intrapersonal and interpersonal processes each of which promote healing, change and growth in each participant at a point in time. Having considered the impact of the Humanistic perspective of the person on the counselling relationship in general terms it is necessary to consider how this impacts more specifically on the counselling relationship in main approaches within this tradition so as address the third and final dimension of the research question.

9. The Main Therapeutic Approaches

9.1 Introduction

There are a significant number of approaches to therapy that can be located in the Humanistic tradition each broadly sharing the same values and perspective of the person as “*aware, subjective beings and self-reflective agents*” (Watson et al, 1998, p. 3). These authors identify two of the core principles of the approaches in the Humanistic tradition of psychotherapy, the importance of the counselling relationship and the client’s experiencing in therapy which involves inter alia, a cultivation of self awareness through an examination of their inner subject worldview. These core values underpin what Watson et al (ibid) have described as the Person-Centered, Gestalt and Existential roots of this tradition noting also that other approaches which share these principles (Cain, 2008). In order to consider the final dimension of the research question, this chapter presents a review of the counselling relationship in these three foundational approaches within the Humanistic with particular reference as to how it is impacted by the perception of the person that underpins this tradition.

9.2 The Relationship in Person-Centered Therapy

As noted previously, Rogers was strongly of the view that the therapeutic relationship was the essential vehicle for promoting, facilitating and enabling change in the client. The basis for this relationship was the therapist providing the core conditions coupled with a non directive attitude which in essence reflects an intention to “*honour the self-determination of the client*” (Raskin et al, 2008). The objective is to create an environment or a counselling space that is safe and free so that the client can proactively progress towards self healing. This is consistent with and honours the perspective of the person within the Humanistic tradition. Rogers came to regard congruence or genuineness as the most important of the core conditions (Watson et al, 1998). This congruence encompasses internal congruence where the therapist is aware of their own internal experiencing as they engage with the client and external congruence which refers to the therapist’s capacity to communicate their experience to their clients. Initially Rogers’ focus was on the intrapersonal psychic process of the client. However, during his later years he began to place greater emphasis on the role of the therapist in the therapeutic encounter. This shift in emphasis is further elucidated

in the work of Bohart, which is described by Raskin et al, who note that there is a shift from a perspective where the therapists provided conditions give rise to positive change to “*an interactive, synergistic model in which the client co-constructs the therapy*” (2005, p. 143). This view is supported by the writings of other theorists in this field such as Gendlin (1996).

9.3 The Relationship in Existential Therapy

The importance of presence in existential therapy has been previously discussed in relation to the work of Bugental and Yalom and is related to the concept of congruence as both suggest authenticity in the relationship which is a key principle in this form of therapy (Watson et al, 1998). Yalom maintains that a “*trusting patient-therapist relationship is crucial to the process of change*” (1980, p. 339) which is similar to Person-Centered therapy. The initial focus of the Existential therapist is to work to gain the clients’ trust until they feel sufficiently safe and able to engage in the challenging self-reflection that is characteristic of this type of therapy. In the relationship in Existential therapy both client and therapist “*participate, in which love and hate, trust and doubt, conflict and dependence, come out and can be understood and assimilated*” (Watson et al, 1998). The focus is very much on the therapist supporting the client in facing the givens of existence (Yalom, 1980). In this sense this approach to therapy can be more challenging and confrontational than the Person-Centered approach. However, the aim of Existential therapy is to foster autonomy and consequently it is neither directive nor non directive (van Deurzen, 2010). In reflecting on the role of the client and the therapist in the relationship, van Deurzen describes what she terms the “*bias*” that both bring to therapy (ibid, p. 282). She equates these to the concepts of transference and countertransference from the psychoanalytical paradigm. She maintains that these biases can impact on the communication process but if recognised these can be used to foster real contact between the participants. It is important that the therapist recognise that the therapeutic encounter and space is for the benefit of the client. To this encounter and into this space the Existential therapist must bring their own experience of addressing essential givens, and life issues and the anxiety that these engender while the client brings “*a fundamental commitment to sorting out vital issues and coming to terms with life*” (van Deurzen, 2009, p. 3). Existential therapy is most suitable when a client wishes to “*relinquish inauthentic ways of being so that the latent existential confrontation may be faced*” (Mendelowitz and Schneider 2005 p. 308).

This enables the client develop a more authentic way of being as described originally by Heidegger (Inward, 2000) as a mode of existence where one acknowledges responsibility for one's life recognising "*one's ultimate uniqueness and strives to become what one inherently is*" (Mendelowitz and Schneider, 2008, p. 296). These authors note that this self becoming also involves a relational consciousness. In addition to the client developing this authenticity, the therapist is also authentic, in so far as possible, within themselves and in the relational dimension of their being (ibid; van Deurzen, 2010, Yalom, 1980).

9.4 The Relationship in Gestalt Therapy

Gestalt therapy is based on concepts that have their roots in philosophy, most particularly Existentialism and Phenomenology and as a consequence shares the same values of the other approaches within the Humanistic tradition (Perls, 1992). The perspective of the person that informs this approach is described by Yontef as "*a way of being authentic and meaningfully responsible for oneself*" (1993, p. 3). The word "*authentic*" is used as described by Heidegger (Cohn, 2002). Central to Gestalt therapy is the concept of contact and the growth of relationship as expressed in the "*I-Thou*" relationship as described by Burber (2010). The centrality and the importance of the relationship is well captured by Polster and Polster when they observe in relation to Gestalt therapy

"Its major premise is that the therapeutic experience is not merely a preparatory event, but a valid moment per se needing no external referent to confirm its inherent relevance to the patients life" (1974, p. 3)

In this valid moment the client and therapist are in engaged in a dialogue where each participant is experienced as they are in a contact that is characterised by caring, warmth, acceptance and self-responsibility (Perls, 1992; Yontef, 1993). Joyce and Sills maintain that the essence of the relationship in Gestalt therapy depends on three interrelated elements, the provision of a safe container, the establishment of a working alliance and the offer of a dialogic relationship (2007, p. 41). The latter is based on the work of Buber and in essence requires the therapist to be as fully present as possible in a real sense. Consequently this type of relationship is similar to the Real relationship previously described. Yontef (1993) describes four characteristics of the therapeutic dialogue in Gestalt therapy, the first of which is inclusion which involves "*putting*

oneself as fully as possible into the experience of the other.....while simultaneously retaining a sense of one's separate, autonomous presence ” (p. 4). This inclusion refers to the client and therapist. The second characteristic is presence, which has been discussed previously, and in this instance is used by the therapist to encourage clients *“to regulate themselves autonomously”* and in so doing to use the immediate experience to raise their awareness (ibid). The commitment to dialogue is the third characteristic and refers to allowing rather than manipulating contact recognising that this arises from the natural interactive dialogue between two people. The recognition that this dialogue is lived is the final characteristic and reflects the immediacy of doing that is involved in this dialogue. This interaction can both verbal and non-verbal and is in essence an expression and movement of energy between the participants. In summary, the objective of Gestalt therapy is to *“bring self-realisation through here-and-now experiments in directed awareness”* and at the heart of this self realisation is the authenticity of the person, both therapist and client, which goes to the very core of the perspective of the person in the Humanistic tradition (ibid; Polster and Polster, 1974; Clarkson, 2008).

9.5 Summary

This brief review of the therapeutic relationship in the three main approaches in the Humanistic tradition shows the commonalities and differences in emphasis in the counselling relationship between these approaches. All three recognise the importance of the Real relationship between two experiencing people who are willing and motivated to engage in a dialogic process of healing, change and growth. The Person-Centered approach focuses on the core conditions and recognises the role of the therapist and client in the co-construction of a safe space where this process can take place. In Existential therapy the focus is on creating a safe space in which the client can feel free to engage in challenging self reflection and learn to face the existential givens of being human supported by a therapist who has travelled this journey. Both client and therapist bring to this space their own experiences and bias which can be used in a positive manner so that the client becomes authentic in their way of being. This concept of authenticity is also central to Gestalt therapy which is characterised by a here-and-now dialogue in which both client and therapist engage as real people. The dialogue can be both verbal and non-verbal and it takes place through the activity of contact leading to change and growth. In recognising the similarities and different

emphasis of these approaches in the counselling relationship, there is a golden thread underpinning and linking all three like an unbiblical cord to a shared perspective of the person arising from their common philosophical origin. The question is could it be otherwise given their shared origins and value system. This is discussed in the penultimate chapter of this study.

10. The Research Questions Considered – Findings and Discussion

10.1 Introduction

The study set out to explore the question whether the Humanistic tradition has at its core a unique perspective of the person which endows the counselling relationship and especially the counselling space with characteristics that are particular and distinctive to the therapeutic approaches within this tradition. The specific objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To describe what constitutes the Humanistic tradition in counselling and psychotherapy.
2. To identify the essence and characteristics of the unique perspective of the person in the Humanistic tradition.
3. To describe and understand the counselling relationship and the counselling space in this tradition by reference to this perspective of the person;
4. To identify how this perspective impacts on the relationship in the three core approaches in this tradition.

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings that emerged from this study by reference to the overall proposition and the specific objectives, and also by reference to other key issues that emerged during the study.

10.2 Main Findings

In summary the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy does have a unique perspective of the person which is different from the psychoanalytical and behaviourist traditions. The roots of this perspective can be found in the worldview of Humanistic tradition as it developed and evolved through the centuries, from the early Greeks and more specifically as expressed in terms of human existence in Existential philosophy, as influenced by Phenomenology. From these philosophical origins there emerged a perspective of the person which was inherently growth orientated and positive, that viewed a person as an organism in process who sought to reach their potential through the exercise of choice based on a freedom that is only circumscribed by the limitations of the human condition and environmental factors. Within these limitations the person tries to be that which he/she fully is and does so by being in relationship to others. The limitations of the human condition include the givens of existence, most particularly the

reality of *Non-Being*. The role and influence of God or spirituality on the development of the person is ultimately one of personal belief as this dimension cannot be known in the human sense of the word as noted by Kierkegaard (Gardiner, 2002). However, this dimension of the person is accommodated within this tradition, both in general and within the therapeutic approaches (van Deurzen, 2010; Maslow: 1990, Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 2009, Yalom, 1980, Rogers, 1980, Tillich, 2000: Cain, 2008; Moss, 2001).

This perspective of the person was adopted and adapted by theorists such as Maslow (1990) and Rogers (1980) and, as such, became one of the founding principles of the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy. Within this tradition, the three foundational approaches, Person-Centered, Existentialist and Gestalt cascaded this perspective to all aspects of therapy most particularly the counselling relationship. Consequently, the relationship within the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy is characterised by the importance of the relationship, which is primarily but not exclusively a Real relationship, as described by Clarkson (2008) and Gelso and Carter (1994). It is where both participants bring themselves as experiencing human beings to “*the in-betweenness that we create*”, each on their own journey towards existential authenticity as described by Heidegger (van Deurzen, 2010, p. 288). Their journeys converge for a time in the counselling relationship and in this convergence each brings their particular experience, knowledge, and training to the resultant process of connection. Their intrasubjective and intersubjective presence enables the client and therapist to work together to co-create solutions that promote change, growth and healing. In summary, these key findings support the research proposition and its objectives. However, in doing so, the researcher believes that it raises a number of key issues and questions.

10.3 Key Issues and Questions

The many and varied criticisms of the Humanistic tradition have been alluded to during the course of this study. It is not within the scope of this study to address each of these. However the issue of the unconscious and how this tradition deals with this warrants a particular mention. It would be wrong to assume that this tradition and its principle therapeutic approaches do not take account of the unconscious (Polster & Polster, 1974; van Deurzen, 2010; Maslow, 1999; Thorne, 2003). There is a clear difference in how the therapies in this tradition view and accommodate the concept of the unconscious in

their practice. A simplified description of the unconscious is that it contains *all* of which a person is *unaware*. In the researcher's view, the main issue is not the contents but the *unawareness* that is important as this is the essence of the unconscious. The Humanistic response is that it does not see the unconscious as "*an intra-psychic locus*" (van Deurzen, 2010, p. 263) and so does not accord it the same importance as other traditions. Rather than seeing a conscious unconscious dichotomy, the Humanistic view of the nature of the person is holistic and that the journey towards authenticity and self awareness is the essence and purpose of life (van Deurzen, 2010, Polster & Polster, 1974). This journey involves bringing into awareness that which one is unaware, something that is possibly never fully achieved in the human condition.

The difference regarding the unconscious leads to a more fundamental issue in relation the study question which is epistemological in nature. Given the philosophical roots of the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy and its constituent approaches, could the outcome of the study be any different. The perspective of the person is fundamental and in all important aspects defines this tradition and its approach, setting the parameters and the boundaries and consequent limitations of the therapy. Does this place a question mark over the openness of the therapy and indeed is all therapy inherently limited by its theoretical foundation, i.e. its worldview. The researcher is of the view that this is the case but would argue that this does not put into question the relevance or efficacy of the therapeutic process irrespective of the tradition. In addition, accepting this perspective and the difference in emphasis between approaches, it appears inevitable that the underlying characteristics of the counselling relationship within the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy in general and the main therapeutic approaches within this tradition would be similar. The researcher believes that this observation also applies to other traditions even though they would not claim their roots in philosophy This raises the question as to whether there should be a relationship between philosophy and psychotherapy given the inexorable influence of the former on the latter or should there be a clear separation as advocated by Freud (May, 1994).

A similar issue arises in relation to the perspective of the researcher, particularly in relation to qualitative research. How much of an impact does this have on the outcome of the research. The researcher writes from a certain cultural context and is located within a specific tradition which, despite one's best efforts, they cannot be completely divorced from and we return to Gadamer's observation that the research agenda is

framed and limited by the researcher's perspective (Cushman, 1995). If we accept this assertion, it begs the question as to whether new and possibly breakthrough advances can be made in this manner or can we rely on Buber's belief that if the researcher / interpreter is faithful and attentive to their work, something will emerge and that this something is worth the effort (Anderson and Cissna, 1997).

Feltham raises the possibility that the counselling relationship could "*become the key to theoretical integration across all therapies*" (1999, p. 1). The researcher would acknowledge that the relationship is central to any future integration of therapies either within or between the traditions. However, it is equally important and perhaps more fundamental that a shared worldview in relation to the conscious and the unconscious is developed between the traditions so as to provide a balanced holistic perspective of the person if such integration is to take place. How this challenge can be met when the worldview of a tradition circumscribes the essential aspects of the approaches and indeed the qualitative research outcomes within that tradition is a key question to be answered. Whether such integration is desirable and would be of benefit to the therapist and most importantly the client is also a question that must be addressed.

11. Conclusion

11.1 Introduction

This study examined the evolution of the Humanistic tradition in psychotherapy from its philosophical roots, most particularly in Existential philosophy, to its expression through three main approaches to therapy within this tradition, Person-Centered therapy, Existential therapy and Gestalt therapy. It has examined the key characteristics of the counselling relationship in this tradition and how this is given expression through these three approaches. It concludes that the perspective of the person that lies at the heart of this tradition endows the counselling relationship in this tradition and its core constituent approaches with particular characteristics that inform all material aspects the therapeutic encounter.

11.2 Further Research

However, this relatively brief study and its main conclusion suggest further areas of research which would be of benefit to the profession of psychotherapy, its practitioners and most importantly its clients. The Humanistic tradition originally emerged as a reaction against the other two then prevailing traditions. The time may be opportune to re-examine the relationship between the three traditions with fresh eyes through the lens of the developments that there have been in each tradition in the intervening years. The channel for this re-examination may be through the counselling relationship also taking into account such fundamental issues as the perspective of the person, the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious, the relationship between emotion and thinking and the role of each participant in the therapeutic encounter, what each brings to the counselling space. Another key area that warrants further research is the qualitative research methodology itself and the role of the researcher in this endeavour, how to provide an environment for new ideas and concepts to emerge. In the spirit of Nietzsche's challenge can the research community in psychotherapy question the fundamentals of its own tradition so that new ideas and possibilities can emerge?

I say to you: "One must have chaos in oneself

in order to give birth to a dancing star"

Friedrich Nietzsche

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