

## RESPONSE TO BARRACATO

**Ned L. Gaylin**  
*University of Maryland*

Although familiar with 12-step programs, I am hardly an expert on alcoholism, but I have certainly read enough to know that there is a biological component—an addictive aspect—to the problem: One that is never addressed in Ronnie Barracato's piece. Contrarily I have spent the good part of my professional life working with children and families. As a Person-Centered family therapist I had given up the systems approach to looking at families almost as soon as I learned about it. It just doesn't compute (pun intended) with either the Person-Centered philosophy or my understanding of how families operate. Furthermore, and most importantly, the rather convoluted theoretical constructs embodied in the systems thinking which these models generated neither aids my understanding or my work with families and their individual members.

Rogers' special genius was his ability to explain complex behavior (e.g., psychological distress, the process of psychotherapy) with a minimum of jargon and a maximum of clarity. For me, Bateson's (1956) double-bind theory, and Wiener's (1948) cybernetics do little to help explain either schizophrenia or human communication patterns. As for Wiener, his notion of communication feedback mechanisms was based on computers, not the human brain—it was not his intention to apply this theory to human behavior. The more we study artificial intelligence and try to make the jointure between machine and mind, the more we are amazed by the differences and the complexity of the latter. The mind is not binary. Similarly, in mid-twentieth century we knew virtually nothing about schizophrenia. Today we know little, but believe it to be far more biological than psychosocial in origin. Thus, I am left more puzzled than edified by Barracato's revisitiation of these issues and their application to the mind and families. Regarding the application to alcoholism, I leave that to someone more knowledgeable than I.

### REFERENCES

- Bateson, G., Jackson, D. D., Haley, J., & Wakeland, J. (1956). Towards a theory of schizophrenia. *Behavioral Science*, 1, 251-264.
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