

## Article Reviews

### *On Connectedness: A Review and Essay*

In this paper I will review two books and a journal article, as follows:

Sampson, E.E. (1993). *Celebrating the Other*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Jordan, J.V., Kaplan, A.G., Miller, J.B., Stiver, I.P., and Surrey, J.L. (1991). *Women's Growth In Connection*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Natiello, P. (1987). The Person-Centered Approach: From Theory to Practice. *Person-Centered Review*, 2, 203-216.

What holds this group of writings together is the fact that collectively they bear the single theme of connectedness. In this theme there is imbedded a provocative dialectic that may be found in the Person-Centered Approach – the dialectic of autonomy on the one hand and attachment on the other. In the earliest period of PCA's birth and development, the struggle for autonomy was paramount. Rogers perceived theories of therapy in which hierarchy and control characterized the therapist's actions, a directivity that was altogether contrary to his own evolving values. He fashioned an approach that stood in studied contrast to this view, and named it *non-directive* in order to highlight the contrast between this therapy and others. And in this emergent therapy the emphasis was on a respect for clients that assured their own autonomy. Respect for personhood and a methodology in therapy that implemented that respect were ascendent features of this new therapy. Yet more time and more experience would be needed for therapists to find their own ground. In the authentic effort to provide a forum in which the client could claim autonomy, the therapists in that early time were ringed with subtle constriction. It would take more time to evolve a place where therapists were fully present. The unfolding of that place is related to the ideas of the materials to be reviewed here, so I will come back later to the issue of the therapist's place in PCA.

### *Sampson's Work*

The central theme of Sampson's work is a comparative analysis of monologic and dialogic world-views. With respect to the monologic view Sampson has much to say about preoccupation with the self as a singular entity. A major section is devoted to this issue, in a chapter entitled "Celebrating the Self." He casts this idea of self-celebration in the sociopolitical context of a male-dominated society. He minces no words here. He sees the monologic view as a narrative of power, control, and exploitation of the other. He examines at length the ways in which the monologic world-view suffuses our society. As an illustration he presents a brilliant analysis of the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas confrontation as it took place in the presence of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Of that all-male committee's action, Sampson observed that "they did not engage her perspective in a dialogue with theirs, but rather continued to reflect on her situation entirely through their eyes, as though she had no eyes of her own, no voice of her own that might differ from theirs. . . . A dialogue was reduced to a monologue and the Senators never had to deal with the results of a genuine encounter with her as other."

The fundamental insufficiency of the monologic approach rests in this fact, that this approach seeks for the essence of human nature in the self-contained individual and regards as secondary the ways in which the individual interacts with the world.

The second half of the book deals with the dialogic turn. Sampson introduces this section with an illuminating statement: "This dialogic turn transforms the dominant project of the Western world, its self-celebratory, other-suppressing stance, into a necessary celebration of the other."

This theme is so crucial that, as you note, he has chosen the book title, *Celebrating the Other*, to reflect that singular fact. Sampson argues that we cannot really understand persons by "searching deeply within the individual's psyche." This statement bears close reading. Sampson is telling us that if we attend to the individual alone we cannot expect true understanding. Self-in-representation is for Sampson the indivisible unit.

Sampson carries further his emphasis on the dialogic turn, taking it into the realm of science and new understandings. Here too he speaks to the need for a dialogic approach, especially in the human sciences. He pokes fun at the old traditional view of a detached science, calling it the "God's eye view from Nowhere."

This section of the book is original and exciting and makes constant connection with PCA values. This is the section of the book for which to render a special thanks to Edward Sampson.

#### *Writings From the Stone Center*

In this book, five women join together to examine human development from a feminine perspective. In a position remarkably similar to that of Sampson, they say that "existing developmental theory concerns the common notion that development evolves through stages of ever increasing levels of separation and spheres of mastery and personal independence. This theory emphasizes the 'separate self,' an autonomous, self-sufficient, contained entity" (p.1). Because this common theory was incongruent with their own professional and personal experiences, they sought for more comprehensive models of human development, and in particular a model that was inclusive of women's experience.

One outcome of their inquiry was the delineation of a theory of development that centered on the concept of self-in-representation. They argued that the primary experiences of self are relational. It is here that the concept of empathy emerges as a dominant theme. Empathy is seen as a central organizing concept in women's relational experience. Accordingly, discussions of empathy suffuse much of their work.

The analysis of empathy put forth in the book refers to the dual nature of empathy, in terms of cognitive and affective components. In describing the affective component they hold that "it is in this dimension that the most intense contact is made, and there is a deep connectedness, an interpenetration of *feelings* between two people" (p. 46). They are referring here to the mutuality of empathy, to the notion that in the emotional realm reciprocal empathy is the bond that connects two persons. It is of particular note that some of our own PCA colleagues have begun to consider the place of reciprocal empathy. Godfrey Barrett-Lennard comes to mind in this connection.

There is in the book a corresponding discussion of the cognitive component of empathy and, as you may imagine, this component takes a different tack. Here they say that "the cognitive component of empathy follows a different, essentially contradictory, course from that of the affective. Specifically, while there may be an interpenetration of affect, identity remains differentiated. The therapist, throughout, never loses sight of herself as a distinct being; at the same time she is emotionally joined with another" (p. 47).

It is my own sense that many psychotherapists will resonate to this dual concept of a differentiated and relational self. In my own experience as a therapist (Seeman, 1957) I once observed that, "It is only out of the understanding of one's selfness that one person can be freely close to another without threat, obligation, need, or fear" (p. 29). Here too, as in statements found earlier in this review, we meet the idea that autonomy and connectedness need be no strangers to each other.

*Natiello's article*

I have included Natiello's article in this review because it brings a unity to the review. It does so because the article shows with such precision how the arguments of the review are applicable to the Person-Centered Approach. In her paper Natiello examines the three major "necessary and sufficient conditions" for the psychotherapeutic process and in effect finds them not sufficient. She argues that, while necessary, they need to be supplemented by a fourth condition having to do with the attribute of the therapist's *personal power*. What makes her point so germane lies in her conception of personal power. She asserts that for therapists to be truly congruent they must maintain and exercise their own personhood as a partner in the therapeutic process. In this exposition she refers to the work of Keller (1985) who differentiates between the patriarchal view of autonomy as "static autonomy" and a more relational view of autonomy as "dynamic autonomy." For Keller, in dynamic autonomy there is "creative reciprocity between the 'me and the not-me'," a sense of self that is both differentiated from and related to others.

There is more to Natiello's position. I perceive an underlying passion in her view that unless we lay full claim to our own personal power in the therapeutic relationship we are defaulting in our relationship to our clients and to the task of being a therapist. And if in the term "personal power" we read "full relational personhood" we will have it right, since Natiello is writing in the context of the therapeutic relationship. Natiello makes clear her belief in the therapist's claim to full personhood *as a therapist*. She does not settle here for abstract statements but provides concrete examples of her meaning as it is applied in practice.

*A Personal Coda*

It has been abundantly clear that all three of the sources that are reviewed here accent the central theme of connectedness. I choose this place now to describe how my own thinking has come to this same place. My own long-term interest in personality integration and the fully functioning person has led me to the recognition that an adequate description of this domain requires an approach that includes every aspect of us as humans – that is, a human-system approach. Thus I have held to the definition of the human system, the one put forth by Angyal (1941), namely the construct *unitas multiplex*. This definition declares that humans are at once complex and unitary. We have multiple and intricate behavioral subsystems that are unified by organismic linkages and communication processes. We are connected in our complexity. When we are adequately and harmoniously connected we are likely to be fully functioning. Disruption and fragmentation of our connectedness signals organismic dysfunction.

What we do as therapists is to offer a place and a relationship in which clients can experience wholeness. But as therapists we must in the first place create some link of our own, some connection with the client, some way to connect with their own personal system. It is at this point that the phenomenon of empathy is central in my own thinking, for it is the empathic attitude and indeed the acts of empathy that represent the connectedness that I seek as a therapist. In the absence of such connectedness with the client we cannot begin our work. And so we facilitate therapy by the very same process that fosters the client's wholeness, by an experience of interpersonal connectedness. To put it briefly, the process itself is the healing agent.

I suspect that it is evident now why I have chosen to review the three publications that I chose. We are all speaking the same language.

## REFERENCES

- Angyal, A. (1941). *Foundations for a science of personality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.  
Keller, F. (1985). *Reflections of gender and science*. New Haven: Yale University Press.  
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### *Efficacy, Effectiveness And Expertise*

*The American Psychologist*. (December, 1995)  
Article on *The Consumer Report Study*.

Seligman (APA, December, 1995), who has been a champion for the support of "efficacy studies" as the foundation for the specific treatment for specific dysfunction paradigm, offers an excellent discourse concerning the effectiveness of psychotherapy as reported in *The Consumer Reports* study of the effectiveness of psychotherapy (1995, November). Seligman makes the point that this survey study has changed his view of the way to study effectiveness. Within this framework, he suggests that studies of specific treatment for specific dysfunction (which he terms, "efficacy" studies) do not consider the realities of therapy. Seligman's gracious conclusion that "efficacy" studies ". . . are very useful for deciding whether one treatment is better than another treatment for a given disorder. . ." suggests the very restrictive nature of such studies. These results by virtue of the research designs seldom go beyond the internal validity of the studies. His conclusion is well stated: "The efficacy study is the wrong method for empirically validating psychotherapy as it is actually done, because it omits too many crucial elements of what is done in the field." In other words, by the nature of the methodological designs and their inherent constraints (e.g., control studies, exclusive and manualized treatments, random assignment, limited treatment times, single diagnoses), many crucial elements of the actual practice of psychotherapy in the field are ignored.

Seligman suggests the model of *The Consumer Reports'* survey as a viable model for serious investigation of the effectiveness of psychotherapy. By virtue of its realism, this model moves away from Seligman's previous emphasis which he termed, the "gold standard" represented by "efficacy" studies. Here, the major focus is upon the therapists' expertise of specificity in psychotherapy doubly reinforced by the expertise of empirical validation.

However, Seligman falls prey to his initial bias of the "gold standard" when he suggests a combination of models and ". . . that the Consumer Reports survey compliments the efficacy method . . . (and) can be combined into a more ideal method that will best provide empirical validation of psychotherapy." In his discussion of the flaws in this survey, his overlay of the two models implies the "premium" of specificity, the common characteristic of empirical validation studies, which he previously identifies as leading to an ". . . illusory conclusion in psychotherapy." Seligman further attaches himself to this illusion when he does not consider the continued findings which reject differential effectiveness and specificity (including *The Consumer Report* study). The *Consumer Reports'* finding refuting the assertion ". . . of the usefulness of specific techniques for specific disorders . . ." is supported by conclusions of current reviews of psychotherapy efficacy and effectiveness (Duncan & Moynihan, 1995; Lambert, 1992; Lambert, Shapiro & Bergin, 1986; Luborsky, Singer, & Luborsky, 1986; Stubbs & Bozarth, 1994). The

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