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## A relationship between Eastern thought and Western psychotherapy : an application of Taoism and Zen to client- centered therapy

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A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EASTERN THOUGHT  
AND WESTERN PSYCHOTHERAPY  
(An Application of Taoism and Zen to  
Client-Centered Therapy)

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School  
College of the Pacific

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

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by  
Lloyd Saxton  
August 1957

If you do not get it from yourself,  
Where will you go for it?

Zenrin Kushi

If you work on your mind with your mind,  
How can you avoid an immense confusion?

Hsin-Hsin Ming

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## PREFACE

This paper represents two years of very close collaboration with Alan Watts. It owes an inestimable debt to him for the basic premise as well as its development-- for ideas and insights garnered in conference, in lecture, in seminar, and in his published works on Zen. Much of the language is, indeed, his.

I also extend my gratitude and deeply-felt appreciation to Gi-Ming Shien, without whose very kind and patient exposition of the material on Taoism and the intricacies of the Chinese language to a not always unpuzzled student, this paper would not be.

The concept of client-centered therapy is, of course, that of Carl Rogers, with whom I was privileged to work during the year (1953) that he was visiting professor at the University of California.

Finally, my enduring and warm thanks to Professor Ernest Wood, who saw me through the consolidation of the various materials and collaborated in the final stages of the manuscript.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This paper does not purport to be an examination of Zen or Taoism, but rather a view of certain aspects of Zen and Taoism from the vantage point of contemporary psychology, to see if a metaphysic, a philosophical resting-place, might not be found for the admittedly pragmatic science of clinical psychology.

#### I. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The questions the paper asks, then, and attempts to answer, are (1) can such a formulation be made, and (2) does psychotherapy conducted from this point of view move satisfactorily?

#### II. SCOPE OF THE PAPER

As far as the scope of this paper is concerned, what "Taoism" will mean is Taoism as expressed in Chuang-tzu and Lao-tzu as translated by James Legge; moreover, as I interpret the translation of James Legge. There will be no historical treatment.

Similarly with Zen: by "Zen" will be meant, largely, the Zen of verbal tradition, and little or no attempt will

be made to document my position. This paper is not an examination of Zen or Taoism. Rather, the ideas that I have arrived at from Zen and Taoism are summarily taken as a priori, or "given,"--a starting-place from which to examine the relationships of these certain aspects of Zen and Taoism to the science of Western psychology, especially that branch of psychology known as clinical psychology, and, within that, the specialty of psychotherapy. The paper, then, will be an attempt to relate, on the one hand, what I will assume to represent an ancient Asian thought, with what, on the other hand, I will present as a contemporary Western thought.

### III. APPLICATION OF THE BASIC PREMISE

I will attempt to show the relations as I see them between what I will purport to be two systems of thought, and will then show what might happen if Western psychotherapy, or a particular school of Western psychotherapy, were to align itself or conduct itself more closely along the lines of these purported aspects of Zen and Taoism. The latter material will be drawn from research I have done during the past two years with patients in psychotherapy.



## CHAPTER II

### THE EAST--ZEN

#### I. ZEN AND LEARNING THEORY

One of the most important aspects of Zen is that "living Zen" is distinct from "academic Zen."

Living Zen is a process of unlearning rather than a process of learning. Psychotherapy has, in general, been looked upon as a learning process or a learning experience. Learning, as defined by the psychologist, is behavior change, behavior change with two qualifications: learning is behavior change not caused by maturation or fatigue. All other types of behavior change, then, may be defined as learning. To say, then, that unlearning is different from learning is a bit of a paradox. If learning is behavior change, then unlearning would be defined as no behavior change at all--so nothing has happened. And this is, on the face of it, ridiculous. But, upon deeper examination, it appears to be not quite so ridiculous after all.

The whole end-point, or the major end-point, of client-centered therapy is not so much to get the patient to change as it is to get the patient to accept himself, to accept himself as he is. If he accepts himself as he is without trying to change, then he is able to function as

fully as possible according to his own capabilities.

Psychotherapy thought of in these terms, in terms of acceptance rather than in terms of change, can be said to be an experience in unlearning.

Zen represents the abandonment of ideology, of all fixed forms of thought and feeling whereby the mind tries to grasp its own life.

Now here again, in older schools of therapy, analysis is a most important aspect of the therapy situation. The term used for Freudian psychotherapy is "psychoanalysis"; the term for Jungian psychotherapy is "analytic" therapy. The emphasis here, not only semantically but to some extent in actual practice, is upon analysis.

In client-centered therapy, no attempt is made to analyze the client's behavior. No attempt is made to grasp intellectually the meaning of behavior. The emphasis is wholly on accepting the status quo, accepting the "as is" of behavior. However a person feels, if he simply accepts it then it ceases to be a problem.

If he accepts himself as he is, then he is able to function according to his total potential.

If most of his energy is devoted to fighting himself, then he is a mind divided, or a schizophrenic, and he is a very ill person.

As to the abandonment of all fixed forms of thought, client-centered therapy emphasizes flexibility rather than rigidity. A rigid person, rather than being thought of as a strong-willed person or a person of firm character, is thought to be an emotionally immature person, a mentally ill person. A person who is extremely flexible, who is able to bend to the circumstances, is thought to be a person who is emotionally mature, or mentally healthy. Lao-tzu says,

On the branches of a tough and rigid tree the snow piles up until they crack beneath its weight; while thin and springy branches simply yield and throw it to the ground without being broken or bent.<sup>1</sup>

The Samurai of Japan must have an attitude of what is known as mura, i.e., an absence of feeling that "I am doing it." The consciousness of self must be subordinated to concentration on the task in hand. The mind, instead of being focussed upon itself, instead of being self-conscious, as it were, is focussed upon the task. The task is done unself-consciously, then. Ideology is abandoned. There is no teleology, no striving toward an end that is visualized.

## II. THE PURPOSELESSNESS OF ZEN — SPONTANEITY

In Zen there is no goal; there is no end; there is no

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<sup>1</sup>Lao-tzu, Tao Te Ching, trans. James Legge, The Texts of Taoism (Vols. 39-40 of Sacred Books of the East; London: Oxford University Press, 1891).

purpose. There is simply spontaneity. There is an abandonment of all ideology, an abandonment of all fixed forms of thought. There is simply an acceptance of the moment, an acceptance of what is going on, what is happening, happening both in terms of external events and in terms of internal feelings or emotions, an acceptance of the totality of experience, of what is happening in the moment.

If we examine this a bit further, from the point of view of Western science, we see that everything that the individual experiences must be in his perception of the moment. According to the views of contemporary psychology, a person cannot be aware of the external world; the external world does not really exist except as he perceives it. A person is aware only of the state of his own nervous system.

Philosophically, this is very, very closely related to the Zen position, the acceptance of the present, the acceptance of the "is-ness."

In psychotherapy, if a person accepts the present in all of its ramifications, accepts the present situation in its totality, not only physically, but situationally, emotionally (all of which really can be summed up in one word: experientially)--if a person accepts the present moment in its totality, something seems to change for him. Now, as he must live in the present moment, accepting it does not

change anything, except psychologically. But this is where the problem existed in the first place! The problem was a psychological problem. It existed psychologically. Therefore, it is not surprising that the problem could vanish without going anywhere. When a person accepts the present, accepts the present situation organismically, experientially, in its totality, he has really changed nothing in the objective present. But, if the objective present exists only in his perception (exists only functionally, that is), the fact that he has accepted it, which changes his perception of it, changes it in actuality from a psychological point of view.

And this is what, indeed, has been found to occur with people in therapy when they accept the situation without trying to head for a goal, to change things, to better themselves, or better their situation or learn things, or change their behavior (in the sense of learning). When they simply accept what the situation is, this very acceptance, then, can be seen to change the situation for them. It is no longer the same situation after they accept it as it was before they accepted it, simply by virtue of their acceptance.

The pursuit of the good is unavoidably connected with the pursuit of the future, the illusion whereby we are unable to be happy without a promising future for this symbolic or conceptual self. If the self is seen merely as a convenient

frame of reference--a logical construct, as it were--then the pursuit of the future is seen for what it is, as necessarily illusory, and the person becomes content to live in and of the moment, which, indeed, he must do anyway. The perceptual present is, and forever remains, inescapable.

The cultural insistence upon the measuring of worth and success in terms of time, and the insistent demand for assurances of a promising future, are making things increasingly difficult for the individual in the Western twentieth century. The neurotic, working for an end, is always, like the donkey, running after the carrot attached to a stick in front of his nose.

This is not the attitude that it is futile to eat when hungry because you will simply be hungry again. On the contrary, this is the attitude that when you are hungry you eat, simply because you are hungry--not that the eating will have any permanent effect or do any permanent good, but simply to eat when hungry and that's the end of it. This is not a doctrine of fatalism. It is a doctrine of spontaneity rather than teleology.

A Zen legend goes as follows:

When Mu-chou was asked, "We dress and eat every day, and how do we escape from having to put on clothes and eat food?" he answered, "We dress; we eat."

"I don't understand," said the monk.

"If you don't understand, put on your clothes and eat your food."<sup>2</sup>

On being asked how to escape from the heat, another master directed the questioner to the place where it is neither hot nor cold. When asked to explain himself, he replied, "In summer we sweat; in winter we shiver."<sup>3</sup>

Life is not a situation from which there is anything to be grasped or gained. There is no permanence in life. To succeed is always to fail, in the sense that the more one succeeds in anything the greater is the need to go on succeeding.

Lao-tzu said, "The Tao, without doing anything, leaves nothing undone."<sup>4</sup>

But the action is felt as spontaneous, zestful, natural, relaxed. This, as opposed to the typically harried, nervous, obsessive, rigid, compulsive behavior typically associated with the neurotic.

Zen is most emphatically not to be regarded as a system of self-improvement. For to seek self-improvement becomes a conflict in terms in the Zen or Taoist persuasion.

Nor is client-centered psychotherapy to be thought of

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<sup>2</sup> Ku-chou Lu, in Kutsun-hsu yu lu, 2, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Verbal tradition.

<sup>4</sup> Lao-tzu, op. cit., Chapter III.

as a pursuit or a method or a technique of self-improvement. Quite the contrary, it is rather to be thought of as a practice leading to self-acceptance. Now, happily enough, once the self is accepted as the self--not the ephemeral, fleeting, symbolic self, but the dynamic self, the self of experience, the real self, as it were--once this is accepted in experiential terms rather than as a symbol of something that exists within the person, happily enough the problems that have led him into therapy seem to have vanished.

In the language of Zen, our true non-conceptual self is already the Buddha and needs no improvement. Or, as one Zenrin verse puts it, "A long thing is the long body of the Buddha; a short thing is the short body of the Buddha."

### III. ZEN AND CONCRETE EXPERIENCE

Another aspect of Zen which is one of its central characteristics is the non-verbal or non-symbolic or "un-speakable" level of reality. Zen emphasizes the concrete, the experiential--as does Taoism, of course.

Now here again, in client-centered therapy, we find emphasis upon the experiential rather than upon the symbolic, emphasis upon concrete as distinct from abstract.

To quote Watts:

A proper exposition of Zen should leave the mind



like an open window instead of a panel of stained glass."

This would also be true of a successful therapy experience which does not aim at re-orienting the individual, does not aim at introducing new learning, but which brings the client to a position wherein he is able to accept himself completely, accept the situation completely as it is, as he sees it.

When he accepts the situation and accepts himself, he is then in a position to utilize to the fullest his own capabilities and potentialities.

He becomes a fully functioning individual--fully functioning in the sense that he is able to utilize his capabilities to their fullest extent.

The object of the Zen school of Buddhism is to go beyond words and ideas in order that the original insight of the Buddha may be brought back to life. To seek enlightenment in words and ideas, to quote Dr. Triggant Burrow, is like "expecting the sight of a menu card to reach and satisfy the inner processes of a hungry man."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Alan W. Watts, The Spirit of Zen (second edition; London: John Murray, 1955), Preface, p. x.

<sup>6</sup>Triggant Burrow, Science and Man's Behavior (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1953), p. 51.

The wisdom of sages is not in their teachings.

One may ask, then, just what is the wisdom of the sages? What is the difference between the wisdom and the teaching? And the answer would be that the difference is Zen. This would be one way of defining Zen.

The Zen masters maintain that an attempt to think out the problems of life in words and ideas, in terms of the intellect, is doomed to failure.

Therefore, from the very start, Zen aimed at clearing aside all definitions, intellectual concepts, and speculations.

A technique of Zen whereby the disciple is led to attain satori is the koan. The koan is a problem which admits of no intellectual solution. For example, "A sound is made by the clapping of two hands. What sound is made by one hand?"<sup>7</sup>

The masters, then, talk about Zen as little as possible and throw concrete reality directly at the student. This reality is the "suchness" of our natural, non-verbal world.

If we see this just as it is, there is nothing good, nothing bad, nothing inherently long or short, nothing

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<sup>7</sup>D. T. Suzuki, Essays In Zen Buddhism (London: Rider & Co., 1950), Vol. II, Chap. I.

subjective, nothing objective.

There is no symbolic self to be forgotten and no need for any idea of a concrete reality to be remembered.

For Zen, the world of "suchness" is neither one nor many, neither uniform nor differentiated.

A Zen master might hold up his hand to someone, insisting that there are real differences in the world, and say, "Without saying a word, point to the difference between my fingers." At once it is clear that "sameness" and "difference" are abstractions. Indeed, the more one tries to define them, the more meaningless they become. The object, then, is what it is--nothing more, nothing less.

The client in therapy typically experiences a peculiar sensation of freedom when he discerns that the world is no longer to be felt as some sort of an obstacle standing against him. He no longer perceives himself as an obstacle divided against himself. This seems to generalize into a discovery of freedom in the most ordinary tasks.

The sense of subjective isolation vanishes.

Client-centered therapy also takes the view that an intellectual solution to a problem is and must remain unsatisfactory. The solution must be experiential, organismic. Looking for intellectual solutions is a waste of time, since the solution simply does not exist in this dimension. When

the client comes to the realization of this, he is well on the road to being through with therapy.

The master T'ui-yin said, "As the inquiry goes on, steadily and uninterruptedly, you will come to see that there is no intellectual clue in the koan."<sup>8</sup>

Intellectual clues are not the stuff of which solutions to problems of this kind are made. The solution must lie experientially, emotionally. There is no way of explaining this moment other than by saying that it is the time when the fetters of illusion snap.

In psychological terms this would be the moment at which the client ceases to try to find an intellectual solution to his problems, the moment when he comes to grips with his problems with immediacy. That is the moment which defines the culmination of therapy. This is what we mean by acceptance.

Life can be killed by definition and analysis. It must be grasped alive.

The moment the client realizes this, finally and absolutely, that it cannot be grasped by analysis, he lets go, understanding the neurosis of trying to deny all things by trying to grasp them.

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<sup>8</sup>Alan W. Watts, The Way of Zen (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), Chap. III, citing T'ui-yin, Mirror For Zen Students.

There is a famous Zen parable which says that to those who know nothing of Zen, mountains are just mountains, trees are just trees, and men are just men. After one has studied Zen for a little time, the emptiness and the transience of all forms is perceived, and mountains are no longer mountains, trees are no longer trees, and men are no longer men. For while ignorant people believe in the reality of objective things, the partially enlightened see that they are only appearances, that they have no abiding reality, and pass away like drifting clouds. But, the parable concludes, to him who has a full understanding of Zen, mountains are once again mountains, trees are trees, and men are men.<sup>9</sup>

In the beginnings of clinical psychology some fifty years ago, all sorts of meanings were read in conceptual terms into dynamics of personality, the necessity of analyzing and interpreting actions in psychotherapy. For the past decade or so, quite the opposite approach to psychotherapy has been the case. And now, for the client who has concluded a successful therapy, mountains are mountains, trees are trees, men are men.

Perhaps more important, he is himself.

Satori is the realization of one's innermost nature, concretely, experientially.

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<sup>9</sup>Verbal tradition.

The conclusion of successful therapy is the realization of one's own nature, or the understanding, the acceptance of one's own nature, the understanding of one's own self as he is.

The aim of za-zen, sometimes translated as Chinese yoga, is simply to release the mind from having to think about the body. Similarly, the idea of therapy is to render the client unself-conscious, unconcerned. The attitude of Muga described in the Samurai's creed says, in part:

I have no divine power;  
 I make honesty my power.  
 I have no magic power;  
 I make inward strength my magic.  
 I have no body;  
 I make fortitude my body.  
 I have no ears;  
 I make sensibility my ears.  
 I have no limbs;  
 I make promptitude my limbs.  
 I have no design;  
 I make opportunity my design.  
 I have no principle;  
 I make adaptability to all things my principle.<sup>10</sup>

The emphasis is upon the acceptance of one's self, the trust of one's self, the trust to be placed in one's self, the absence of rigidity, the absence of moving toward an end, the reliance, instead, on the "now."

When the individual ceases frantically trying to clutch the world in a net of abstractions and to insist that

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<sup>10</sup>Watts, The Spirit of Zen, op. cit., p. 130.

life be bound and fitted to its rigid categories, the mood of Zen or Taoism becomes comprehensible.

With the acceptance of the concrete rather than the abstract, the emphasis on the actual rather than the symbolic, the client in client-centered therapy is brought to mental health. In Chuang-tzu's words, "The perfect man employs his mind as a mirror. It grasps nothing, it refuses nothing. It receives, but does not keep."<sup>11</sup> Lao-tzu says, "Cut out cleverness and there are no anxieties."<sup>12</sup>

#### IV. ZEN AND ESSENTIAL IMPERMANENCE

The Buddha taught that all things are essentially impermanent and that as soon as man tries to possess them they slip away.

This acceptance of the impermanent nature of things, of the essential fleeting, transitory nature of everything, that we cannot own anything, certainly not our own body--the most we can expect is a ninety-nine year lease--the emotional acceptance of this idea, not simply the intellectual acceptance, the rational acceptance, but the emotional acceptance

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<sup>11</sup>Chuang-tzu, The Writings of Chuang-tzu, trans. James Legge, The Texts of Taoism (Vols. 39-40 of Sacred Books of the East; London: Oxford University Press, 1891), Book II, Chap. III.

<sup>12</sup>Lao-tzu, op. cit., Part II, Chap. LXXI.

of this idea, is thought to be one of the end-points of therapy.

When the client has genuinely, emotionally, grasped this concept, he is no longer in need of therapy, usually, or will shortly be finished with therapy.

Both Buddhism and Taoism say that nothing can ever be possessed. They declare that those who try to possess are, in fact, possessed. They are slaves to their own illusions about life.

Spiritual freedom is just that capacity to be as spontaneous and unfettered as life itself. For, whether we are content with our illusions or frightened by them, we are equally possessed by them; and hence, the non-attachment of Buddhism and Taoism means not running away from life but running with it. Freedom comes through complete acceptance of reality.

The negative aspect of Zen, this giving up, then, is only a way of expressing the positive fact that to give up everything is to gain all.

The Zen disciple gains all by accepting all, since ordinary possessiveness is lost.

When Chuang-tsu's wife died, one of his disciples found him singing and beating time on a pot instead of indulging in pious mourning.

The disciple remonstrated, "To live with your wife and then see your eldest son grow up and be a man, and



not to shed a tear over her corpse, this would be bad enough; but to drum on a pot and sing, surely this is going too far."

"Not at all," replied the master. "When she died I could not help being affected by her death. Soon, however, I remembered that she had already existed in a previous state before birth, and now, by virtue of a further change, she is dead, passing from one phase to another like the sequence of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. For me to go about weeping and wailing would be to proclaim myself ignorant of these natural laws. Therefore, I refrain."<sup>13</sup>

#### V. THE EXPERIENTIAL SELF IN ZEN AND SELF-ACCEPTANCE

The Fourth Patriarch following Seng-Ts'an<sup>14</sup> is believed to have been Tao Hsin (579-651).<sup>15</sup> When he came to Seng Ts'an he asked,

"What is the method of liberation?"

"Who binds you?" replied Seng-ts'an.

"No one binds me."

"Why, then," asked Seng-Ts'an, "should you seek liberation?"

For the client in therapy to realize that no one binds him and that he is not bound and therefore he needs to seek nothing except the very realization that he needs to seek

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<sup>13</sup>Chuang-tzu, op. cit., Book XVIII, Chap. II.

<sup>14</sup>D. T. Suzuki, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 182. Seng Ts'an, Hsin Hsin Ming.

<sup>15</sup>Watts, The Way of Zen, op. cit., p. 89.

nothing--this would be the end-point of therapy.

The Zen tradition maintains that the whole idea of purifying the mind is both irrelevant and confusing because the very nature of the mind is to be fundamentally clear and pure. The attempt to work on one's own mind is a vicious circle. To try to purify it is to be contaminated with purity.

This impossibility of grasping the mind with the mind is the non-action, the wu-wei, of Zen. There is no necessity for the mind to try to let go of itself, or to try not to try.

Bankei traditionally is thought to have said, "Brushing off thoughts which arise is just like washing off blood with blood."

This is the Taoist philosophy of naturalness, according to which a person is not genuinely free, detached, or pure when his state is the result of an artificial discipline. He is just imitating purity.

The Zen teaching is just simply to let go of the mind because the mind is nothing to be grasped. Letting go of the mind is equivalent to letting go of the series of thoughts and impressions which come and go in the mind, neither repressing them nor holding them nor interfering with them. This could be described as the relaxed state of mind.

Complete relaxation, acceptance: that is the end-point of therapy.

The Zen principle is that the true mind is no-mind and that our true nature is no-nature.

A celebrated Zen master, Ma-tsu, said in one of his lectures:

The Tao has nothing to do with discipline. If you say that it is attained by discipline, when the discipline is perfected, it can again be lost. If you say that there is no discipline, this is to be the same as ordinary people.<sup>16</sup>

The Tao, then, may neither be attained by discipline nor no discipline. Discipline, then, has nothing to do with the Tao. The Tao is spontaneous.

A Zen tale goes as follows:

Chao-chou asked the Zen master, Han-ch'uan, "What is the Tao?"

The master replied, "Your ordinary mind is the Tao."

"How can one return into accord with it?"

"By intending to accord, you immediately deviate."

"But without intention how can one know the Tao?"

"The Tao," replied the master, "belongs neither to knowing nor not-knowing. Knowing is false understanding; not-knowing is blind ignorance. If you really understand the Tao beyond doubt, it's like the empty sky. Why drag in right and wrong?"<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Watts, The Way of Zen, op. cit., p. 97, citing Ku-tsun-hsu Yu-lu, line 4.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 98, citing Wu-men kuan.

Another Zen Buddhist master, Lin-chi, said:

There is no place for using effort. Just be ordinary and nothing special. Relieve your bowels, pass water, put on your clothes and eat your food. When you are tired, go and lie down. Ignorant people may laugh at you, but the wise will understand.<sup>18</sup>

The following dialogue between Shen-hui and Ch'eng is part of the tradition of Zen:

Shen-hui says, "When one practices samadhi, isn't this a deliberate activity of the mind?"

Ch'eng answers, "Yes."

Shen-hui says, "Then this deliberate activity of the mind is an activity of restricted consciousness and how can it bring seeing into one's own nature?"

To which Ch'eng replies, "To see into one's own nature it is necessary to practice samadhi. How could one see it otherwise?"

And Shen-hui replies, "All practice of samadhi is fundamentally a wrong view. How, by practicing samadhi could one attain samadhi?"<sup>19</sup>

Samadhi, then, or self-realization, must, in the Zen view, be attained simply and naturally. Striving for it is the one way to put it off.

From the point of view of Western psychology, this same freedom of mind would be spoken of as emotional maturity, or mental health. Mental health cannot be attained by "striving" for it, by any analytic method, but can be

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<sup>18</sup>Lin-chi Lu in Ku-tsun-hsu yu-lu, line 4, pp. 5-6

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

obtained simply by not looking for it, by not looking for anything but by simply accepting what is.

Another Zen poem says:

The conflict between right and wrong  
Is the sickness of the mind.<sup>20</sup>

## VI. ZEN, FREE WILL, AND THE EXPERIENTIAL SELF

It may also be pointed out that the problem of free will, or the question as to whether our behavior is voluntary or not, is tied up with the problem of deciding to decide.<sup>21</sup> That is, if decision itself were voluntary, every decision would have to be preceded by a decision to decide--which would have to be preceded by a decision of a decision to decide, and so on, in infinite regress.

If the action is simply spontaneous, unpremeditated, the problem of decision simply does not occur. The question of whether an act is voluntary or involuntary does not arise. Thus, the decision simply happens. It is neither voluntary nor involuntary. It simply occurs.

Actually, it is impossible not to be spontaneous, for what I cannot help doing I am doing spontaneously. But if I am at the same time trying to control it, I interpret it as a

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<sup>20</sup>Suzuki, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 182, citing Seng Ts'an, Hsin Hsin Ming.

<sup>21</sup>Watts, The Way of Zen, op. cit., Chap. II.

compulsion. As a Zen master said, "Nothing is left to you at this moment but to have a good laugh."

In this moment the whole quality of consciousness is changed.

The neurotic now feels himself in a new world, in which, however, it is obvious that he has always been living.

From this point of view, then, the actor and his actions are indistinguishable. The actor is his actions. A person exists in terms of function. He exists as he functions. His function is his existence.

To function, then, naturally and spontaneously and unself-consciously, is, from the point of view of modern psychology, to be self-actualized, to be emotionally mature, to be mentally healthy.

From the Zen point of view, this attitude, this frame of reference, gets rid of the subjective distinction between "I" and "my experience."

This is very close to the interpersonal theory of Harry Stack Sullivan,<sup>22</sup> who was very successful in working with schizophrenics. Harry Stack Sullivan postulated that a person exists only as he interacts with his environment; that, in a matter of fact, his existence is interaction with

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<sup>22</sup>Harry Stack Sullivan, Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry (Washington, D.C.: W. A. White Foundation, 1945).

with his environment.

The most significant interaction with our environment is, of course, our social interaction or our interaction with others, especially significant others.

If this is viewed with duality, to use Zen terms, the person is then ill.

If he views himself as his experience without deliberately, consciously viewing it this way, or making an attempt to view it this way, which would negate the whole process, but simply, naturally, unself-consciously views experience this way and views himself as equated with his experience, then no problem arises.

When the neurotic just acts unself-consciously, he is no longer caught in the contradiction of trying to be spontaneous. The compulsive, blocked, and tied-up feeling vanishes. No block to spontaneity remains when the trying is seen to be needless.

In the words of the Cheng-tao Ko,<sup>23</sup> "You cannot take hold of it but you cannot lose it. In not being able to get it, you get it."

Or, in the words of Hakuin, "How wondrous, how wondrous! There is no birth and death from which one has to

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<sup>23</sup>D. T. Suzuki, The Manual of Zen Buddhism (London: Rider and Co., 1951), citing Cheng-tao Ko.

escape, nor is there any supreme knowledge after which one has to strive."<sup>24</sup>

In other words, then, it is as impossible to go against the spontaneous Tao as to live in any other time than the now or any other place but here.

When the client in therapy recognizes this for himself, realizes it fully, emotionally, experientially, there is nothing left to do but simply relax. It isn't, then, that he achieves anything. It isn't, then, that learning takes place. Paradoxically, therapy can be thought, then, to consist of unlearning. He stops trying to be spontaneous by seeing that it is unnecessary to try, and then and there it happens.

It was happening all the time anyway.

It's simply a matter of his ceasing to struggle with himself.

The end-point of Zen and the end-point of therapy is the mind functioning without blocks, without wobbling between alternatives.

The Zen term no chih ch'u is usually translated as "going straight ahead without stopping."

Our natural organism performs the most marvelously

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<sup>24</sup>Suzuki, Essays In Zen Buddhism, op. cit., I, p. 239, citing Orategama.



complex activities without the least hesitation for deliberation. Conscious thought is itself founded upon its whole system of spontaneous functioning.

The point of no chih ch'u is not to eliminate reflective thought, but to eliminate blocking in both action and thought.

Because it is always annoying, one tends also to block at blocking, and so the state turns into the kind of wobbling. The simplest cure is simply to feel free to block so that one does not block at blocking.

When this point is reached in therapy, the client does what he does. If he blocks, he blocks. To block is as natural as to do anything else, if one accepts it as such.

Blocking is perhaps the best translation of the Zen term nien, as it occurs in the phrase wu-nien, "no thought," or, better, "no second thought."

Takuan pointed out that this is the real meaning of attachment in Buddhism, as when it is said that a Buddha is free from worldly attachment. It does not mean that he is a "stone Buddha," with no feelings, no emotions, and no sensations of hunger and pain. It means, simply, that he does not block at anything.

One does not behave, then, as a stone, according to this persuasion, but enters into everything wholeheartedly and freely, without having to keep an eye on oneself. Zen

does not confuse spirituality with thinking about God while running for the bus. In Zen, spirituality is simply to run for the bus.

## VII. SYMBOL VS. REALITY

The life of Zen begins in what might be thought of as a disillusion with the pursuit of goals which do not really exist. These goals are symbols, symbols thought of as realities.

The neurotic involved in the search for the symbol is unable to grasp the reality because he can't recognize it for what it is. Being unable to grasp the reality--and symbols by their very nature being ungraspable--he is miserable, unhappy, confused, desperate.

He finds himself unable to live anywhere, unable to live with himself, dissatisfied with himself, dissatisfied with others, and with his state of being. To realize that his self is an illusion, a concept, a symbol, that he exists as he experiences, to then accept all experience uncritically, is both freedom--liberation, in the Zen sense--and mental health, in the terms of Western psychology.

Human experience is determined by the nature of the observer, his attitude and set. To use an obvious example: two men come upon a barrel of water in the desert; one man might exclaim happily that the barrel is half full, while

the other may look at it with disappointment with the observation that it is half empty.

One problem seems to be with the neurotic that the power of thought enables him to construct symbols of things apart from the things themselves. This includes the ability to make a symbol, an idea, of himself apart from himself. Because the idea is so much more comprehensible to him than the reality, the symbol becomes perceptually more stable than the fact. He learns to identify himself with his idea of himself. Hence, the subjective feeling of a "self" happens.

Now, with its characteristic emphasis on the concrete, Zen points out that "self" is just an idea, a concept useful and legitimate enough if seen for what it is, but disastrous if identified with the real nature.

The awkwardness of self-consciousness, then, comes into being when the neurotic becomes aware of the conflict or contrast between the idea of himself, on the one hand, and the immediate concrete experience on the other.

Therapy aims at returning a person to the ability to experience directly, concretely, immediately, without the intervention of symbols or concepts.

When the neurotic no longer identifies with the idea of himself, relationships become real. Consequently, the notion of getting something out of life becomes absurd. The

person becomes one with his experience. He is the experience. There is no separation of self and experience. The experience is the person; he is the experience. So that the experience comes naturally, directly, with immediacy.

The sense of subjective isolation is one of the most formidable of the neurotic syndromes.

With this merging of the "self" and experience, isolation simply ceases to exist. There is nothing to be isolated. What was isolated was simply an idea. When the idea is abandoned as a concept or a symbol, in favor of the acceptance of immediacy of experience, then the sense of subjective isolation vanishes with it. It vanishes with no difficulty because it existed in the first place only symbolically, as a psychological entity.

#### VIII. NATURALNESS IN ZEN

In both life and art, the cultures of the Far East appreciate nothing more highly than spontaneity or naturalness. "For a man rings like a cracked bell when he thinks and acts with a split mind"<sup>25</sup>--one part standing aside to interfere with the other, to control, to condemn, or to admire. The mind must stop trying to act upon itself, upon its stream of experiences.

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<sup>25</sup>Watts, The Way of Zen, op. cit., p. 135.

The story is told of a Zen monk who wept upon hearing of the death of a close relative. When one of his fellow students objected that it was most unseemly for a monk to show such personal attachment, he replied, "Don't be stupid. I am weeping because I want to weep."<sup>26</sup>

Yun-men said, "In walking, just walk; in sitting, just sit. Above all, don't wobble."<sup>27</sup>

The essential quality of naturalness is the sincerity of the undivided mind which does not dither between alternatives.

The client in therapy cannot be told to be natural because being natural to be natural is not being natural. The moment any self-consciousness enters into the situation, that moment naturalness vanishes.

It is a logical contradiction to say that one can be deliberately spontaneous. One is either spontaneous or he is not spontaneous. To be deliberately spontaneous is a contradiction in terms.

Thus it is that therapy cannot be accomplished simply by sitting the client down across from the desk and explaining to him that all he has to do is to simply go forth and be natural. This is a conclusion which the client must arrive

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<sup>26</sup>Verbal tradition.

<sup>27</sup>Lao-tzu, op. cit., Chap. XIXVII.

at for himself, arrive at in an experiential, feeling way-- perhaps without even being able to verbalize the idea. Indeed, the idea may not necessarily exist as a concept for him. Perhaps it is better if it does not. It must exist simply in terms of his behavior. He must simply be natural.

The idea is not to reduce the human mind to imbecility, but to simply implement its innate nature without force.

It is fundamental to both Taoist and Zen thought that the natural man is to be trusted.

The "no mind" doctrine of Zen can be translated, in modern psychological terms, as "unself-consciousness," a state of wholeness in which the mind functions freely and easily without the sensation of a second mind, or ego, observing it critically. To quote Watts:

If the ordinary man is one who has to walk by lifting his legs with his hands, the Taoist is one who has learned to let the legs walk by themselves.<sup>28</sup>

The Taoist learns to let his mind alone, so that it can function in an integrated and spontaneous way that is natural to it. Chuang-tzu says that the Tao cannot be conveyed either by words or by silence.<sup>29</sup> It is, then, non-verbal, experiential. The Tao can be known; it can be

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<sup>28</sup>Watts, The Way of Zen, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>29</sup>Chuang-tzu, op. cit., Book XXV.

experienced; but it cannot be talked about. It is simply a matter of doing, doing unself-consciously, naturally, spontaneously.

In Zen there is the feeling that "awakening" is something quite natural, something startlingly obvious. If it involves a difficulty, it is just that it is much too simple. A line in the "Six Precepts of Tilopa" says, "No thought, no reflection, no analysis, no cultivation, no intention; let it settle itself."<sup>30</sup>

A celebrated poem goes:

The perfect Tao is without difficulty  
Save that it avoids picking and choosing.

And, again:

Follow your nature and accord with the Tao;  
Saunter along and stop worrying.  
If your thoughts are tied you spoil what is genuine.  
Don't be antagonistic to the world of the senses,  
For when you are not antagonistic to it  
It turns out to be the same as complete awakening.  
The wise person does not strive;  
The ignorant man ties himself up.  
If you work on your mind with your mind,<sup>31</sup>  
How can you avoid an immense confusion?

The ideal of therapy could be stated in very much the same fashion--as a simple acceptance of "what is," neither striving for it nor against it, but simply accepting it.

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<sup>30</sup>Suzuki, op. cit., Vol. I.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 182, citing Seng Ts'an, Hsin Hsin Ming.

A difficulty here is the difference between a genuine, wholesome, complete emotional acceptance of a situation, or one's self, and the pretending acceptance, the self-martyred acceptance, the verbalizing of acceptance in a fashion that seeks pity from the onlooker and demonstrates self-pity in the individual.

This type of "acceptance" is not really acceptance but a counterfeit of acceptance, and, like any counterfeit, is not only worthless but even dangerous.

The neurotic clings to things in the vain hope that they may remain still and perfect. He does not reconcile himself to the fact of change. He will not let the Tao take its course.

Chuang-tzu<sup>32</sup> taught that the highest form of man is he who adapts himself to and keeps pace with the movement of the Tao; he alone can find peace. For the fact that man notices and regrets change shows that he himself is not moving with the rhythm of life. If man would keep pace with the Tao, he would find the true stillness, for he would be moving with life and friction would not arise. Conceptual thinking is putting a barrier between oneself and the Tao.

Zen masters had no patience with concepts.

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<sup>32</sup>Chuang-tzu, op. cit.



Master Pi Chang said that Zen meant simply, "Eat when you are hungry and sleep when you are tired."<sup>33</sup>

When a human being is so self-conscious and so self-controlled that he cannot let go of himself, he wobbles.

From the Zen point of view, human life consists primarily and originally in action, in living in the concrete world of "suchness."

The neurotic, prompted by a desire for certainty and security, cannot let go of himself. He feels that he should not do what he is doing and that he should do what he is not doing. He feels that he should not be what he is and should be what he is not.

The mind cannot act without giving up the impossible attempt to control itself. If most of the energy of the mind is taken up with attempting to control itself, there is no energy left for action. It must let itself go in the sense of acting spontaneously into the unknown. In trying to stand above or outside the level upon which he is acting, the neurotic of necessity drifts off into an infinite regression. This attempt to act and to think about the action simultaneously is precisely the identification of the mind with its idea of itself. The only alternative to shuddering

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<sup>33</sup>verbal tradition.

paralysis is to leap into action regardless of the consequences. Thus, when Yun-men was asked, "What is the Tao?" he answered simply, "Walk on."<sup>34</sup>

#### IX. THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF ZEN

Zen in its social context is primarily a way of liberation for those who have mastered the disciplines of social convention, of the conditioning of the individual by the group. Zen is a medicine for the ill effects of this conditioning, for the mental paralysis and anxiety which come from excessive self-consciousness. This is precisely, of course, the same social context the science of clinical psychology, and within that the specialty of psychotherapy has grown up. Psychotherapy deals with people who are suffering from mental paralysis which comes from excessive self-consciousness.

Zen does not seek to overthrow the conventions themselves, but, on the contrary, takes them for granted. The psychotherapist does not seek to overthrow the conventions of his society, but merely aims at accepting them matter-of-factly, taking them for granted. In a social context where convention is weak, the doctrines of contemporary psychotherapy would appear both unnecessary and ridiculous.

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<sup>34</sup>Watts, The Way of Zen, op. cit., p. 141.

More than that, they would be completely un-understandable.

The native of many cultures of the South Pacific would certainly be completely non-plussed by any ideas of this sort, which would appear to him to be so natural that it would seem strange that anyone should have to mention them. There is no neurosis in these cultures.

#### X. IN SUMMARY

A Zenrin poem says:

There is nothing equal to wearing clothes  
And eating food.  
Outside this there are neither Buddhas  
nor Patriarchs.<sup>35</sup>

This is the quality of wu-shih, of naturalness without any contrivances or means for being natural. It is often said that to be clinging to oneself is like having a thorn in the skin, and that Zen is a second thorn to extract the first. When it is out, both thorns are thrown away. But if Zen becomes another way of clinging to oneself, or if therapy becomes another way of clinging to oneself, through seeking security or seeking advancements, the two thorns become one.

Therefore, in Zen, there is neither self nor Buddha

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<sup>35</sup>D. T. Suzuki, Zen Buddhism & Its Influence On Japanese Culture (Kyoto: Eastern Buddhist Society, 1938), pp. 73-77.

(to which one can cling); no good to gain, no evil to be avoided; no thoughts to be eradicated, and no mind to be purified; no body to perish, and no soul to be saved.

At one blow, this entire framework of abstractions is shattered to fragments.

When the Governor of Lang asked Yao-shan, "What is the Tao?" the master pointed upwards to the sky and downwards to the water jug beside him. Ask for an explanation, he replied, "A cloud in the sky and water in the jug."<sup>36</sup>

To practice with an end in view is to have one eye on the practice and the other on the end, which is lack of concentration, lack of sincerity. To put it another way, one does not practice Zen to become a Buddha; one practices it because one is a Buddha from the beginning. Thus, one does not enter therapy to get well, but to discover what the truth is about himself.

Zen is seeing reality directly in its "suchness," seeing the world as it is concretely, undivided by categories and abstractions.

Dogen says, in the Shobogenzo,<sup>37</sup>

Without looking forward to tomorrow, every moment

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<sup>36</sup> Watts, The Way of Zen, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>37</sup> R. Masunaga, "The Standpoint of Dogen and His Treatise on Time," Religion East & West, I (University of Tokyo: 1955), 42.

you must think only of this day and this hour, because tomorrow is difficult and unfixed and difficult to know. You must forget about the good and bad of your nature, the strength or weakness of your power.

In Za-zen there must be no thought either of aiming at satori or of avoiding birth and death, no striving for anything in future time. All time is here in this body. The past exists in its memory and the future in its anticipation, and both of these are now. For when the world is inspected directly and clearly, past and future times are nowhere to be found.

Zen is a way of experiencing rather than thinking.

The present-day emphasis in psychotherapy is upon experiencing.

Many of our most tormenting problems are abstract creations of thought. They vanish when we see our everyday world just as it is.

The Chinese proverb: "What comes in through the gate is not family treasure," is understood in Zen to mean that what someone else tells you is not your own knowledge.<sup>36</sup>

The client-centered psychotherapist tells the client nothing. He gives him no analysis, no interpretation, no advice. Whatever comes out of therapy comes out of the client himself. At best, it is speeded by the relationship

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<sup>36</sup>verbal tradition.

between the client and the therapist; but it always arises from the client, never from the therapist.

Satori, as Wu-men explained, comes only "after one has exhausted one's thinking, only when one is convinced that the mind cannot grasp itself."<sup>39</sup>

Successful therapy, likewise, must be experiential, not intellectual.

"Awakening" almost necessarily involves a sense of relief because it brings to an end the habitual psychological cramp of trying to grasp the mind with the mind.

The client, similarly, experiences typically a sense of relief at the close of therapy, for perhaps precisely the same reason.

"Awakening," then, is to know what reality is not.

However, it is the letting go itself and not the feeling of it that would identify both the satori of Zen and the culmination of successful therapy.

So long as one thinks about listening, one cannot hear clearly; and so long as one thinks about trying or not trying to let go of oneself, one cannot let go.

Both Taoism and Zen are expressions of a mentality which feels completely at home in this universe, and which

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<sup>39</sup>Watts, The Way of Zen, op. cit., p. 164.

sees man as an integral part of his environment. The end of man is to be a man--not a great man, not a super man, but simply a man.

In a universe whose fundamental principle is relativity rather than conflict, there is no purpose because there is no victory to be won, no end to be attained. Because the world is not going anywhere, there is no hurry.

A first principle in the study of Zen is that hurry, and all that it involves, is fatal; for there is no goal to be attained.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the purposeful life is the one without content, without point. It hurries on and on and misses everything. Not hurrying, a purposeless life misses nothing. For it is only when there is no goal and no rush that the human senses are fully open to receive the world.

The neurotic, entering therapy, is typically pressed, harried, hurried. For him to relax, to accept himself as he is, to accept circumstances and their natural fruition, then becomes the end of therapy. That this is a goal without a goal is similar to the "gateless gate" of Zen--a paradox in language, but a verbal paradox only. The environment is not now felt as a conflict, an action from outside. His behavior may now be seen as simply an expression of spontaneous balance. In the words of a poem in the Zenrin Kushu:

The wild geese do not intend  
 To cast their reflection;  
 The water has no mind  
 To receive their image.<sup>40</sup>

To travel is to be alive, but to get somewhere is to be dead. Zen has no goal. It is travelling without point, with nowhere to go.

The client coming into therapy always asks what can be done for him. He wants to know when he will be finished with therapy. When he understands that nothing will be done, that he will never be finished in the sense of attaining anything, this, in itself, becomes the end of therapy.

There is no need to try to be in accord with the Tao. It will simply take care of itself. Both the past and the future are fleeting illusions. It is the present which is eternally real.

The neurotic is unable to live comfortably in the present. He regrets the past; he dreads the future. Or, he is so tied up in aspirations and ambitions that all his energy is concentrated in some phantasmic future time. All the while, he must, inevitably, remain in the present. When this is clearly understood, he simply relaxes, accepts the fact that he is what he is, and problems cease.

Zen takes the position that it is a serious mistake to

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<sup>40</sup>Toyo Eicho (ed.), Zenrin Kushu, cited by Alan W. Watts, The Way of Zen, op. cit., p. 181.



undertake a spiritual practice, or any practice, with the end in mind of liberation, in the spirit of a compulsive discipline to be "practiced" with a goal in mind. This very attitude defeats the end that is to be achieved. Now here again, we have the paradox in language, saying, admitting, that a goal is being sought, and then saying that the way to achieve this goal is not to seek it. This, however, is a paradox in language only. It is not saying, as it appears to be on the surface, that to achieve something you sort of ignore it and sidle up to it and then, suddenly, you have it. It is saying, rather, that the very goal itself exists in the act, the attitude, of purposelessness. However, one cannot try to be purposeless. To try to be purposeless is like trying to be relaxed. The mere act of trying negates the act of relaxation. If the goal is to be relaxed, the one way to achieve it is not to try, but simply to do it. This is what is meant by the concept that "liberation" in Zen--or emotional maturity, or mental health--can be achieved as a goal without a goal.

In Zen, this attitude is carried over further into areas of everyday practice. In preparing tea, doing the housework, archery, fencing, it becomes an underlying ideal, a way of life: To do all things naturally, spontaneously, zestfully, rather than in a compulsive, goal-directed fashion.

So, although the idea of purposelessness--of mindlessness, if you will, in this sense--applies specifically to "liberation," the underlying idea can apply as a basic philosophy to all the activities that one engages in.

The client in therapy is concerned specifically with his psychological problems, with his neurotic syndromes, as it were.

The knot cannot be untied because its very nature is like the hydra-headed snake--to try to untie it is to knot it more firmly still--but by its very nature of being a psychological problem, when it is ignored (or rather, accepted), it no longer exists.

The basic conceptualization of this attitude, as in Zen, tends to be generalized to "practical" spheres of activity. It is not to be said that pragmatic results cannot be obtained by striving for them, but rather that in the very striving and the achieving of these pragmatic results, the underlying philosophy of tranquillity, serenity, can be the matrix or the resting place from which activity springs.

This is the wu-wei of Taoism, the action in inaction --not merely inaction, not being a block of wood or a "stone Buddha," but being very alive, keenly alive, tremendously alive, in a way that is an expression of life itself, rather than a struggle against it.

Alan Watts closes his book, The Way of Zen, with a particularly apt example:

When Fa-ch'ang was dying, a squirrel screeched on the roof. "It's just this," he said, "and nothing else."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Watts, The Way of Zen, op. cit., p. 201.

## CHAPTER III

### THE EAST--TAOISM

#### I. LAO-TZU

Lao-tzu says:

The Tao that can be expressed  
Is not the unchangeable Tao.  
The name that can be named<sup>1</sup>  
Is not the unchangeable name.

Without going into any lengthy commentary, it may be seen at once that the emphasis here is upon direct understanding or immediacy of perception. Epistemology is negated. "The name that can be named is not the unchangeable name."

Further:

The nameless is the origin of nature.  
The naming is the mother of all things.<sup>2</sup>

From the metaphysical point of view, then--or, the metaphysics of the Lao-tzu position is--the so-called principle of nothingness: that the nameless is the origin of nature, of heaven and earth; and the generating principle is naming. "Naming is the mother of all things." So, we have the principle of nothingness as underlying creation and the

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<sup>1</sup>Professor Ci-Ming Shien, of The American Academy of Asian Studies, in a Conference in 1956, translating Lao-tzu, Tao Te Ching.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

the naming of things as the generating principle.

Further:

Therefore the sage withdraws his mind  
 Into a state of nothingness,  
 Constantly contemplates  
 The transcendental aspect of nature,  
 While he holds his mind in the state of being  
 In order to obtain the manifested results.<sup>3</sup>

This third verse expresses the synthesis between the principle of "nothingness," and the epistemology of "naming," as the origin of the universe.

Further:

"Origin," the nameless, and "mother," naming,  
 Are in nature the same  
 Although they are different in name.  
 They may be similarly described,  
 As the abstruse and inevitable.<sup>4</sup>

Now, this is very patently a conclusion of verse two. The origin, which is nameless--the principle of nothingness--and the mother, or naming--the epistemology--are really one and the same in nature. Although, again, this is apparently a principle which applies to the direct understanding, immediacy of understanding, and is confusing when put into the logical terms of language, because, as he says, they are different in name. They are at once the same and different, then--which, again, is a logical paradox but a perceptual reality.

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

And finally:

Reaching away from the abstruse or ineffable  
 Into the deeper abstruse  
 Is the gateway of all transcendental wisdom.<sup>5</sup>

This, then, is the path of the sage, the pathway to liberation as Lao-tzu describes it. The conclusion of verse three: The sage withdraws his mind into the state of nothingness. He obtains the manifested results by reaching deeper into the abstruse, arriving at the gateway of all transcendental wisdom.

In these five verses, we have a statement of the fundamental principles, the underlying philosophical foundations of Taoism. "Naming" here refers more to the perceptual process than to the necessarily verbal giving of a name.<sup>6</sup> The universe comes into reality as we perceive it, i.e., it exists in our perception of it. Arising from nothingness, existing as we perceive it: In nature, these are one and the same thing. The origin, the namelessness, and the perception are really the same although they appear to be different. The sage, then, in seeking liberation or transcendental wisdom, would simply withdraw his mind into this nothingness. He stops "naming," or conceptualizing, or labelling. He

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Alfred Korzybski, Science and Sanity (Lancaster, Pa.: Science Press Printing Co., 1953).

doesn't seek without. He doesn't seek techniques of understanding. He simply withdraws into nothingness.

In the language of contemporary psychology, the neurotic coming into a therapy situation is filled with anxiety for external events. When he learns to accept the situation calmly, a curious thing happens. The situation that he is now prepared to accept no longer exists. It existed as a dreadful thing only in his own consciousness, his own awareness. When he accepts it, it vanishes as the shadow that it was.

Now this is presupposing, of course, that there are --or that problems can be subdivided or categorized into-- two major types: realistic problems and psychological problems. If a man is hungry, he knows he is hungry. If the food is present, he eats; if it is not present, he doesn't eat, and remains hungry. He has a realistic problem, but not a psychological problem. There are peoples of various cultures--the South Seas cultures, as well as the Eskimo culture, are usually cited as examples--that have great realistic problems, but they have no neurotic problems, no psychological problems as we know them in our own culture. The solution of psychological problems must be arrived at from a psychological approach, inasmuch as this is the sphere in which they exist. They cannot be attacked realistically or directly because they aren't real. Once they are accepted and seen for what they

are, they vanish. This may perhaps be thought of as a pragmatization of these principles of Taoism.

The entire field of clinical psychology is largely pragmatic, based upon empirical experience. There is little or no philosophical principles which would tend to explain why therapy works. Indeed, the various schools of therapy, utilizing opposite philosophical principles, have, to date, appeared to work about equally well. By "work," here, we would mean returning the neurotic, the patient, to a state of relative health and normalcy. The hypothesis could be made, then, that if therapy were conducted with these basic philosophical principles in mind, it would be much more efficacious, much more economical.

Lao-tzu says, further:

There exists a completing thing  
 Which was before the coming of nature.  
 Tranquil, boundless,  
 Abiding alone and changing not,  
 It eternally revolves without fail.  
 It may be called the mother of the universe.  
 I know not its name,  
 But characterize it as the Tao. . .<sup>7</sup>

The Tao, then, cannot be known, cannot be named. Its principle is nothingness. Lao-tzu says that he merely characterizes it as the Tao, arbitrarily forcing a name upon it. The way to wisdom, then, is to understand directly, without

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<sup>7</sup>Lao-tzu, op. cit., Chap. XXV.



the intervention of naming, quantifying, categorizing, conceptualizing. Psychological difficulties arise with the self-conscious attempt to analyze, interpret, perceive causal relations--as contrasted with spontaneity, or immediacy of perception, or acceptance.

Further:

When my abstraction is complete  
 And quiescence is maintained unalloyed,  
 Though the various forms are restless  
 I am looking for the return of nature.<sup>6</sup>

Now this can be seen as having a very direct application to the problems of psychotherapy. The return to nature lies in unalloyed quiescence. Now here again, this does not mean becoming a block of wood.

Needham says that "for one reason or another, Taoist thought has been almost completely misunderstood by most European translators and writers."<sup>9</sup>

The various forms of quiescence, says Lao-tzu, are restless--quiescence, then, in activity. We have again, here, one of these logical paradoxes. The emotionally mature man, or mentally healthy man, could be said to be an active man who is quiescently active. This would be a principle of wu-wei, action in inaction. Wu-wei is action that is with

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Chap. XVI.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Needham, Science and Civilization in China (London: Cambridge University Press, 1956), II, p. 34.

the Tao, or action that is "appropriate," as a contemporary psychologist would say. The neurotic exhibits activity which is not quiescent, which is harried, disturbed, spasmodic--in a word, not with the Tao--or, in the language of contemporary psychology, action which is inappropriate.

Further:

All things strive and increase  
 But they must return to their roots from which they sprang.  
 This return is called tranquillity.  
 Tranquillity is called return to one's ordinance  
 Or destiny, return to nature.  
 Return to nature is called one's ordinance, or nature,  
 The unchangeable or immutable.  
 Knowledge of the immutable is called intelligence.  
 Those who are ignorant of the immutable  
 Give way to recklessness and end in disaster.  
 Knowledge of the unchangeable leads to toleration.  
 Toleration leads one to be impartial.  
 Being impartial leads one to be kingly.  
 Being kingly leads one to heavenliness.  
 Heavenliness leads to the Tao.  
 The Tao leads to eternity.  
 It is thus that one's whole life is preserved from harm.<sup>10</sup>

This could be seen as an epistemology of therapy: the acceptance of the "as is" with no attempt to either condemn or approve, being impartial, in other words; thinking neither in terms of good nor bad, of right or wrong, but simple acceptance.

That simple acceptance does not lead to anarchy or licentiousness is clear if it leads to the Tao. A modern expression of this might be the "positive growth potential" of

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<sup>10</sup>Lao-tzu, op. cit., Chap. XVI

Carl Rogers, who finds that when emotions, needs, desires, are accepted fully, that they are, happily, in line with the mores of the culture. One of the most striking evidences of this comes from the study made at the University of Chicago by Bruno Bettelheim.<sup>11</sup> He describes a school, the entire population of which is given over to severely disturbed, delinquent boys and girls. In this school they are permitted to do anything and everything that they wish, with the exception of hurting themselves or each other. The school has had a remarkable record in returning to usefulness--that is, social usefulness--and personal happiness and integration every one referred to it, with, to date, no failures.

Further:

Erudition banished, vexations end.  
 Prompt affirmation and hesitant response,  
 Are they not similar?  
 Goodness and evil,  
 Are they not asking?  
 What men venerated  
 I also cannot but respect,  
 Because if it is inadvertent  
 The calamity would be without end.<sup>12</sup>

Lao-tzu is saying, here, that the cultural mores must be respected, but, if these mores are in accordance with the Tao and the individual is in accordance with the Tao, there is no problem. The problem simply does not arise. There is

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<sup>11</sup>Bruno Bettelheim, Love Is Not Enough (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1947).

<sup>12</sup>Lao-tzu, op. cit., Chap. XX.

no need to ask what is good and what is evil. The problem of good and evil does not arise. With the ending of the endless consideration of problems, the analysis and interpretation of a previous error of psychotherapy, the neurotic problems cease to be.

The Tao, then, is the original and directing principle of all things, the universal principle, the ordering principle. Wholeness is prior to particulars. This is the Tao. The emphasis here is on the priority of wholeness to individual things. Wholeness must have pre-existed the coming of individual things. The return to wholeness is the aim of psychotherapy--emphasis upon wholeness as opposed to the fragments of behavior. Now, in attempting to pull the fragments together, obviously the emphasis is on the fragments. If the fragments are not emphasized, the fragmentary aspect of behavior not given importance, and the emphasis is instead upon the wholeness, then the fragments seem to vanish: their separation was not actual but psychological in the first place.

The philosophical basis for unity or wholeness is clear in Zen and Taoism, for if space is not a thing it cannot separate things. Consequently, all things are a continuous and inescapable and unchangeable unity.

In Greek philosophy, from which our own Western concepts largely descend--at least, for the purposes of this paper, this is the assumption that is being made--matter is

the source of evil, ugliness, diversity, etc., whereas form is the source of unity, good, etc. In Plato, the end of man is to quit the body, to obtain pure substance or pure spirit. Thus, liberation would be something that one would aspire to, something that one would attain. The end of man is salvation or paradise, and the value of man in and of himself is denied.

We find, in Taoism, there is no difference between substance and matter; rather, we find a harmony between substance and matter. The metaphysics of Taoism as expounded in the above verses indicates this. Matter becomes a realized or manifested substance, and thus the value of man is asserted. The end of man is simply to be a man. There is nothing further to attain--no salvation, no paradise--simply manhood. The heavens, earth and man are all equally great.

Indirect understanding would be the image; direct understanding would be the reality. The known and the knower, then, are identical, experiential. There is no separation between the knower and the known as is the case with indirect understanding, or imagery, or conceptualization.

In Taoism, the problem is not one of faith, as is the Western doctrine, but of realizing what is already present. There is no necessity for any organizing. Indeed, it is impossible to know external things because this would be

indirect knowledge. In the language of contemporary psychology, one does not perceive a copy of the universe, but perceives only, and is only able to perceive, the state of his own nervous system. The known and the knower are identical.

In Taoism, there is no ego or no self in the universe. These are concepts of man. Mental concepts are not a part of the real universe. These are a part of indirect knowledge, based upon images rather than reality. The peaceful and tranquil mind is empty of concepts. This is the Taoistic principle of emptiness. The true fullness is emptiness of concepts, not nothingness in and of itself, not nihilism, not fatalism, but rather a fruition of emptiness in that the emptiness represents an emptiness of concepts, or images, or indirect knowledge, and therefore a fruition of immediacy of experience.

In Taoism, suffering starts with the perceived duality or dichotomy of the subjective and objective, an emphasis upon intellectualization or conceptualization or analysis or categorizing. These are the shadows of the universe. The second step is the pursuit of the object; thirdly, the need to possess it. This leads to anxiety and disturbance which, in turn, leads to suffering. Intellectual desire is the same as the desire for fame and money. Tao is the undifferentiated wholeness of all existence, the universal virtue of all things. To obtain harmony with the Tao, would be to get rid

of or ignore self-concepts. One would then be in harmony with the universe.

Instead of emphasizing the problems of the self, therapy would consist of emphasizing the wholeness, accepting the individual as a whole, as a complete entity in and of himself.

He who knows the Tao  
Does not care to speak about it.  
He who is ever ready to speak about it  
Does not know it.<sup>13</sup>

The Tao, then, is not something to be conceptualized, to be verbalized, but something simply to be acted upon directly and unself-consciousless.

When we renounce learning  
We have no troubles.  
The universe has no mind, no system.  
It is a spontaneous pattern,<sup>14</sup>  
Transcending consciousness.

And further:

To know, and yet think we do not know,  
Is the highest attainment.  
Not to know, and yet think we do know,  
Is a disease.  
It is simply by being pained  
At the thought of having this disease  
That we are preserved from it.  
The sage has not the disease.  
He knows the pain that would be inseparable from it  
And therefore he does not have it.<sup>15</sup>

In other words, unconscious acceptance of the given.  
Not fatalism, but rather its opposite; living fully and

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Chap. LXVI.    <sup>14</sup>Ibid., Chap. XI.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., Chap. LXXXI

completely and unself-consciously in the present.

If we could renounce our sageness  
 And discard our wisdom,  
 It would be better for the people a hundred-fold.  
 If we could renounce our benevolence  
 And discard our righteousness,  
 The people would again become filial and kindly.  
 If we could renounce our artful contrivances  
 And discard our scheming for gain,  
 There would be no thieves nor robbers.<sup>16</sup>

Difficulties arise from "busy-work" of all kinds. The "do-gooder" with his well-meaning counsel, no matter how artful, is ill-advised. The therapist must be prepared to renounce the attributes of which he is most proud: his sageness, his wisdom, his benevolence, his righteousness, and simply accept the client as he seems to himself.

Those who possessed in highest degree  
 The attributes of the Tao  
 Did not seek to show them  
 And therefore they possessed them  
 In fullest measure.  
 Those who possessed in a lower degree  
 Those attributes  
 Sought how not to lose them  
 And therefore they did not possess them  
 In fullest measure.

## II

Those who possessed in the highest degree  
 Those attributes  
 Did nothing with a purpose,  
 And had no need to do anything.  
 Those who possessed them in a lower degree  
 Were always doing,  
 And had need to be so doing.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., Chap. XIX



## III

Those who possessed the highest benevolence  
 Were always seeking to carry it out,  
 And had no need to be doing so.  
 Those who possessed the highest righteousness  
 Were always seeking to carry it out,  
 And had need to be doing so.

## IV

Those who possessed the highest sense of propriety  
 Were always seeking to show it  
 And when men did not respond to it  
 They bared the arm and marched up to them.

## V

Thus it was that when the Tao was lost,  
 Its attributes appeared;  
 When its attributes were lost,  
 Benevolence appeared;  
 When Benevolence was lost,  
 Righteousness appeared;  
 And when righteousness was lost,  
 The proprieties appeared.  
 Propriety is the attenuated form of good faith  
 And is also the commencement of disorder;  
 Swift apprehension is only a flower of the Tao  
 And is the beginning of stupidity.<sup>17</sup>

To paraphrase, the seven virtues in Chinese philosophy  
 as expressed in the preceding six verses are, from highest to  
 lowest:

1. Tao.
2. Te. Te is defined here as virtue, or  
 the attributes of Tao.
3. Good (benevolence).
4. Justice.

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid. Chap. XIXVIII

5. Li (or the rite of personal conduct).

6. Wisdom.

7. Honesty (or faith--legalism), which, says Lao-tzu, is, though a flower of the Tao, the commencement of disorder and the beginning of stupidity.

Thus, wisdom is high in Western philosophy and low in Chinese philosophy.

In Chinese philosophy, naturalness, or spontaneity, is the end-point of man.

The emphasis in Taoism is upon integral wholeness, i.e., Taoism has to do with the first two principles of Chinese philosophy, the Tao and the Te. The ordinary people may follow the Li of a holy man. With the holy man it is instinctual, a natural part of his whole integrated personality. For a holy man it is spontaneous.

Thus the definition of a "good" man has nothing to do with morality itself.

Taoism emphasizes the enjoyment of the Tao and the Te, spontaneity and forgetfulness, just as nature itself, and the fundamental principle of equality.

Everything is what it is, so to speak of quantity or degree becomes nonsense.

## II. CHUANG-TZU

Chuang-tzu says:

There is a bird named the phang. Its back is like the Thai Mountain, while its wings are like clouds all around the sky. On a whirlwind it mounts upwards as on the whorls of a goat's horn for ninety thousand li till, far removed from the cloudy vapors, it bears on its back the blue sky. And then it shapes its course for the south and proceeds to the ocean there. A quail laughed at it and said, "Where is it going to? I spring up with a bound and come down again when I have reached but a few fathoms, and then fly about among the brushwood and bushes, and this is the perfection of flying. Where is that creature going to?"<sup>18</sup>

Thus, each of the two birds is secure unto himself. The quail, in his own way, is exhibiting his own perfection of quaildom, of being a quail. The other bird, with "wings like clouds all around the sky," and a back like a mountain, is actualizing its own nature.

Further:

The perfect man has no thought of self. The spirit-like man none of merit. The sagely-minded man none of fame.<sup>19</sup>

The end of man is complete spontaneity, unself-consciousness, utter naturalness. The ultimate man has no thought of self, merit, or fame.

Again:

If we take a stalk of grain and a large pillar, a loathsome leper and a beauty like Hsi Shih, things large and things insecure, things crafty and things strange, they may in the light of the Tao all be reduced to the same category of opinion about them. So was separation that led to completion; from completion ensued dissolution. But all things, without

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<sup>18</sup>Chuang-tzu, op. cit., Chap. III. <sup>19</sup>Ibid.

regard to their completion and dissolution, may again be comprehended in their unity. It is only the far-reaching in thought who know how to comprehend them in this unity. This being so, let us give up our devotion to our own views and occupy ourselves with the ordinary views. These ordinary views are grounded on the use of things. The study of that use leads us to the comprehensive judgement and that judgement secures the success of the inquiry. That success gained, we are near to the object of our search and there we stop. When we stop and yet do not know how it is so, we have what is called the Tao.<sup>20</sup>

The Tao, here once again, is seen as something that is spontaneous, of immediacy of experience, non-logical, non-perceptual, non-dualistic. (Incidentally, Hsi Shih mentioned above was a very famous beauty, a courtesan presented by the king of Yueh to his enemy the King of Wu, and who hastened on his progress to ruin and debt, she herself perishing at the same time.) Tranquillity, in the light of this, becomes something internal rather than external or imposed from without. Taoism sees an identity between individuals and nature, a wholeness. Nature reveals itself in individuals; therefore, nature and the individual is not separated. If there were a ruling principle--although to speak of a ruling principle in this context becomes, of course, absurd--it would be spontaneity, spontaneity as differentiated from anarchy.

This view is very close to Western science in general, not only psychology or psychotherapy, but science in general.

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., Book II, Chsp. IV, Part I, Section 2.

The scientist views things in the light of their nature. He is not interested in disputes in affirmations, but merely in the "suchness," or the "is-ness," or the nature of what he is viewing. He tries to be completely dispassionate, completely objective in his investigations and in his views, as well as his conclusions and affirmations.

Dr. Fung Yu-lan has remarked that "Taoism is the only system of mysticism which the world has ever seen which is not profoundly anti-scientific."<sup>21</sup>

Aristotelian logic is characterized by the dichotomy of true and false, here and not-here, etc. In Chinese "logic," there is no "true" and no "false"; there is only what is. This is the Tao.

The Western scientist, likewise, is not concerned with questions of why, nor has he been for some two centuries. The scientist is content to observe nature, with the idea of seeing what laws or uniformities are manifest. He tests his observations by attempting to make predictions and seeing if the predictions come true, and then by manipulating situations to see if he is able to control the environment by means of these predictions. Essentially, then, the nature of science is dispassionate, amoral, disinterested, and objective.

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<sup>21</sup>Needham, op. cit.

All subjects may be looked at from two points of view, from that and from this. If I look at a thing from another's point of view, I do not see it. Only as I know it myself do I know it. Hence, it is said, that view comes from this. And this view is a consequence of that, which is the theory that that view and this, the opposite views, produce each other. Although it be so, there is affirmed now life and now death, now death and now life, now the admissibility of a thing and now its inadmissibility, now its inadmissibility and now its admissibility. The disputants now affirm and now deny, now deny and now affirm. Therefore, the sagely man does not pursue this method, but views things in the light of his heavenly nature and hence forms his judgement of what is right. This view is the same as that, and that view is the same as this; but that view involves both a right and a wrong, and this view involves also a right and a wrong. Are there indeed, or are there not, the two views--this and that? They have not found their point of correspondency, which is called the pivot of the Tao. As soon as one finds this pivot, he stands in the center of the ring of thought, where he can respond without end to the changing views, without end to those affirming and without end to those denying.<sup>22</sup>

Since there is no "here" and "there" except in subjective existence, here and there are self-centered; and, since there is no self in Taoism--the self being an illusion--here and there cannot exist. All that exists is the unity, the wholeness. "Here" and "there" are seen as correlatives rather than separatenesses.

A frog in a well cannot be talked with about the sea. He is confined to the limits of his hole. An insect of the summer cannot be talked with about ice. It knows nothing beyond its own season. A scholar of limited views cannot be talked with about the Tao. He is bound

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<sup>22</sup>Chuang-tzu, op. cit., Book II, Part I, Section II, Chap. III.

by the teaching which he has received. Now, you have come forth from between your banks and beheld the great sea; you have come to know your own ignorance and inferiority and are in the way of being fitted to be talked with about great principles. Of all the waters under heaven there are none so great as the sea. A myriad streams flow into it without ceasing, and yet it is not filled. And afterwards it discharges them, also without ceasing, and yet it is not empty. In spring and in autumn it undergoes no change; it takes no notice of floods or of drought.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, the therapist should, above all, be characterized by humility. He should not attempt to force his own view, his own point of view, his own frame of reference, his own interpretations, any sort of analysis or opinion or advice, however well taken, upon the client.

The client is to be regarded as a person in his own right. The therapist's chief concern is to understand him from his own point of view, to understand him, to accept him as he is, as an integral human being, and to respect him for his own person, neither blaming nor praising.

The sage cherishes his views in his own breast, while men generally state theirs argumentatively to show them to others. Hence, we have the saying, "Disputation is a proof of not seeing clearly." The great Tao does not admit of being praised. The great argument does not require words. Great benevolence is not officiously benevolent. Great disinterestedness does not vaunt its humility. Great courage is not seen in stubborn bravery. The Tao that is displayed is not the Tao. Words that are argumentative do not reach the point. Benevolence that is constantly exercised does not accomplish its object. Disinterestedness that vaunts its purity is not genuine. Courage that is most stubborn is ineffectual. These five

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., Book XVII, Part II, Section XX, Chap. I.

seem to be round and complete, but they tend to become square and immovable. Therefore, the knowledge that stops at what it does not know is the greatest. Who knows the argument that needs no words and the way that is not to be trodden? He who is able to know this has what is called the heavenly treasure-house. He may pour from it without its being exhausted. And all the while, he does not know whence the supply comes.<sup>24</sup>

This seems to be so clear an exposition of the client-centered position that to paraphrase would be pointless.

In the following, Chuang-tzu expresses very pointedly the client-centered position that what is right for the client is what is right for him, and nothing else; "rightness" is not something to be imposed from without by however well-meaning or clever an analyst. (In fact, the less clever he is, probably, the better it is for the client.) And, most emphatically, "rightness" is not to be equated with righteousness.

If a man sleep in a damp place, he will have a pain in his loins and half his body will be as if dead; but will it be so with an eel? If he be living in a tree he will be frightened and all in a tremble, but will it be so with a monkey? And, does any one of the three know his right place? Men eat animals that have been fed on grain and grass; deer feed on the thick-set grass; centipedes enjoy small snakes; owls and crows delight in mice; but does any one of the four know the right taste? The dog-headed monkey finds its mate in the female gibbon; the elk and the axis deer cohabit; and the eel enjoys himself with other fishes. Mao Zhiang and Li Ki were accounted by men to be most beautiful, but when fishes saw them they dived deep in the water from them; when birds, they flew from them aloft; and when deer saw them, they separated and fled

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., Book II, Part I, Section II, Chap. VII.



away. But did any of these four know which in the world is the right female attraction? As I look at the matter, the first principles of benevolence and righteousness and the paths of approval and disapproval are inextricably mixed and confused together:--How is it possible, then, that I should know how to discriminate among them?<sup>25</sup>

Chuang-tzu feels that discussion is, psychologically, fruitless and will not lead to enlightenment, or behavior change; that perception must be, necessarily, of immediacy and directness. It must be experiential rather than analytic, and must originate in the person himself. Further, that what is true for a man is simply what is true for him.

Since you made me enter into this discussion with you, if you have got the better of me and not I of you, are you indeed right and I indeed wrong? If I have got the better of you and not you of me, am I indeed right and you indeed wrong? Is the one of us right and the other wrong? Are we both right or both wrong? Since we cannot come to a mutual and common understanding, men will certainly continue in darkness on the subject.

Whom shall I employ to adjudicate in the matter? If I employ one who agrees with you, how can he, agreeing with you, do so correctly? And the same may be said if I employ one who agrees with me. It will be the same if I employ one who differs from us both, or one who agrees with us both. In this way, I and you and those others would all not be able to come to a mutual understanding; and shall we then wait for that great sage? We need not do so. To wait on others to learn how conflicting opinions are changed is simply like not so waiting at all. The harmonizing of them is to be found in the invisible operation of heaven, and by following this on into the unlimited past. It is by this method that we can complete our years without our minds being disturbed.

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., Book II, Part I, Section II, Chap. VIII.

What is meant by harmonizing conflicting opinions in the invisible operation of heaven? There is the affirmation and the denial of it; and there is the assertion of an opinion and the rejection of it. If the affirmation be according to the reality of the fact, it is certainly different from the denial of it:--there can be no dispute about that. If the assertion of an opinion be correct, it is certainly different from its rejection:--neither can there be any dispute about that. Let us forget the lapse of time; let us forget the conflict of opinion. Let us make our appeal to the Infinite, and take up our position there.<sup>26</sup>

The therapist, then, accepts the statements of the client uncritically, at their face value. Thus, the Taoist concept of a mind of all-embracing wholeness would be that of no-self, of not imposing one's viewpoints upon others, but accepting things as they are in their own light. The therapist, accepting the statements of the client as statements in their own right, not about anything--not statements about anything, as symbols to be related to something, to be analyzed and interpreted and intellectualized about, but simply accepting them as statements in their own right. Concepts, like "here" and "thero", depend upon a point of view, upon a "self." With no self, there is no point of view; concepts vanish, and all that remains is one all-embracing wholeness.

According to Taoism, it is impossible to investigate the cause of things. Imagination, speculation, has nothing

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., Book II, Part I, Section II, Chapter I.

to do with reality. Western philosophy asks the question, "Why? What is the cause?" To ask "Why?" in the Taoist view, is the beginning of suffering, e.g., intellectual desire, to speculate upon the cause and forget to enjoy it.

The sage responds to the influence acting on him, and moves as he feels the pressure. He discards wisdom and the memories of the past. He does not indulge in any anxious doubts. He does not lay plans beforehand.<sup>27</sup>

This is the complete man: responding with action appropriate to the moment, rather than upon expectation or stereotypy or set.

The presumption is that benevolence and righteousness are not constituents of humanity; for to how much anxiety does the exercise of them give rise!<sup>28</sup>

The true Tao is neither benevolent nor righteous, but simply what is. Moreover, benevolence and righteousness--the attempt to "help" or direct or guide people--is actually a source of anxiety!

The true men of old came and went composedly. They did not forget what their beginning had been and they did not inquire into what their end would be. They accepted their life and rejoiced in it. Thus, there was in them what is called the want of any mind to resist the Tao.<sup>29</sup>

Simply the acceptance of the present and the responding with the appropriate action.

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., Book V, Part II, Section VIII, Chap. II.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Book VIII, Part II, Section I, Chap. III.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., Book VI, Part I, Section VI.

What could be plainer than the following!

Hwang-Ti, enjoying himself on the north of the Red Water, ascended to the height of the Kwan-lun Mountain and, having looked towards the south, was returning home when he lost his dark-colored pearl. He employed Wisdom to search for it but he could not find it. He employed the clear-sighted Li Ku to search for it but he could not find it. He employed the vehement debator, Khieh Khau, to search for it, but he could not find it. He then employed Purposeless, who found it, on which Hwang-Ti said, "How strange that it was Purposeless who was able to find it!"<sup>30</sup>

In Taoism, the future of man is open because the Tao has no mind, just the spontaneous principle. In Taoism there is no Final Cause, just spontaneity and nothingness.

We find, further, that:

When water is still, its clearness shows the beard and eyebrows of him who looks into it.<sup>31</sup>

A very clear exposition of the principle that the therapist should remain a clear mirror within which the client can see himself reflected through his own frame of reference as he looks at himself.

And again:

Such is the clearness of still water, and how much greater is that of the human Spirit!

And, further:

Vacancy, stillness, placidity, tastelessness, quietude, silence, and doing nothing are the root of all things.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Book XII, Part II, Section V, Chap. IV.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., Book XIII, Part II, Section VI.

Thus, in such a situation, in such a psychological climate, created by this attitude, by this behavior on the part of the therapist, the client is able to get at his own roots, as it were, to re-experience himself as he really is, an ability which the neurotic has long since lost. From vacancy comes fullness, as rest after sleep. The principle of non-action refers to no purposeful or conscious action, letting everything take its own course, non-interference, an attitude of not imposing one's own viewpoints upon other people, a willingness to let each follow his own natural ability. Confronted by this, not as a verbalized principle, but as a behavior, as demonstrated in his interaction with the therapist, the client is able to let down his defences, relax his own actions, and rediscover his own sanity, his own undifferentiated wholeness.

There should not be the practice of what is good with any thought of the fame which it will bring, nor of what is evil with any proximation to the punishment which it will incur.<sup>32</sup>

The therapist, then, cannot think in terms of "success" or outcome of therapy. When he is doing this he is a psychologist and not a therapist.

Confucius said:

I have got it. Ravens produce their young by hatching; fishes by the communication of their milt; the

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., Book III, Part I, Section III, Chap. I.

small-waisted wasp by transformation; when a younger brother comes, the elder weeps. Long is it that I have not played my part in harmony with these processes of transformation. But as I did not play my part in harmony with such transformation, how could I transform men?

Lao-tzu's reply:

You will do, K'iu, you have found the Tao.<sup>33</sup>

Here, again, is stressed the unself-consciousness of the liberated man. He who knows not the "Tao" knows the Tao --the spontaneous, immediate, organismic sort of thing, as opposed to the rigid, intellectualized categorization of speculation. To influence other men, in other words, the therapist himself must play his part in harmony with such transformation. By responding in such a fashion as to show that he understands, so that communication is established, reflecting the statements of the client as a clear mirror, adding nothing, subtracting nothing, the therapist is able to bring about a transformation on the part of the client.

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., Book XIV, Part II, Section VII, Chap. VIII.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE WEST--CLIENT-CENTERED THERAPY

#### I. WHAT IS PSYCHOTHERAPY?

Psychotherapy deals primarily with the organization and the functioning of the personality. There are many elements of experience which the individual cannot face, cannot clearly perceive, because to face them or to admit them would be inconsistent with and threatening to himself. To see his own attitudes, confusions, ambivalences, feelings and perceptions accurately expressed by another, but stripped of their complications of emotion, is to see himself objectively. This, in effect, paves the way for acceptance of himself, of all of those elements which he now more clearly perceives. In a sense, then, reorganization, a more integrated functioning, occurs.

In a relationship of this sort, the client experiences a feeling of safety. He finds that whatever attitude he expresses is understood in almost the same way that he understands it. He is then able to explore areas which he has denied, feelings which he could not admit because of their anxiety-producing character. As he verbalizes these areas and finds that the therapist accepts them, he comes to take the same attitude, and accept what he finds as he experiences

himself (his needs, drives, desires, wants, aspirations), more fully. He comes to experience himself in this way without guilt. He has been enabled to do so because another person has been able to perceive him with acceptance and respect.

Shaffer sees psychotherapy as "a learning process through which a person acquires an ability to speak to himself in appropriate ways so as to control his own conduct."<sup>1</sup> This is undoubtedly another dimension which would be appropriately considered a part of the client-counsellor relationship, a situation wherein the client finds an optimal atmosphere to learn to "speak to himself in appropriate ways."

Meister and Miller describe the experience of psychotherapy as:

...an attempt on the part of the therapist to offer the client a new type of experience wherein his cycle of unusual responses may be disrupted, since the therapist does not supply the reinforcement by rejection which other social contacts have provided. The client's report of his behavior, his actual behavior, and his need to behave as he does, all are accepted. Thus, in the counselling relationship itself, the client adopts a new mode of response, a different mode of need-satisfaction.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>L. F. Shaffer, "The Problem of Psychotherapy," American Psychologist, II (1947), 459-467.

<sup>2</sup>R. K. Meister and E. H. Miller, "The Dynamics of Non-directive Therapy," Journal of Clinical Psychology, II, (1946), 59-67.



The relationship may be seen as one in which the client is provided with the opportunity of making responsible choices in an atmosphere in which it is assumed that he is capable of making these choices. Operationally, it may be observed that in the therapy hour the client makes hundreds of choices--what to say, what not to say, what to withhold, what to think, what to believe, what to do, what values to place upon his experiences. The relationship becomes an area for a continuing practice in the making of increasingly mature and responsible choices.

## II. RESEARCH STUDIES IN SELF-INITIATED BEHAVIOR VS. DIRECTED BEHAVIOR

In a well-known study of autocratic, democratic, and laissez faire groups, it was found that in the democratic group, where the leader's role was one of interest and permissiveness, the group took responsibility upon itself and, in quantity and quality of production, and in absence of hostility, it exceeded the other groups.<sup>3</sup>

In a study by Herbert Williams, a classroom group of the worst-offending juvenile delinquents in a large school system were brought together. The only two rules to be

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<sup>3</sup>Ronald Lippit, "An Experimental Study of the Effect of Democratic and Authoritarian Group Atmospheres," University of Iowa Studies in Child Welfare, XVI, (1940), pp. 43-195.

observed were (1) a boy must keep busy doing something, and (2) no boy was permitted to annoy or bother others. Now here, we submit, was a situation of genuine permissiveness with responsibility clearly placed upon the individual. The group remained together for a four-month experimental period. Here are the results: The major educational achievement increased 11.2 months in reading age, 14.5 months in arithmetic age, and similarly in other subjects. The total increase in educational age was 12.2 months. If three members are omitted whose attendance was short, the average increase was 15.2 months. Now, this is more than four times the normal expectation for a group with this degree of retardation.<sup>4</sup>

In a study of food habits, it was found that when groups were urged by a lecturer to make use of little-used meats--hearts, kidneys, brains--few (10%) actually carried out the suggested practice. In other groups, the problem of war scarcities was discussed with the group members and simple information about the meats given, following which the group members were asked to make their own decisions about serving the meats in question. These decisions, it was found through a follow-up study, tended to be kept, and 52% (!) actually served one or more of these meats--a rather

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<sup>4</sup>Herbert D. Williams, "Experiment in Self-directed Education" School and Society (1930), XXXI, 715-718.

clear-cut and operationally sound demonstration of the principle that self-initiated and responsible action proved far more effective than guided action.<sup>5</sup>

Another study comes to the same conclusion regarding industrial workers. With conditions of pay held constant, some groups of workers were shifted to a new task and carefully instructed in the way to handle it and in ways of increasing efficiency on the new task. Other groups were shifted to the new task and permitted to discuss, plan and carry out their own way of handling the new problem. In the latter groups, productivity (1) increased more rapidly, (2) increased to a higher level, (3) held a higher level, and (4) morale was definitely higher, than in the groups which had been instructed.<sup>6</sup>

A study of supervision in an insurance company was made by the Survey Research Center. When units in which productivity and morale were high compared with those in which they were low, significant differences were discovered in the methods and personalities of the supervisors. In

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<sup>5</sup>Kurt Lewin et al., "The Relative Effectiveness of a Lecture Method and a Method of Group Decision For Changing Food Habits," (Washington, D.C.: National Research Council, 1942). (Mineographed.)

<sup>6</sup>Lester Coch and J. R. P. French, Jr., "Overcoming Resistance To Change," Human Relations, I (University of Michigan, 1948), 512-532.

units with high productivity, supervisors and group leaders tended to be interested in the workers primarily as people, and interest in production was secondary. Supervisors encouraged group participation and discussion and group decisions in matters affecting their work. Finally, supervisors in these "high" units gave little close attention or supervision to the work being done; they tended to place the responsibility upon the worker.<sup>7</sup>

The way in which self-directing capacities of small communities were utilized in the development of the T. V. A. project was well described by David Lillienthal.<sup>8</sup>

In a very different type problem situation than any of those so far cited--that of training a striking force of Marines--General Carlson relied very heavily upon the self-directing capacities of the individual in developing the famous Carlson's Raiders.

In dealing with juvenile delinquency there has been a similar experience cited in the area projects developed by Clifford Shaw. Success was encountered frequently in direct proportion to the degree to which the leader built upon the

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<sup>7</sup>Survey Research Center, "Selected Findings From A Study of Clerical Workers in the Prudential Insurance Co. of America," Human Relations (University of Michigan, 1948), Study No. 6.

<sup>8</sup>David E. Lillienthal, T. V. A.--Democracy On The March (New York: Pocket Books, 1945).

strength of the group. If the leader was a catalyst, a person genuinely able to accept the neighborhood as it existed, and to release the group to work toward its own real purposes and goals, the result was in the direction of socialization. The gangster, petty politician, the tavern keeper, when given the opportunity to express real attitudes and the full freedom to select goals, tended to choose goals which moved the group toward more social objectives.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, Clifford Shaw says:

Attempts to produce these changes for the community by means of ready-made institutions and programs planned, developed, financed and managed by persons outside the community are not likely to meet with any more success in the future than they have in the past. This procedure is psychologically unsound because it places the residents of the community in an inferior position and implies serious reservations with regard to their capacities and their interest in their own welfare. What is equally important is that it neglects the greatest of all assets in any community, namely, the talents, energies and other human resources of the people themselves. . . . What is necessary, we believe, is the organization and encouragement of social self-help on a cooperative basis.<sup>10</sup>

The Peckham Experiment in London provides an opportunity to study the basic hypothesis from another vantage point. The Peckham Center is a center organized for family

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<sup>9</sup>Carl R. Rogers, Client-Centered Therapy (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951), p. 59.

<sup>10</sup>Clifford Shaw, Memorandum Submitted To The Board of Directors of the Chicago Area Project, January 10, 1944. ( mimeographed.)

health and family recreation by a group of biologists. In attempting to promote health and richness of living for individuals and families, the sponsoring group has learned many lessons which are deeply relevant to psychotherapy:

Another outstanding characteristic of the biological overhaul (health examination) must be emphasized. The facts elicited and their significance are, as far as possible, presented to the family in their entirety in lay terms. No advice is volunteered. To the layman this might appear but natural, since no advice is sought, but to anyone trained in the medical profession --that is, specifically to give advice--it is a most difficult attitude to achieve. Indeed, "to give advice" seems to be a well-nigh irresistible impulse to most human beings. We try, then, not to give advice and to refrain from assuming the authority of special knowledge. It is left to their own degree of intelligence to act. It is difficult to understand why a laissez faire attitude to a mouthful of decaying teeth should change as a result of the new circumstances, but it does; or why a complacency to a useless overweight in either a man or a woman should change, but it does. It was found in practice that when the examinations were conducted in a spirit which led up to conclusions which were bits of advice, no action was taken; whereas leaving it to spontaneity in the individual and to his own sense of responsibility, action is taken in the overwhelming majority of cases. (Italics mine) <sup>11</sup>

With this type of handling, with a deep respect for the right and capacity of the individual to be responsible for himself, then, ninety per cent of the individuals in whom some disorder is discovered go for treatment!!! The study continues that, not only with regard to health

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<sup>11</sup>I. H. Pearse and Lucy C. Crocker, The Peckham Experiment: A Study in the Living Structure of Society (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1943), p. 49-50.

activities is this hypothesis found to be effective, but it is also the purpose of this Center to give families an opportunity for recreational enrichment of living.

Our problem is the "man in the street." The first tentative approach to encouraging the members to do things was based on the common assumption that ordinary people like to emulate their betters; that an exhibition of a high degree of skill, of relative perfection, would stimulate the imitative faculty and lead to action. That method of approach we have found useless. The assumption is not borne out by the experiment.

Primarily, individuals are conscious only of their own capacity, and act accordingly. They may admire, they may even be envious of outside standards, but they do not use them, even as stimulants to try out their own capacity. The status "teacher" tends inevitably to undermine self-confidence. Our failures during our first eighteen months work have taught us something very significant. Individuals, from infants to very old people, resent or fail to show any interest in anything initially presented to them through discipline, regulation, or instruction--which is another aspect of authority. . . . .

. . . We now proceed merely by providing an environment rich in instruments for action. Slowly but surely, these chances are seized upon and used as opportunity for development of inherent capacity. . . . .

. . . Having provided the members with a chance to do things, we find that we have to sit back and leave them make their own use of them. We have had to learn to sit back and wait for these activities to emerge. Any impatience on our part, any help, has strangled their efforts. We have had to cultivate more and more patience in ourselves. The alternative to this cultivation of patience is, of course, obvious--the application of compulsion in one or other of its many forms, perhaps the most tempting of which is persuasion. But having a fundamental interest in the source and origin of spontaneous action--as all biologists must--we have had to discard even that instrument for initiating activities. Even temptation, the gentlest form of compulsion, does

not work, because human beings, even children, recognize carrots for what they ultimately mean. We have at least progressed beyond the donkey! . . . . .

. . . Civilization hitherto has looked for the orientation of society through an imposed "system" derived from some extrinsic authority such as religion, "cultural education," or political suasion. The biologist conceives an order emanating from the organism living in poise in its environment. Our necessity, therefore, is to secure the free flow of forces in the environment, so that the order inherent in the material we are studying may emerge. Our interest is in that balance of forces which sustains naturally and spontaneously the forms of life which we are studying.<sup>12</sup>

I submit that this is a statement which might very well have been made by an adherent of Chuang-tzu himself in 600 B. C.!

. . . The biological necessities of the situation then compel us to leave the members to themselves, to initiate their own activities, their own order of things. We have no rules, regulations, or any other restriction of action except a very fluid time-table. Within eighteen months, the seeming chaos and disorder is rapidly developing into something very different. This is apparent even to our visitors, one of whom, upon leaving, described the life in the Center as being like a stream, allowed to form its bed and its banks according to the natural configuration of the land.<sup>13</sup>

If there is a basic respect for the capacity of the individual or group, then responsibility and self-direction occur, characterized by spontaneity, creativity, productivity, morale and confidence.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 38-40.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 41.



### III. THE ATTITUDE OF THE THERAPIST

In any psychotherapy the therapist himself is a highly important part of the human equation. What he does, the attitude he holds, his basic concept of his role - all influence therapy to a marked degree. The relationship of the philosophical views of a therapist to his work cannot be over-emphasized. Does he see each person, each client, as having worth and dignity in his own right? And, if so, to what extent is this operationally evident at the behavioral level? Does he tend to treat individuals as persons of worth, or does he subtly devalue them by his attitude or behavior? Is his philosophy one in which respect for the individual is uppermost? Does he respect his capacity and his right to self-direction, or does he basically believe that the client's life would best be guided by the therapist? To what extent does he have a need and a desire to dominate others? Is he willing for the client to select and choose his own values, or are the therapist's actions guided by the conviction--usually unspoken--that the client would be happiest if he permitted the therapist to select for him his values and standards and goals?<sup>14</sup>

Among psychologists and psychiatrists there are many

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<sup>14</sup>Rogers, op. cit., p. 20.

whose concept of the individual is that of an object to be dissected, diagnosed, manipulated.

This paper postulates that such an approach to therapy is not based upon a sound philosophical position.

The assumption is made that the creation of an interpersonal situation, characterized by the therapist's acceptance of the client as a person who is competent to direct himself, creates a psychological climate in which therapy is able to proceed.

The therapist, necessarily, is always demonstrating, both in a conscious and non-conscious way, the attitudes which he holds toward the client. This obviously, then, does not mean a passive role on the part of the therapist. A passivity, a seeming lack of interest or involvement on the part of the therapist, is experienced by the client as a rejection; indifference is not the same as acceptance. Nor does a passive attitude on the part of the therapist indicate to the client that he is regarded as a person of worth.

This concept of the therapist's attitude tends to reduce a problem which has been experienced by other therapeutic orientations: the problem of how to prevent the therapist's own maladjustment from interfering with the therapy process.

There can be no doubt that every therapist has his

own conflicts, and how to keep these "warped" attitudes from blocking therapy or harming the client has been an important topic in therapeutic thinking.<sup>15</sup> Warped or unrealistic attitudes are the most likely to be evident when evaluations are made. When evaluation of the client or of his problems is non-evident, counsellor bias has little opportunity to influence the relationship. When a therapist is thinking in evaluative terms, even if the evaluation is objectively accurate, he is to some degree assuming a judgmental position, viewing the person, the client, as an object rather than a person, and, to that extent, respecting him less as a person. When the therapist is concerned with what he should do, his attention is focussed upon himself and there is necessarily a decreased focus upon the respect he feels for the client.<sup>16</sup>

#### IV. THE FUNCTION OF THE THERAPIST

It is the therapist's function to assume, insofar as he is able, the internal frame of reference of the client, to perceive the world as the client sees it, to perceive the client himself as he is seen by himself.<sup>17</sup>

At this level, therapist participation becomes an

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

active experiencing with the client of the feelings to which he gives expression.<sup>16</sup> The therapist concentrates upon trying to understand the client as the client seems to himself. The therapist must lay aside his preoccupation with diagnosis and his diagnostic shrewdness, must give up the temptation subtly to guide the individual and must concentrate on one purpose only: that of providing deep understanding and acceptance of the attitudes consciously held at this moment by the client as he explores, step by step, into the dangerous areas which he has been denying to consciousness. This is not a subtle way of guiding the client while pretending to let him guide himself. The therapist must think and feel and explore with the client. He must then indicate to the client the extent to which he is seeing through the client's eyes. This becomes a striking operational demonstration of the belief he has in the worth and the significance of this particular person, demonstrating a confidence in the potentiality of this individual for constructive change and a development of a fuller and more satisfactory life, a basic confidence in the constructive tendency in the human organism, a demonstration of the central hypothesis of respect for and reliance upon the capacity of that person.

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<sup>16</sup>Nathaniel J. Raskin, "The Development of Non-directive Therapy," J. Consult. Psychol., 1946, 12, 92-110.

How far is the therapist going to go in maintaining his central hypothesis? Or should he feel that "I can be successfully responsible for the life of another"; or "I can be temporarily responsible for the life of another without damaging his capacity for self-determination"; or "The individual cannot be responsible for himself, nor can I be responsible for him, but it should be possible to find someone else who can be responsible for him." To put him in an institution or a hospital where he can be watched, for example. An example from a counseling interview can be cited which demonstrates the hypothesis that the therapist can, in good conscience, retain a deep respect for the capacity of a person in this situation<sup>19</sup>

Client: "I've never said this before to anyone, but I've thought for just a long time--this is a terrible thing to say--but if I could just, well, if I could just find some glorious cause that I could give my life for, I would be happy. I cannot be the kind of person I want to be. I guess maybe I haven't the guts or the strength to kill myself and if someone else would relieve me of the responsibility, or I would be in an accident....I....I....just don't want to live."

Therapist: "At the present time things look so black to you that you can't see much point in living."

Client: "Yes. I wish I had never started this therapy. I was happy when I was living in my dream world. There, I could be the kind of person I wanted to be, but now there is such a wide, wide gap between

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<sup>19</sup> Rogers, op. cit., p. 46.

my ideal and what I am. I wish people hated me. I try to make them hate me because then I could turn away from them and could blame them. But, no, it's all in my hands. Here is my life, and I either accept the fact that I am absolutely worthless, or I fight whatever it is that holds me in this terrible conflict. And I suppose that if I accepted the fact that I am worthless, then I could go away someplace and get a little room someplace, get a mechanical job someplace, and retreat clear back to the security of my dream world where I could do things, have clever friends, be a pretty wonderful sort of person."

Therapist: "It's really a tough struggle, digging into this like you are, and at times the shelter of your dream world looks more attractive and comfortable."

Client: "My dream world...or suicide."

Therapist: "Your dream world or something more permanent than dreams."

Client: "Yes." (a long pause, complete change of voice) "So I don't see why I should waste your time coming in twice a week. I'm not worth it. What do you think?"

Therapist: "It's up to you. It isn't wasting my time. I'd be glad to see you whenever you come, but it's how you feel about it. If you don't want to come twice a week, or if you do want to come twice a week, once a week, it's up to you." (long pause)

Client: "You're not going to suggest that I come in oftener? You're not alarmed and think I ought to come in every day until I get out of this?"

Therapist: "I believe you are able to make your own decisions. I'll see you whenever you want to come."

Client (note of awe in voice): "I see. I may be afraid of myself, but you aren't afraid for me."

Therapist: "You say you may be afraid for yourself and are wondering why I don't seem to be afraid for you?"

Client: "You have more confidence in me than I have." (long pause) "I'll see you next week....maybe."<sup>20</sup>

These are issues, of course, which test the philosophical position of such a point of view as is being expressed in this paper to its ultimate, and, perhaps in the final analysis, an issue which each person would have to decide for himself. Only a general theoretical position may be presented and, perhaps, the functioning of the therapist in this as well as in any situation depends upon his own reaction to the situation at the time that it occurs.

This type of therapy cannot--indeed, must not--be a technique.

It could never be rigidly enforced as a dogmatic principle to be invariably followed, but rather must be viewed as a point of view, a philosophical orientation the operational demonstration of which must rest with the therapist's own personality structure. It may be observed, however, that the more deeply the therapist does rely upon the strength and potentiality of the client, the more deeply does he discover that strength.<sup>21</sup>

When the therapist accepts a client as he is from his own frame of reference, he frees the client to explore his life and experience anew, frees him to perceive in that experience new meanings and new goals.

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

The question, then, that would arise: Is the therapist genuinely willing for the client to organize and direct his own life? Is he willing for him to select goals that are social or anti-social, moral or immoral?

Even more difficult, is he willing for the client to choose regression rather than growth, or maturity, to choose neuroticism rather than mental health, to choose to reject help rather than to accept it, to choose death rather than life?

To me it appears that only as the therapist is completely willing that any outcome, any direction may be chosen--only then does he realize the vital strength of the capacity and the potentiality of the individual for constructive action. It is as he is willing for death to be the choice that life is chosen; for neuroticism to be the choice that a healthy normalcy is chosen.<sup>22</sup>

In a research study, Fiedler reports that among successful therapists, the following characteristics were the most frequently encountered:

Most characteristic: The therapist is able to participate completely in the patient's communication.

Very characteristic: The therapist's comments are always right in line with what the patient is trying to convey.

The therapist sees the patient as a co-worker on a common problem.

The therapist treats the patient as an equal.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 48.



The therapist is well able to understand the patient's feelings.

The therapist really tries to understand the patient's feelings.

The therapist always follows the patient's line of thought.

The therapist's tone of voice conveys the complete ability to share the patient's feelings.<sup>23</sup>

At the negative end of the scale are placed those items which describe the therapist as hostile to, or disgusted by, the patient, or acting in a superior fashion. At the extreme negative pole was the statement, "Therapist shows no comprehension of the feelings the patient is trying to communicate."

It's not surprising that comprehension, or the degree of communication, would rank high with successful therapists and low with unsuccessful therapists. This finding clearly demonstrates the importance of empathy and complete understanding on the part of the therapist. Some of the items also indicate the respect which the therapist has for the client. Quite lacking is any statement of a tutorial role, a tutorial or authoritarian role being played by therapists who experience success with their patients. The importance of a complete and sensitive understanding of the client's

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<sup>23</sup>Fred E. Fiedler, "The Concept of an Ideal Therapeutic Relationship," J. Consult. Psychol., 1950, 14, 239-245.

attitudes and feelings as they seem to him--the client--is supported by Fiedler's work.

The basic hypothesis concerning the capacity of the individual for self-initiated constructive handling of the issues involved in life situations has not yet, of course, been definitely proved or disproved by any research evidence.

At this time, it may only be stated that clinical experience does seem to support this hypothesis.

It must be admitted that this is, of course, unsatisfactory from the scientific point of view.

#### V. THE ATTITUDE OF THE CLIENT

The expectation of the client in therapy will govern his perception to a considerable extent.

The range of these expectations is tremendous.

The client may have expected the counselor to be a parental figure who will shield him from harm and who will take over the guidance of his life. He may have expected the therapist to be a psychic surgeon who will probe to the root of his difficulties, causing him great pain and making him over against his will. He may have expected him to be an advice-giver, and this advice may be genuinely and dependently desired, or it may be desired in order that the client can prove the advice wrong. He may, due to unfortunate previous experience with psychiatric or psychological counselors, look upon this new experience as one where he will be labelled, looked upon as abnormal, hurt, treated with little respect--and thus, may deeply dread the relationship. He may look upon the counselor as an extension of the authority which referred him for help--the dean, the Veterans Administration, the court. He may, if he has some knowledge of

client-centered therapy, view the counselling interview as a place where he will have to solve his own problems, and this may seem to him a positive, or a very threatening possibility. Even this enumeration of some of the most common expectations which the client brings to therapy, barely suggests all the ramifications which they may have.<sup>24</sup>

Now, it seems that the therapy experience would be facilitated if both the client and the therapist were to perceive the relationship in similar fashion. The problem is how this may be brought about.

One thing is clear: according to the hypothesis upon which this paper is based, the perception will not come about as a result of telling the client how he ought to experience the relationship.

Meaningful perception is a matter of direct sensory experience.

It not only does not help, but it may actually hinder a unified perception if the therapist attempts to describe intellectually the character of the relationship or of the process.

There is one way in which the desired relationship may be brought about. It can perhaps best be shown in the words of a client:

This type of psychological help seemed strange to me at the first meeting. I wondered, "How in the devil can

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<sup>24</sup>Rogers, op. cit., p. 67.

this help me--just talking about things that weren't even clear to me." I won't deny that after that first meeting I doubted whether he could help me. . . .

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. . . Through having to put my concerns into words and logical sentences, which was necessary as I couldn't keep silent longer than the counsellor, I began to understand them better and saw them in different lights. Some of my vague thoughts were put into words by the counsellor so that I had a fuller understanding of the three things I was concerned over. After I told him of my problems and he didn't suggest any solution--which was what I had expected from counselling--I found, again, that silence could be embarrassing, and found it necessary to make up some methods of overcoming my difficulties, which later being rephrased by the counsellor, began to make sense. .

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. . . During the interviews, my psychologist took my views and thoughts and made them so that I could understand what was going on. He didn't conclude them, but stated them back to me so I could draw my own conclusions. Things we talked about seemed clearer in my mind and organized it to an extent where now I believe I can think things out for myself.<sup>25</sup>

And further:

I was lost in your presence, especially when I was told I had an hour with you. I could either sit, or talk, or do as I pleased. The impression I received was of being left alone, all on my own with my problem; but I soon discovered that by talking of my indecision and problem, I was able to see clearly that my problem was being solved of my own initiative, rather than the counselling of my interviewer.<sup>26</sup>

The safety of the relationship with the counsellor, the complete absence of any threat, permits honesty--even the

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<sup>25</sup>S. Lipkin, "The Client Evaluates Non-directive Therapy," J. Consult. Psychol., 1948, 12, 137-146. p. 140.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

honesty of inconsistency--and makes the situation very much different from an ordinary conversation or social behavior.

The therapeutic interview becomes a place where one can talk directly about concerns as they are felt.

The client is able, of course, to communicate perhaps only a small fraction of the attitudes and feelings he is experiencing, but this apparently commences a process which becomes continuous and serves to change--and, in some cases, reverse--his former patterns of behavior.

The effect of the interview doesn't cease when the client walks out the door. The therapy hour is carried over into other experiences.

The realization that some change is occurring, that he is experiencing new feelings, seems to give the client persistence in continuing the interviews.

## VI. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CLIENT

In a study made at the counselling center of the University of Chicago over a three-month period, it was found that only approximately three per cent of some fifteen hundred appointments were broken.<sup>27</sup> In only three instances out of one hundred did the client simply fail to show up. This element is usually also experienced with some astonish-

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<sup>27</sup>Rogers, op. cit., p. 75.

ment by the client. Clients speak of talking about "things I had never previously thought of" and they describe with vividness facts that have been denied consciousness for some years. This experience of discovering within himself attitudes and emotions which have been deeply buried out of awareness, constitutes one of the deepest and most significant aspects of therapy.

During counseling, I was forced in my own mind to admit that several of these things were wrong. I began to think and actually admit things to myself about myself that I had never considered admitting before. I began to see just what was at the root of all of my actions, why I was so often apt to cover up what I had done with excuses.<sup>28</sup>

This experience can be somewhat depressing or disillusioning in some cases.

As for the counseling I have had, I can say this: It really makes a man strip his mind bare, and when he does, he knows then what he really is and what he can do--or at least he thinks he knows himself pretty well. As for myself, I know that my ideas were a little too big for what I really am. But now I realize that one must start at his own level. . . .

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. . . Now, after four visits, I have a much clearer picture of myself and my future. It makes me feel a little depressed and disappointed, but on the other hand it has taken me out of the dark; the load seems a lot lighter now--that is, I can see my way, now. I know what I want to do. I know about what I can do. So now that I can see my goal, I will be able to work a whole lot easier at my own level.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Lipkin, op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 142-143.

And again, in the words of another client:

I started to talk of the things that had bothered me and, at intervals, Mr. L. solidified my ramblings into a few clear, concise words. Many of the thoughts and fears in my mind were vague. I couldn't put them into exact, clear, words. The fear was the thing that overwhelmed my thoughts. I had never seen these clearly. I couldn't put it into words that seemed to mean anything to me. Mr. L. took these vague thoughts and fears and put them into words that I could understand and see clearly. By doing so, I could see clearly their degree of importance. Some of the things I was afraid of now seemed unimportant, as they actually were. Fear, though, is something that combats reasoning. I needed help and Mr. L. gave it to me. During the second meeting, I received my first jolt. Taking my vague thoughts, he told me in a few words what they really meant. I broke out in a sweat. I was trembling, somewhat panicky. Those few words had opened the door for me. When I walked out into the street after that meeting, it was as though I were in a new world. People looked different--more human. The world seemed a better place to live in. . . .

. . . . .

In school I applied some of the things I had learned and found that they worked. I seemed to get along better with the other students and at times the fear and tension almost vanished. At times, though, it became just as bad, but it came in waves now that receded when I made an effort. . . .

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. . . During subsequent meetings, I learned more and more about myself, until today--our fifth meeting--I told him the real trouble that was bothering me--all of my other fears that I had told him about in previous meetings being related to this main fear. A night ago I wrote another piece of fiction and for the first time in six years it had everything in it that I wanted to say. It was good, and my friends verified this. . . .

. . . . .

. . . It was an immediate relief to get rid of these

fears and the tension and the misery that goes with it.<sup>30</sup>

Still another aspect of this experience of reorganization of personality involves a similarity to psycho-drama. The client is trying out on a symbolic and verbal level the new self, the new behavior toward which he is struggling. One often sees evidence of this in the interviews.

Last time, I was using the time a little differently from the way I do sometimes, because I was trying to get myself to say something and then to see if it was true--or if I'd know if it were true after I said it. Sometimes you can sort of try out different expressions of feeling to see whether they do any good or not, whether they fit or not.<sup>31</sup>

Progress appears to be experienced by the client almost from the first.

It is the fact that he discovers that some of the issues that he has discussed, some of the denied experiences which have been accepted, no longer cause him pain or anxiety--which encourages the client to go forward. The realization that one segment of personality organization has been reconstructed, and that new forms of behavior result from it--this it is that builds the client's confidence in his own ability to make progress in exploring himself.<sup>32</sup>

And, again:

This sense of progress and achievement is felt not only in moments of elation and pleasure, but also when the road seems darkest and the confusion greatest. It is clear that even in a feeling of retrogression the

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 145-146.

<sup>31</sup>Rogers, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.



experience of progress is with the client and buoys him up. This appears to be characteristic of most clients. It is not infrequently true that the blackest moods and the deepest despair come rather shortly before the end of therapy. Looking at it more deeply, we may say that to face the most threatening denied attitudes, the client needs to feel considerable confidence, which comes from the recognition that one issue after another has been resolved, that one experience after another has been assimilated. Yet it is still true that these most basic denials are deeply upsetting when brought out into the therapeutic hour, and that all the past confidence cannot prevent the client from plunging into despair as he discovers that much that is basic to his personal organization is false and must be painfully rebuilt. Nonetheless, the backdrop for this mood of discouragement is a series of experiences of vital inner progress and reorganization and, black and tragic as the present discovery may seem, the positive setting in which it takes place is also a part of the total experience for the client.<sup>33</sup>

In therapy, the client learns new aspects of himself, new ways of relating to others, new ways of behavior. Therapy may be thought of as an experiencing of the self, rather than an experience about the self. Thus, the intellectualizing, introspective interest in self drops away in favor of a more primary experience. The material being explored in the interviews progresses from past to present--not a steady progression, of course, for in one respect early interviews are often concerned with present problems. But, in general, the experience of the client seems to focus itself more and more upon the present perceptual situation. He tends to begin

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 85.



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*President.*

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with some past aspect, then gradually faces the crucial and often unpleasant issue as it exists in the present. Thus, therapy ends with the person dealing with himself, with his own attitudes, emotions, values, goals, as they currently exist. He learns that it is safe to leave the less-dangerous consideration of the symptoms and to focus upon the discovery of himself here and now--the immediate, experiential, direct perception of self, the "territory" and not the "map."<sup>34</sup>

Shearer has made a major study which indicates that:

1. There is a tendency for the "acceptance of self," operationally defined, to increase during therapy. Acceptance of self, according to the definition used, means that the client tends:

To perceive himself as a person of worth, worthy of respect rather than condemnation;

To perceive his standards as being based upon his own experience rather than upon the attitudes or desires of others;

To perceive his own feelings, motives, social and personal experiences without distortion of the basic sensory data;

To be comfortable in acting in terms of these perceptions.

The essential elements would appear to be that the individual at the end of therapy perceives himself as a more

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<sup>34</sup>Alfred Korzybski, Science and Sanity (Lancaster, Pa.: Science Press Printing Co., 1953).

<sup>35</sup>Elizabeth T. Shearer, "An Analysis of the Relationship Between the Acceptance of and Respect For Self and Acceptance of and Respect For Others in Ten Counseling Cases," J. Consult. Psychol., 1949, 13, 169-175.

adequate person with more worth and more possibility of meeting life. He permits more experiential data to enter awareness and thus achieves a more realistic appraisal of himself, his relations, and his environment. He tends to place the basis of standards within himself, recognizing that the "goodness" or "badness" of any experience or perceptual object is not something inherent in that object, but is a value placed upon it by himself. In the language of Zen, he comes to recognize the "suchness", or the "isness," of reality and his relationship with it, tending to no longer pin such dogmatic and rigid importance to such labels as "good," "bad," and other social and cultural mores. Not that he flies in the face of society or culture, or disregards mores or conventions, but simply that he tends to recognize them for themselves, for what they are--as labels, nothing more--not reality itself, but simply convenient signposts, useful when recognized as signposts, but devastating when confused or perceived as objects of importance in and of themselves.

The client tends to enter therapy regarding himself critically, feeling more or less worthless, and judging himself quite largely in terms of standards set by others. He has an ideal for himself and sees this ideal as very different from his present self. Emotionally, the balance of feelings about himself swings decidedly to the negative

side, and, as therapy proceeds, he often feels even more discouraged and critical about himself. He finds that he frequently experiences very contradictory attitudes toward himself, and as he explores these he gradually becomes more realistic in his perception of himself and more able to accept himself "as is." As he develops more concern in regard to his current feelings and attitudes, he finds that he can look at them objectively and experience them--neither as a basis for emotional self-condemnation nor self-approval; they are simply himself observed in action.

This self, "as is," is increasingly accepted, accepted not in the intellectual sense, but simply unself-consciously accepted.

As these changes take place, he feels himself to be more spontaneous in his attitudes and behavior, experiencing himself as a more real person, a more unified person.

He changes from high level abstractions and wide generalizations to more differentiated perceptions closely rooted in primary experience.

This examination of the rich primary experience exposes the falsity of many of his generalizations, his tendency to view the symbol or experience the symbol, as the reality, the conceptual as the concrete.

This process does not just "happen," it is facilitated

by the special conditions of the therapeutic relationship, the complete freedom to explore every portion of the perceptual field and the complete freedom from threat to the self, which the client-centered therapist in particular provides.

The client has been living by a map; in therapy, he discovers first of all that the map is not the territory, that the experiential territory is very different and far more complex. He also discovers that, even as a map, his map has contained some serious errors. Therapy gives him the protected opportunity to come down from the high level abstraction of his map and explore the territory of primary experience. By the time he is constructing a new map with the new awareness that it is only a map and not experience itself, therapy is ready to conclude.

Using other semantic terminology, we might say that the client gradually reduces the intentional quality of his reactions--his tendency to see experience in absolute and unconditional terms, to over-generalize, to be dominated by concept or belief, to fail to anchor his reactions in space and time, to confuse fact and evaluation, to rely upon ideas rather than upon simple straightforward reality-testing--and move toward a more extentional type of reaction.

This may be defined as the tendency to see things in

limited, concrete, actual, differentiated terms, to be aware of the space-time anchorage of facts--the immediacy of facts, in other words--to be dominated by facts, not by concepts, to evaluate in multiple ways, to be aware of different levels of abstraction and that they are abstraction and various levels of it, to test his inferences and abstractions by reality, to participate in reality. These ideas are all part of the fundamental thinking in semantics.<sup>35</sup>

The human being deals with much of his experience by means of symbols. Symbols tend to become generalized, as opposed to differentiated, generalized to the point of an almost complete state of utter meaninglessness--meaningless in the sense that they are no longer attached in any meaningful way, or very slightly, or fragmentarily, or peripherally attached in any meaningful way to the fundamental data of the senses. The direction of movement in therapy, then, should be toward the concrete, the direct, the immediacy of experience.

The satori experience of Zen would be the "Aha!" experience of Gestalt psychology. The change is in the

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<sup>35</sup>S. I. Hayakawa, Language In Thought and Action (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949); Wendall Johnson, People In Quandaries (New York: Harper & Bros., 1946); Alfred Korzybski, Science and Sanity (Lancaster, Pa.: Science Press Printing Co., 1953); Reusch and Bateson, Communications: The Social Matrix of Society (New York: Norton, 1950).

direction of from perceiving elements as rigid and fixed to perceiving them as "loose" or changeable.

We might, therefore, define psychotherapy from the phenomenological point of view as: The provision of experience whereby the individual is enabled to make more adequate differentiation of the phenomenal self and its relationship to external reality. If such differentiations can be made, the need of the individual for maintenance and enhancement of the phenomenal self will do the rest.<sup>36</sup>

The phenomenal self is here seen by Snygg and Combs to have mere conceptual reality. As the individual comes to recognize this, to be able to differentiate, in other words, the symbolic or phenomenal self from the reality of experience or the "is-ness" or the "suchness" of Zen, he comes closer and closer to the actual, the concrete, and proceeds, in Zen terms, toward satori, or, in the terms of Western psychology, toward the culmination of therapy.

We have the acceptance or the recognition for the individual of the environment as it is, rather than as rigidly defined in terms of set, or expectation, or symbol, or concept. Now, this is something rather difficult to define because when you define it you put it into words. It cannot, indeed, by its very nature, be verbalized; it is beyond words; likewise, it is beyond silence. Being beyond

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<sup>36</sup>Donald Snygg and Arthur W. Combs, Individual Behavior: A New Frame of Reference for Psychology (New York: Harper & Bros., 1949), p. 285.



both words and silence simply makes it non-verbal or non-symbolic, but nonetheless real or actual; indeed, being real, being actual, is precisely what it is. To give a very mundane example: The taste of an avocado is certainly beyond both words and silence. Its immediacy of perception, its direct experience, however, is both actual and concrete, as well as being easily arrived at if the avocado is available and the individual is willing--both psychologically and physically willing. He must be willing to accept the taste of the avocado as a direct experience. As long as he attempts to verbalize about it, to describe it in conceptual terms or symbols, define it as "green" or "round" or in any such fashion, the essential nature of the taste of the avocado will, of course, forever escape him. The solution is simply to drop all such intellectual ratiocinations and experience directly the avocado itself.

Thus, the phenomenal self of Snygg and Combs<sup>37</sup> vanishes and the relationship to external reality itself is perceived directly; and this direct perception becomes the self, or is indistinguishable from the self. "I am as I experience," or, perhaps rather, "I am my experience." I do not taste the avocado, then, in the sense of a separate phenomenal self

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

experiencing the taste of the avocado, but, as I experience it directly, in a sense I am the taste of the avocado--a direct, immediate experience, with no intervening variable of a phenomenal self.

The conclusion of therapy finds the client experiencing reality directly, wholesomely, and unself-consciously, without feeling the compulsion to stand off from himself and watch himself, to be critical of himself, to feel unworthy, and so on; but rather simply to be himself, which is what he must do or be, unavoidably, in any event. This is inescapable. When he recognizes this and accepts it genuinely, viscerally accepts it, that is the end of therapy in a very analogous way that satori is the end of Zen.

As therapy progresses, the client comes to realize that he is trying to live by what others think, that he is not being his real self, and he becomes less and less satisfied with this situation.

But if he is to relinquish these introjected values, what is to take their place?

There ensues a period of confusion and uncertainty as to values, a certain sense of insecurity in having no basis for judging what is right or wrong, good or bad.

Gradually, this confusion is replaced by a dawning realization that the evidence upon which he can base a value

judgement is supplied by his own senses, his own experience. Short-term and long-term satisfactions can be recognized not by what others say, but by examining one's own experience. A value system is not necessarily something imposed from without, not for adults--it is, for children, but not for adults --it is something experienced.

He discovers that he has within himself the capacity for weighing the experiential evidence and acting upon those things which make for the long-run enhancement of himself.

Characteristic of the change in the valuing process during therapy is that the client moves away from a state where his thinking, feeling and behavior are governed by the judgements and expectations of others toward a state in which he relies upon his own experience for his values and standards.

## VII. "NON-VERBAL" THERAPY

That the psychotherapy situation is experiential seems a well-founded hypothesis, strikingly demonstrated by this case in which there were no verbalized insights, little expression of attitudes, no certain expression of denied experience:

Joan was one of my first clients when I started counseling one-half day each week at the local high school. She had told the girls' advisor, "I feel so shy I couldn't even tell him what my problem is."

Will you tell him for me?" So, the advisor told me before I saw Joan that she worried about having no friends. The advisor added that she had noticed that Joan seemed always to be so alone. . . .

. . . . .

. . . The first time I saw Joan she talked a little about her problem and quite a bit about her parents, of whom she seemed to be quite fond. However, there were long, long pauses. The next four interviews could be recorded verbatim on this small piece of paper. By the middle of November, Joan remarked, "Things are going pretty good." No elaboration on that. Meanwhile, the advisor commented that the teachers had noticed that Joan was now smiling a friendly greeting when they met her in the hall. This was unheard-of before. However, the advisor had seen little of Joan and could say nothing of her contacts with other students. In December, there was one interview during which Joan talked freely. The others were characterized by silence, while she sat, apparently deep in thought, occasionally looking up with a grin. More silence through the next two and one-half months. Then I received word that she had been elected "Woman of the Month" by the girls of the high school! The basis for that election is always sportsmanship and popularity with other girls. At the same time, I got a message from Joan, "I don't think I need to see you any more."<sup>38</sup>

Experiences of this kind seem to indicate that therapy can move forward even though verbally the client exhibits few of the elements which seem to be characteristic of therapeutic progress. In this case, there was very little verbal exchange. It was apparently due to the experience of the relationship; the client apparently moves from the experiencing of himself as an unworthy, unacceptable and unlovable person to the realization that he is accepted, respected and

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<sup>38</sup>Rogers, op. cit., p. 159.

loved in this limited relationship with the therapist--loved in the sense of being deeply understood and deeply accepted. Even during her periods of silence and shyness, as well as in the times when she could talk, she found acceptance. She discovered that she could be a silent person and still be liked, that she could be her shy self and still be accepted--thus, giving her a feeling of worth and changing her relationship to others outside of the therapy hour. As she finds that she is accepted by others, the characteristics of shyness and withdrawn-ness tend to drop away.

It has been shown that when maladjusted children who<sup>39</sup> are retarded in reading are given even a moderate number of therapeutic sessions and handled in a client-centered manner, there is an improvement in the functioning of the child in reading as measured by standardized tests. In the study conducted by Bills,<sup>40</sup> nine therapy sessions in which reading was in no way the focus of the experience were accompanied by an increase of approximately one year of reading skill during thirty school-days time. This was in a group of eight children who showed marked retardation in reading ability as compared

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<sup>39</sup>Virginia Axline, "Play Therapy Experiences As Described By Young Participants," J. Consult. Psychol., 1950, 14, 53-63.

<sup>40</sup>Robert E. Bills, "Non-directive Play Therapy With Retarded Readers," J. Consult. Psychol., 1950, 14, 140-149.

with their rating on an intelligence test.

Rather striking instances of the effectiveness of simple acceptance in therapy may be gained from a study of play therapy with children. The child may come and sit down and continue to do just that. He may just sit throughout the entire hour. The total silence may continue for one hour or for twenty hours. There is no apparent catharsis, no reflection of feelings; there are no verbalized insights, no self-searching, in short, none of the phenomena generally believed characteristic of the psychotherapeutic process. Not infrequently, however, these cases must be adjudged successful on the basis of reports of altered behavior from adults who deal with the child.

A fourteen-year-old boy is referred because he way-lays and robs smaller children, hits strange adults without apparent provocation, uproots fences, does unsatisfactory school work, and executes cats by hanging. He flatly refuses to discuss anything with the therapist and spends most of his fifteen weekly sessions reading comic books, methodically searching the closets and desk, raising and lowering the window shades and looking out the windows in silence. In the midst of these seemingly unprofitable contacts, his teacher reports that he has performed an act of unsolicited generosity--the first ever noted in his eight years at the school. His teacher tells the therapist that he has used his printing press to print programs for a class skating party and has distributed these to his classmates although no one has suggested it to him. As she puts it, "This is his first social act." For the first time, an interest in his school work is noted. His teacher says, "Why, he's actually one of us now. We never even notice him now."

Another twelve-year-old is referred for attempted rape and for school work so poor that he has been taken out of his classroom in order to be tutored individually by the adjustment teacher. During his therapy sessions he does his spelling homework or describes the latest movie he has seen. Once, he brings a deck of cards and he and the therapist play "War." This is the overt extent of their relationship. When the semester is over he is returned to his grade where he is reported, "doing very well." Months later, he is walking along the street with a friend and he accidentally meets the therapist. He introduces them and says to the friend, "You ought to go see him on account of you can't learn to read. He helps kids who are in trouble."

Again, a thirteen-year-old boy is referred for his explosive, outbursts of aggression and for his long-standing "torturing" (unspecified) of a classmate. He inquires about the therapist's first name, which just happens to be the same as that of the tortured classmate. From then on, he calls the therapist by this name alone. When he is at the height of his sociability, he plays tic-tac-toe with the therapist. By dint of always going first, he wins nearly every game, and scornfully keeps a record of his victories. Most of the time, however, is spent seated at the window, his back to the therapist, counting the numbers of the various brands of automobiles which pass. When the hour ends, he throws his tally sheet on the therapist's table and stalks out. After ten such sessions the therapist tells him that he saves the hour for him, but that he need not come any more if he does not wish to. His reply is, "What do you mean, not come any more? I'll come till the cows come home." Then he misses two weeks in a row and upon his return announces, "I didn't feel like coming, so I didn't." At the end of the semester, he, too, is "doing very well." His teacher has become fond of him because he is so helpful and cooperative. He has stayed after school to help with the school newspaper. His teacher adds, "He's improved so much. Why, I don't know what I'd do without him."

Cases like these are far from rare. Here is an example from a play contact with a nine-year-old boy who had spent the entire hour painting in silence:

Dick: "How much time do I have left?"

Therapist: "Seven minutes, Dick."

Dick: "I might as well go and rock awhile." (He goes and sits in the rocking chair. He closes his eyes and quietly rocks.) "How much time do I have left now?"

Therapist: "Five more minutes, Dick."

Dick (sighs very deeply): "Ah....five more minutes all to myself."

Therapist (very softly): "Five more minutes all your own, Dick?"

Dick: "Yes!" (Said with much feeling. He rocked silently for the rest of the hour; his eyes are shut in apparent enjoyment of the peace.)

Therapist: "It feels good just to sit and rock?"

Dick nods.

Therapist: "That's all the time we have for today, Dick."

Dick: "Okay." (He gets up immediately and goes to the door with the therapist. They say goodbye and he goes out. A minute later he knocks at the door.) "I thought I'd get you some clean water."

Therapist: "You want to help me, Dick?"

Dick: "Yes, I do." (He gets the water. The therapist thanks him and he leaves, skipping down the hall. This is the first time that he has ever made an effort to clean up after his painting.)<sup>41</sup>

It seems as if the therapist's willingness to let Dick be silent was experienced by him as an opportunity for psychological privacy, yet without loneliness. It appears that the therapist must have the ability to tolerate silence

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<sup>41</sup>Rogers, op. cit., pp. 244-247.



without embarrassment. A therapist who feels rejected when the client fails to pour out his problems will only add to the client's anxiety by a display of his own.

In the hour which belongs to him, the child finds an adult who is not shocked by anything he does, who allows the expression of his every feeling, and who treats his utterances with a respect which no other adult offers to the same extent. Reflection and clarification of feelings serve to help the child to bring them out into the open where they can be looked at. If the child feels understood, he tends to bring out deeper material. Since the therapist reflects feelings which are positive, negative, or ambivalent, and regardless of their object or the number of times they occur, no specific attitude or content is valued above the rest. The child has no way of knowing the therapist's opinion; as neither praise nor blame is forthcoming, the child's expressions are determined by his needs rather than by the therapist's persuasion.<sup>42</sup>

#### VIII. A THEORY OF PERSONALITY

A theory of personality may now be stated, utilizing the foregoing:

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 254.

1. Every individual exists in a continually changing world of experience of which he is the center.

2. The organism reacts to the field as it is experienced and perceived. This perceptual field is, for the individual, "reality."

3. The organism reacts as an organized whole to this phenomenal field.

4. The organism has one basic tendency and striving: To actualize, maintain, and enhance the experiencing organism.

5. Behavior is basically the goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced in the field as perceived.

6. The best vantage-point for understanding behavior is from the internal frame of reference of the individual himself.

7. A portion of the total perceptual field gradually becomes differentiated as the self.

8. As a result of interaction with the environment, and particularly as a result of evaluational interaction with others, the structure of self is formed--an organized, fluid, but consistent conceptual pattern of perceptions of characteristics and relationships, together with values attached to these concepts.

9. The values attached to experiences are in some instances values experienced directly by the organism, and in some instances values introjected or taken over from others but perceived in distorted fashion as if they had been experienced directly.

10. Psychological maladjustment exists when the organism denies to awareness significant sensory and visceral experiences.<sup>43</sup>

#### IX. WHAT IS "SUCCESSFUL" THERAPY?

The position, then, that the therapist creates a

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., Chap. XI.

psychological climate wherein the client is able to discover himself as he is and accept himself and his relation to his environment realistically is, indeed, the only defensible position, may be indicated by considering the difficulty of defining such a criterion as "success" in therapy by any outside frame of reference:

1. The removal of symptoms might be a definition of success, but there are some objections to this definition. A symptom might disappear and yet leave unchanged the deeper psychological disturbances out of which the symptoms arose.

2. But, if deep personality change is made the criterion for success, not only is the definition of the direction of that change a matter of dispute among psychologists and among political philosophers, sociologists, law-enforcement officials, and theologians, but it may also be claimed that therapy may be successful without involving personality change. The client may simply increase in his ability to cope with pressing environmental problems.

3. Again, success might be defined as a point at which the client feels satisfied within himself. But this immediately arouses the objection that such evaluations are untrustworthy and subject to the "flight into health" phenomenon, or the client may be satisfied with behaviors which are asocial or even anti-social.

4. If the attempt is made to define success in terms of social behavior and adjustment, difficulties are equally great. A divorce or a change in a job may be "good" or "bad," depending upon one's interpretation of the interaction between client and environment and the interpretation of all the people associated with him in his environment. Such interpretations differ from person to person, from situation to situation.

5. Increased productivity may mean improvement, or it may mean simply a surrender to the demands of the status quo.

The implication here, then, would be the abandonment of any value-judgment, and the sole criterion would be that after therapy the individual is able to be aware of a greater proportion of his total organismic response to any situation. That this generally means a move in the direction of greater socialization is, admittedly, true; but it is not the operational criterion upon which judgment should be based.<sup>44</sup>

The difficulty of arriving at a statement of "success" in therapy is, at present, then, even pragmatically insoluble.

The therapist must take what he gets, must not think in terms of success or failure, must accept the client, as he is, as a person of integrity, dignity, and worth. When this is done, with no attempt made at "guidance," however subtle, no behavior either "approved" or "disapproved," even by inference, the client is able to proceed in his own way at his own pace, to realize his own fullest potential.

This must be a genuine philosophy and not a technique. If it is merely a technique it becomes a sort of trick whereby a certain behavior change is actually sought by sort of pretending to ignore it.

Analyses such as this paper are useful--but only in symbolic terms. The destination must not be confused with the road; nor, worse, with the signpost.

Any analysis is, at best, a signpost, as is all language. The analyst is functioning as a psychologist, and not

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<sup>44</sup>Carl R. Rogers and Rosalind F. Dymond, (eds.), Psychotherapy and Personality Change (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), Chap. II.

a therapist.

The therapist must abandon ideology, concept, and purpose, and simply experience, with the client, the immediacy of the therapy situation. Just that, and no more. This, then, is therapy.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SYNTHESIS

#### I. THE RESEARCH STUDY--AN OVERVIEW

For a year and a half the writer has tested the hypothesis outlined in the foregoing discussion during a total of one hundred and ninety-seven hours of therapy with fifteen different patients. In this admittedly limited sample, the justification for approaching the therapy situation with the major premises in view as discussed seems almost startlingly noteworthy. Of the fifteen clients, eleven--or some seventy per cent--would be adjudged to have attained markedly dramatic improvement to the degree of a complete cessation of the symptoms which brought them into therapy.

Now, while keeping in mind that cessation of symptomatology is certainly not an ultimate criterion, as is pointed out above, it is one of the factors usually noted in a research study. Of more importance than the cessation of symptoms which can be so conveniently and objectively categorized, is the admittedly subjective observation that these eleven at the conclusion of therapy were all leading much fuller, happier, more productive, contented, zestful, creative lives, characterized by self-acceptance, acceptance of others, understanding of self and others, and respect for

self and others. In these three dimensions, there was quite a movement along the line from lesser to greater degree, to an even dramatic extent.

## II. THE "FAILURE" CASES

In the four cases of the fifteen which would be adjudged as "failure" cases or doubtful cases, one had been through two previous psychiatric series. He exhibited a long history of personality difficulty and would be classed as "severely disturbed." In the eight interview hours, some change in self perception and perception of others did occur, changes which have lasted for some months. He did, however, drop therapy after eight interviews and, for purposes of the statistical record, would have to be considered among the "failure" cases.

Another of these cases, self-referred, a boy of twenty-two with severe paranoid problems, wanted immediate help. In the series of interviews, a long history of personality disturbance became evident. He seemed to arrive, in the next-to-last interview, at quite a cogent statement involving considerable insight into his own difficulties. He, however, did not keep the last appointment and nothing has been heard from him since, so that for statistical purposes he would have to be put into a "failed," or at least "doubtful" category.

A third of the failure cases, another young man about twenty, self-referred for an inability to study or concentrate, who complained of poor grades, came for twelve interview hours. No appreciable progress or change in any direction could be observed from the therapist's point of view at the end of the twelfth session, although at times during the sessions insights and new awarenesses did seem to occur.

In the fourth of the failure cases, a man of about thirty-five, a chronic alcoholic for seventeen years, referred by a social service worker, prognosis rather poor to begin with, a paranoid schizophrenic, with severe delusional material as well as hallucinatory experiences, paralytic and epileptic-type seizures, extremely high anxiety level, accompanied by blackouts, has been unable to work for three years; two previous psychiatric treatments or series of treatments. He has been given a clean bill-of-health neurologically, with the University of California Medical Clinic reporting no organic damage or neurological findings. In the series of eight interviews, some improvement was noted. The blackouts ceased, the epileptic seizures ceased, the hallucinatory episodes ceased. However, the delusional material remained. He had the feeling that he was being followed, that he was under the surveillance of government agents, and, in the next-to-the-last interview, reached a sort



of impasse with the therapist in which it seemed that he was emotionally unable to remain in the therapy situation. He had been intellectualizing his difficulties, unable to come to grips emotionally or experientially with them; the therapist violated his own basic premise in exhibiting what might only be termed annoyance; the client interpreted this, or perceived this, as rejection on the part of the therapist and did not return.

### III. THE "SUCCESS" CASES

With the exception of these four cases, the other (eleven) cases of the fifteen could be described as demonstrating various degrees of success.

The longest space of time that any one client was in therapy was thirty hours. A girl of some twenty-two years of age, brilliant, talented, imaginative, was brought into therapy by severe unhappiness, self-referred. She would wake up in the morning at three or four o'clock and be unable to restrain her sobbing and crying until it was time to get up at seven-thirty or eight. She would wake from nightmares screaming and crying. She had no idea what was causing her difficulties. She had a compulsion to count--to count steps, cracks, etc.--had a morbid fear of snakes, had been unable to engage in sexual relations with her husband for some six

months. She felt desperately unhappy and, at the climax of the therapeutic interviews--or, one of the climaxes--felt that she could not continue, and that the only solution to her desperate unhappiness would be suicide. At this point the therapist faced quite an emotional challenge to his basic hypothesis of respect for the individual and the individual's right to make his own decisions, and was able to accept this calmly with the statement that he felt that whatever choice the client made would be right for her. This proved to be a turning point in therapy and some two or three interviews later therapy was discontinued with a complete personality change being described by the client. (This case will be gone into verbatim later in the paper.) It has been some eight months now, since this client has left therapy, and there is some indication of a continuing change. She has recently asked to continue therapy again--or, to start again--but this has, as yet, not occurred. Therapy, of course, must be recognized as a dynamic thing rather than a terminal thing.

The second of the "successful" cases was a woman of some thirty-five, desperately unhappy, with both her husband and her fourteen-year-old stepson also thinking at times of self-destruction. Twelve of the fifteen hours, weeping most of the hour, punctuated by long silences, sobs, and continued

weeping. At the close of therapy she stated that she felt that she could now handle her own problems, that she felt problems would occur but she felt differently about them, so they were no longer as important as they used to be. She seemed quite happy again with her husband, full of plans for her son, and left with the assurance that if anything developed she would feel free to call. In the ten months or so elapsed since the close of therapy, no contact has been made with this client.

The third case was perhaps the most dramatic of the cases in some respects. A young man of some twenty-eight years of age, a drug addict on parole, self-referred, entered therapy a few moments after he had tried to obtain a "fix" and then, realizing what this would mean again, phoned for an appointment and spent some two hours in the first interview. I know of no case in the literature which parallels the rapid movement that this client showed. There was no reference made to the difficulties of his addiction after the first three or four interviews. During the next seven or eight interviews, after which therapy was terminated, he explored areas of his personal relations, of communicating with friends, employers, relatives, and seemed to come to a real grip emotionally, experientially, with himself as a person, and his interaction with others. In the year since therapy

has been terminated, he has had no further difficulties with addiction, is very happily married, has attained two promotions, and seems to demonstrate an unusually well-integrated and self-actualized type of personality, exhibiting tremendous capacity for enjoyment, for intellectual curiosity, a genuine outgoing relationship with others, and all in a natural, unaffected, unself-conscious, unanalytical way. Now, to say that this was a result of the therapy of the twelve hours would, of course, be inadmissible. One never knows what factors go into the dynamics of a personality change or the behavior of any individual; but, one might submit that the therapy at least played a part in the total picture. Of even more importance than the part that therapy played or did not play is the demonstration here of what Rogers has called the "positive growth potential" which the individual will demonstrate if he finds himself in a situation conducive to psychological growth, a situation, in short, of acceptance rather than that of analysis, criticism, or interpretation, all of which intellectual factors it could be postulated have little effect upon the personality structure or the "self" as defined as the part of the personality which remains more or less constant in its perceptual sphere, in interacting with its environment.

The fourth case, or case number four, was that of a boy some eighteen years of age, extremely intelligent, able,

and gifted--self-referred because of a lack of feeling of direction. He said he had "spent the previous semester sleeping in the back of a friend's car." His grades were not enough to keep him in school. During the semester of therapy his grades improved to the point where he obtained all "A"s save one, which was a "B" in English Composition. He had also complained of a difficulty in relating to others, of having no friends. His behavior and attitude, as observed from time to time by the therapist in informal situations, indicated a marked change in these dimensions. He seemed to have many friends, to be accepted widely, to often be the center of a laughing, talking group.

One of the most "satisfying," though, perhaps, not so dramatic, was case number five, a nineteen-year-old boy with a long history of failure in school, self-referred, who obtained remarkable insights in a very short time (twelve hours) and emerged from the therapy experience with marked changes in personality. He had been sullen, belligerent, very depressed, unable to make his morning classes a good deal of the time--the type of boy that one frequently expects to be typically involved in "juvenile delinquency" escapades. He had never attained a grade of higher than "C" and most of his grades were below "C." In this relatively short time, he "found himself," so to speak, and without really arriving at

any intellectual or verbal configurations--which is typical of other types of therapy. He merely described himself as feeling differently, in rather unsophisticated language, and he apparently did feel differently and behaved differently, certainly. It's a subjective impression, of course, but he seemed to brighten. One bit of objective evidence was his grades: They all went up, not just to "C"s but to "B"s.

A sixth case, with whom the basic premises as derived from the contribution of the spirit of Zen or Taoism to client-centered therapy was, I suppose, the most dramatic of the lot. A girl, twenty-two years of age, who was diagnosed as mentally defective with an I. Q. too low to measure. She exhibited such distressing symptoms as jerking, facial tics, crossing of eyes, stuttering, stammering, that the first impression that the therapist had was that she was seriously demented. She was referred to the therapist by the pupil personnel department of the college where she had applied for admission. The college felt itself unable to accept her. She had not graduated from high school, had an I. Q. too low to measure, and appeared to be a case that could be handled in nothing short of a mental institution of some type. The therapist had a Wechsler-Bellevue intelligence test administered by a school psychologist and, to his surprise--and everyone's surprise--she was about above average in

intelligence. The previous I.C. rating had been on the basis of a group test, a pencil and paper test. The Wechsler-Bellevue, an individually administered test, showed her to be above average intelligence, with great capabilities and potentialities. Therapy was undertaken on the basis of one hour per week and the premises of complete acceptance, of non-direction, a willingness to let happen what would happen in the hour, was rigorously adhered to. After some six sessions, her eyes uncrossed and remained uncrossed; her tic-ing and jumping around and other unfortunate manifestations of her emotional problems dropped away. After four months of therapy, at the end of that semester, she was able to enroll in the college, passed the entrance requirements, and during that semester maintained a very creditable average, getting one "B," getting some "A" papers, taking examinations with the other students, in competition with them, and given no special consideration by anyone concerned. Now, her symptoms had been as drastic as described since the age of seven. She had been to two psychiatrists and one school psychologist, not for long treatments but for short terms. Her home situation could only be described as "abysmal." Her father's conception of discipline was to choke her into insensibility. She was virtually a prisoner in her home until the mother consented for her to start therapy. When she started regular classes at the college the following semester, she was a

changed girl in every respect. Now, at no time during these interviews did the therapist deviate from his avowed principle of non-critical acceptance. He made no interpretations, no analyses, offered no suggestions and no advice. He listened, he tried to understand what the girl said from her own frame of reference, to see her as she saw herself, and her situation as she saw it, and to respond in a manner which would indicate that he was trying to do this. The results, then, such as they were, came--all of them--from the girl herself, a striking demonstration of the "positive growth potential" in action. Being provided nothing but a favorable psychological climate for one hour once a week, despite the fact that the rest of her environment remained objectively unchanged, she found herself more and more able to cope with it, with the results as described.

Case number seven, a boy of some twenty-four, twenty-six, years of age, self-referred, who came into therapy complaining of nervousness, despondency. He said he would go into a bank and then be unable to remember his name to sign it to the deposit slip or the check. He felt desperate. He would wake in the middle of the night and be unable to sleep, and would spend the night staring out the window. A case of extreme despondency, extreme depression. In nine interviews he emerged as a self-directing, self-respecting, relaxed



individual. His problems remained, but he no longer felt they were overwhelming. He felt quite able to deal with them. He had been failing in college (he was a C. I., on the G. I. Bill--or rather, an ex-C. I.), because although he had studied the material and knew it before the exam, he would find himself unable to write the exam and would leave before the end of the hour, dropping his paper in the waste basket. After the seventh or eighth interview, he simply didn't feel the anxiety or the tension in the examination situation; he felt that what would happen, would happen; that he would simply do his best, or simply do what he would do--write the exam, turn it in, and, as he put it, "Let the chips fall where they may."

Case number eight, a young man of some thirty years of age, unhappily married, who during the course of sixteen interviews came to an understanding, a new relationship with his wife that proved to be the foundation for a rebirth of some of the feelings that they had had for each other when they were first married. They had a boy some eight years old, and he felt that a divorce would be unfair to the child. He left therapy delighted with the change that he felt in himself and in his familial situation, feeling very ambitious for the future, going to school nights and working days. He did feel that he did not know all that he would like to about himself; he tended to remain on a sort of intellectual level, handling

the emotional material of the interviews with tongs, as it were, and stated that he felt he had gone as far as he could with "this type of therapy" and that something more or deeper could be gotten from psychoanalysis.

Case number nine was a young man of twenty-two, debating with himself whether or not to leave his wife (they had two small children); whether or not to stop going to school; whether or not to quit his job and get another job. He was very confused, very mixed up, very disturbed, demonstrating what would be called in a clinic a "situational neurosis." His face was wreathed in lines of anxiety; he looked very belligerent all the time. At the end of seven hours many marked changes had occurred. He no longer felt unhappy with his wife or with his children; he decided he was happily married. He had entered into a new relationship with his father, with whom he hadn't gotten on for some years. And he had made a decision to open his own business, which seemed to have every chance for success. He was a car-painter, had been trained in the Army and, having made the decision and taken the initiative to finance the business, he felt sure of success. He left therapy enthusiastic and happy and outgoing.

Case number ten, a man of some forty-five or fifty years of age, a chronic alcoholic for some thirty years, suffered a stroke some three years ago, unable to work for three years, divorced (with two children). Currently in therapy,

he has shown improvement to the extent that although the prognosis was poor at the beginning of therapy, he is now actively engaged in looking for work. He has moved out of the community county camp where he had been for some time, and seems to be on the road to self-respect and rehabilitation. He hasn't drunk since beginning therapy. Of course, in a case of this type, of thirty years' duration, it is too early to say what the final outcome will be; but, then, with the persuasion that this paper is concerned with, it would be a contradiction in terms to think of a final outcome, of course. The attitude of purposelessness, of Zen, seems to be one of the central aspects of therapy, the willingness to accept what is.

And case number eleven, the final case, and one of the most heartening from the point of view of the therapist: A young boy some twenty-two years of age, a police case referred for exhibiting himself--self-referred, really, although it was a choice that he was given by the police, apparently. (In a sense, all of these clients must be self-referred, inasmuch as they must enter into therapy of their own volition, remain of their own volition, and leave when they feel the therapy is concluded.) This boy came into therapy concerned with homosexual tendencies which were worrying him; he had the compulsion to exhibit himself and he felt at the same time that this could only lead to

disaster. He was quite desperate in seeking for help. He also felt strong suicidal impulses, feelings of complete despondency, lack of self-worth--complete lack of self-worth--lack of self-respect. The therapist had had sufficient success by this time in the research program that he was able to hew with some confidence to his position of simple acceptance with understanding and a genuine feeling of letting what would happen, happen, in the interview hour, making no attempt to structure it in any way, to direct it in any way, and simply remaining willing to listen uncritically. This boy is still in therapy; he has now been seen for sixteen hours. A complete change seems to have occurred. In the last few hours there has been no discussion of his deviant tendencies; they seem to have dropped away, to have been merely symptomatic. He is speaking actively in terms of the future, has got a job and is going to school, and seems now very active and ambitious and zestful, creative, productive, imaginative; the feelings of despondency, the suicidal trends, no longer seen in evidence, and his demeanor is so changed that he seems really a different boy. If this one case were the only one that had occurred in an entire lifetime of practice, the premises upon which this type of therapy is based and the results which it obtains in terms of human happiness and human worth would be more than justified.

## IV. IN THE CLIENTS' OWN WORDS

The following are some excerpts from the actual clinical hours. The best procedure here would be to submit the complete tape for each client; the next-best would be to submit the verbatim interviews with each client; but perhaps the purposes of the paper would be served--certainly more expediently and perhaps just as well--by chosen excerpts. The entire therapy-hour is concerned, much of it, with repetition, with long silences, with long "barren" periods, and occasional flashes of insight. The following examples are typical:

The case number one as described above: In the second interview the client says, "I felt anxious and depressed at the end of last interview. I felt last week as though you were going to stop seeing me. I thought you felt I was wasting my time, and yours, too. I can't stand the pressures where I am. . . ."

In the third interview she said, ". . . I wouldn't care if I got run over dead in the street. I don't know if that's wrong, or just wrong in our culture. I wish I could do something independently. I'm not really a good executive's wife; I can't get close to people; I can't make a good impression, entertain. . . ."

In the fourth interview she describes a situation

where she woke up utterly rigid, terrified, at five o'clock and cried till six-thirty: ". . . I was completely shaken from it. I still panic at the picture of a snake. I can control it, but I am terribly frightened. The blasted counting annoys the devil out of me. I've left this office counting steps and fitting my steps into the counting. . . ."

In the fifth interview: ". . . I had a fight with my husband this morning. . . ." She continues with a discussion of their relationship, which is very gloomy, and later in the hour she says, ". . . I feel like I'm right in the middle of something. . . ." Near the end of the hour she says, ". . . I feel like I am in a chemistry lab throwing things together and I don't know what I'm doing, so I don't know how. . . ."

In the sixth interview she says she feels fine and from this interview on she has no more depressed feelings, chronic depression. She says, ". . . I feel ready for anything. . . ." She demonstrates a good deal of hostility in not receiving advice. She says, ". . . If I had studied psychology for seven years, I would probably know how to go at a problem. . . ." And she says, ". . . I'm wasting both our times by going over things I've already discussed. . . ." And further, ". . . People aren't studying for seven years so that people can go tell a friend. . . ." She says, ". . . I don't know how to grapple with it. . . ."

The seventh interview, she opened the hour by apologizing for getting angry in the last hour. She talks freely for the first time about her various fears, her terrors, and then at the end of the hour she said, "This is the first time I've felt answers instead of thought answers." Then she laughed and she said, "It feels so good." She said, "There are some things you don't reach logically. . . ." Laughed again, ". . . Gee, it feels good, too. I don't suppose it's a new experience, but it's the first time I've had it for a long time. . . ."

She talks about her family now in more realistic terms, not in such stereotyped terms.

In the eighth interview, she reported that she had got a job, she was happy, enjoying feeling good, hasn't been depressed for a long while, is more affectionate with her husband, and having a lot more fun around the house. She no longer heads straight for the television with a pillow and a blanket to cover her up. She says, ". . . I am very much aware of everything. . . ." She says, ". . . I get a good clean mad on--it's no longer the whining neurotic kind. . . . I can see so many things better now. . . . I fought growing up. . . ."

In the ninth interview, she says, ". . . Cessation of depression is probably the most drastic step I'll take. . . ." She says, ". . . I haven't got real depressed for some time."

Laughs, ". . . It's a wonderful thing. There are lots of things I still do--I still count, but it doesn't bother me as much. I've lost hiding behind the television and the blanket. I've lost compulsive eating. I'm less apathetic to a considerable degree. . . ." She still reports little or no improvement in her sex life and an unfortunate tendency to procrastinate. She says, ". . . Now that I've lost the depression, I've come to another impasse. I don't know what to tell you. . . ." Laughs. "Everything is going so well." She says she now feels more a distaste than a fear towards sex. She says, ". . . I fall asleep easily. . . ." She says, ". . . It's one of those things that the harder you try, the less you're doing it." (!!!!) (italics mine) She now evaluates her husband realistically, instead of in terms of a stereotype. She says, ". . . I'm no longer sure how I feel about him. I think I love him, but I'm no longer sure. I sometimes feel a great rush of affection. . . Everything comes in great surges. . . ." She says, ". . . I'm afraid I . . . I'm afraid to find out how I really feel because I'm afraid I may not like it. . . ."

In the tenth interview, she is menstruating easily for the first time in three months. She is now able to speak of sex freely. Before, it was with difficulty and only intellectually, as though she were "acting in a play and not



really involved." She now says that as she's telling me this she's feeling it. She says her eyes have been bothering her and she's had headaches for the past week and a half.

In the eleventh interview, she says, ". . . I haven't been depressed for a month now. . . ." She says, ". . . when I come in to see you, a lot of hostility is relieved just by getting it off my chest. Some problems appear to be clearing up; others remain; and new ones are developing. . . ."

In the twelfth interview, she talks about the disinterest of her marriage. She says that she's afraid marriage means "housewife's neurasthenia." She says, ". . . It's a good thing I'm in here (in therapy); otherwise, I would have ended up a hospital case or with slashed wrists. Now I feel so much better. I am less compulsive. . . ."

In the thirteenth interview, still crossing eyes, still sex problems, ". . . I am at an impasse and have been for three weeks. I don't know what to do. I don't know how to get at it. I've said this before--I felt stumped then. I don't feel the wild, furious helplessness I've felt before, but I don't think I would with any problem. This has been going on for three or four months now. I don't know what to do. I can't get ahold of it to do anything with it. I don't want to just sit here and look at you, yet I just don't know what to do with it." Her voice trembles through all this.

"I'm becoming more and more emotionally frigid." She says, "This might be defenses building up as I get closer to the solution." She laughs and she says, "I still don't know what to do with it. I stopped just a few minutes ago, not because I was frightened, but because I was afraid I was going to cry. It was a conscious step. I probably should have gone on and left well enough alone. The silences don't help because I don't think. The problem is, where do I go from here?"

Fourteenth interview: "The point is, what do I do? How to get rid of conditioning? I'm sort of stumped. There's no point in my waiting for you, is there?" Laughs. "I should have learned that by now. I just have nothing on it. I could just sit here for an hour; that wouldn't solve anything, either. I feel guilty about it as far as my husband is concerned, too. It piles up that way. It's difficult to talk about, even to you. Impossible, to him. The reaction is there before I have time to think. I feel a general pressure about everything. I can't remember when I've been completely relaxed. I want to be free--emotionally free, as well as intellectually. If there was only some way I could get at the damn thing. Usually, the intellectual comes first, then the emotional follows; this time, I don't know. I usually go out of here thinking. Three or four days later it begins to come through. It makes me feel no longer stumped, no longer up against a blank wall. If you

can help me directly, please do. . . ." And here she weeps uncontrollably for some time. ". . . If you can't help me, no one can. I feel like I can't do it. I wouldn't have faith in anyone else. I feel like a six-year-old girl asking her father for help. I don't know what to do. . . ." Weeps hysterically, sobbing, ". . . Jees, I don't know what to do. I don't want to slack off my responsibility on you, but I don't know what to do. I can't do anything. Is there anything you can do except sitting there being nice? I wish there was something you could do. I hate to learn it like this. It's impossible, and there's nothing I can do about it. I also feel that it will soon be eight o'clock and you'll chase me out of here. I could be bleeding to death and you would chase me out at eight o'clock. I am so afraid it will turn out wrong. I'd rather be dead than insane or frigid. Of the two, frigidity is worse--like finding out you've got cancer and can't live. I'm only going through this place once and if I can't go through the way I want to, I don't want to go through it. Maybe I'm much more afraid of dying than sez; that might solve it. . . ."

At the close of this interview, then, the fourteenth interview, is a very clear statement of her position and a definite suicide impulse. This proved to be a turning-point in therapy and in the next hour she was quite a changed person: ". . . I feel fine. I hated you for making me stand on

my own feet. I don't give up easily. The next day I was still in a turmoil. Then everything was suddenly all right. I feel different. The oddest combination of feeling elated and calm at the same time. I'm still me, but I feel like a new person. I'm going to have my eyes checked. . . ." (Here is a realistic approach to a problem she had been discussing as a compulsion and worrying about it for some three or four months.) "Right now, at least temporarily, I feel so good about everything, I can't worry very much. It feels so good. It feels different than before. The only thing I'm afraid of is that it might be a retreat or another defense mechanism. I feel free, whole, a human being. There are still things I don't like about myself, but they are things I can change. They aren't in my entrails. I'm going to do instead of think." Then she laughs. She says her watch has been broken for a year and she's taken it down to have it fixed. "I'm bored because of nothing to do, no real activity. I'll plan things to do. The primary things are planning new things, a new life. I feel more mature, more capable, whole. The old things still remain, but they're in the minority. I was in fifty different parts. I couldn't pull them together. Now, I feel as though I have one personality. I want to do so many things. This used to worry me. Now it no longer does. It's a marvelous feeling, one I've never had before. . . ."

Then she says that she still feels self-punitive and what she's punishing herself for she doesn't know. She says she feels guilty about not believing in God; she's wondering if that's the basis for her masochism; she can't think of anything else she could feel so guilty about, unless, perhaps, it's tied up with the sex problem. She says, "I guess the difference is that now I feel constructive about the whole thing. I'm not tearing down the old. I'm building the new...." Then she says, ". . . I doubt if at this point I could do any more in here. I feel that things are going to start straightening out. It was a long way up there, but when it broke, it broke like that. Something like an operation with a long slow recovery. I sort of hate to give this up. One moment of sympathy would have broken the whole thing. I'm kind of leary of it because it came so suddenly. From what I've read, things don't usually end this soon. Maybe I'm stopping out on my own too soon, but if I am, I can come back."

Now, this was the last of this series of interviews. A very realistic appraisal here of the way she is feeling; that it has its good points, and they're better than she ever expected; but also the appreciation that there are aspects that remain areas of difficulty, that there is no utopia, and that if she does need to return, she can. A very realistic appraisal, on the whole. In fact, it seems rather

redundant to paraphrase what she herself has expressed so well. This case, which we have examined in some detail with verbatim material from the interviews, seems to be typical of the "success" cases, the ups and downs, the feelings of despondency and the feelings of elation. But a gradual and rather quick approach to a feeling of wholeness, organismic one-ness, a functioning as a unit and a functioning spontaneously. That dynamics may bring a change in this awareness is, of course, not surprising. Indeed, it is part of the postulate that personality is dynamic, changing, fluctuating--and therapy is only one aspect of a continuing phenomenal existence. The individual utilizes therapy as only one fabric of his experience, and attaining a statement of the nature of that made in this last interview is no guarantee of any future conceptualization or lack of conceptualization. Therapy must be seen then as merely a part of the total fluid environment as it relates to the perceptual self.

One of the difficulties of research studies of this kind is the lack of follow-up. This is a difficulty for which as yet no one has developed a methodology for attacking.

A fitting close might be case number eleven, as described above:

He asks, "How can I judge success or failure in

therapy? How do I know when therapy is finished?" After some discussion on this point, he said, "I guess therapy is over when I know it's over." (!) After which there was a long silence. Then he said, "I don't know how to express it in words, but a change has occurred. I look at things differently. It's hard to explain. It doesn't seem as hard as it used to seem, exposing myself and everything. The relationship with Alex has changed. There is no longer a cloak of fear. I'm able to enjoy everything that I do. Just that one thing is really great. It makes me feel really good about it. And there's another thing: I don't want to go back to something that's been already, as I used to. I want to find out what causes this, but I no longer want to go back. I feel I can be happier as an adult."

And, with this so-difficultly-arrived-at formulation, literally wrested from his very viscera, we feel this paper can be closed. Surely no verbal gymnastics could express it so well, or so simply, as this direct, heartfelt statement from a client who has come to grips with his own emotional ghosts and shadows.

The end of man is to be a man.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY

This paper, then, is based upon a research project the theoretical ramifications of which rest primarily upon the spirit of the early Taoist and the later Zen Buddhists; and, secondarily, or perhaps "primarily" and "secondarily" are not really descriptive of the amalgamation--rather, "also" would be a better term, upon the formulations of Carl Rogers and his school of client-centered therapy.

In all, fifteen clients were participants in this program.

Tape-recordings were kept of many of the interviews, and as near-verbatim notes as possible were kept of those which it was not possible to tape.

The therapist's feelings and hypotheses were constantly subjected to reality-testing by frequent supervisory interviews, during which his own feelings and problems were explored in a fashion identical with the premises from which the research study arose.

Based upon the criteria of the cessation of the difficulties which brought the client into therapy, and the admittedly subjective evaluation of the client in terms of improved reality-testing, zest, relations with others,



attitude toward self and others, "optimism," and increased energy or vigor, about seventy per cent of the cases would be termed "successful."

The difficulties of defining success in therapy have been discussed, and this is an admitted weakness of the study. To date, however, this has been an insoluble problem; and the premise of the paper, of course, is that to look for an end, or a goal, in therapy is a conflict in terms. The "goal" is the no-goal of self-acceptance, or acceptance of the present, or status quo. When this occurs, however, psychological problems (which are presumably what brought the client into therapy) vanish, and therapy may be termed a "success."

And finally, the experience of therapy was presented in terms of the client's own verbalization.

This research study would seem to justify exploring further the basic premise upon which it was based: That client-centered therapy rises naturally from the philosophical premises of Taoism and Zen, and that when the therapist rests his approach on Zen principles, the difficulties of conducting therapy resolve themselves in such a way that the therapy moves satisfactorily.

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