

The other inconvenient truth: Psychological challenges of epochal crisis.

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2009 Convention of the American Psychological Association

FROM THE MARGINS

When I considered serving as President of Division 32, I asked myself what I could offer that others could not do better. When I look at the names engraved on the ceremonial oil can I recognize that in some ways, though I have been involved in humanistic psychology for thirty five years, since I left cell biology and persuaded Carl Rogers to chair my dissertation in psychology, I would not consider myself as expert in humanistic psychology of the order of those others who appear here.

To begin with I am not a psychologist. I am licensed as a psychotherapist, and have performed thousands of hours of psychotherapy and counseling, but I have done so as a marriage and family therapist. Neither have I spent my career as a scholar in university psychology departments. My first academic position was as a biologist, but while teaching biology at Oberlin College, at the request of two young women who were heading up the Planned Parenthood chapter there, I helped establish a program based in what today we call "transformative critical pedagogy". I like to share the story of the radicalizing moment in my life when one of these undergraduates explained why she proposed a critical pedagogy for the human sexuality class, "Maureen", she said, "Oberlin women don't get pregnant because they don't know where babies come from. They get pregnant because they don't feel free to say to their boy friend, "Stop. Not now, my diaphragm is in the drawer". She brought me a copy of Carl Rogers' chapter on student centered learning from *Client-Centered Therapy*, (1951) and a copy of Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970 ?)*, and my world changed. From then until now,

questions of power, freedom and justice, and impediments to the realization of human potential have been part of my read on the world. This has been particularly true of my understanding of the power dynamics involved in psychotherapy, education, groups and organizations, and of gender politics, all of which have affected me very personally more than once.

I left Oberlin College in 1975, frustrated with a stuffy conservatism within a supposedly radical academic institution, after psychology department colleagues tried to stifle a program that included courses in human sexuality, women's studies, religious experience, gay pride. In their view, its holistic trans-disciplinary and critical perspectives set it outside the scope of scientific psychology. In the view of the chair of psychology such concerns should be addressed in the dormitory bull sessions, not academic coursework. By then I was well into my PhD dissertation work with Carl Rogers at the Center for Studies of the Person in La Jolla, so we packed up the car and headed west. From then on until 1997, when I became Vice President for Academic Affairs and then President at Saybrook Graduate School, my career in the humanistic psychology community has been largely spent on the margins and even outside the discipline of psychology, in such places as training centers, think tanks, research institutes, professional organizations, social service settings, and as an independent scholar, sites of inquiry, practice and knowledge generation where multiple ways of understanding inner and outer human reality and my own imagination intersected.

The core formative experience of my psychological career was the 15 years I spent at the Center for Studies of the Person in La Jolla, CA, where Carl Rogers spent the last 25 years of his career. During this time, I headed up the ***Carl Rogers Institute for Advanced Studies*** which offered experiential training to people from across the world. I helped found the ***San Diego Gestalt Therapy Institute***, was President of the ***Association for Humanistic Psychology***, created a mental health activist group ***Women for Change*** engaged in critical-education work with youth, women professionals, and older women. I also

spent several years training gestalt and person centered psychotherapists in Brazil. The work there brought me in contact with Paulo Freire who directly (and lovingly) challenged my unexamined Eurocentricism for the first time. This challenge deepened my understanding of both the overlaps and gaps between education for critical consciousness (conscientizacao) and our own work exploring large community group processes, and emergent group consciousness (OHara, 1989)

ALIGNING WITH HOPE

I worked closely with Rogers for many years facilitating large group encounters, cross cultural labs, training psychotherapists therapists and facilitators. These were gatherings of 15 to 1500 people – both professionals and interested citizens who attempted to engage with each other under conditions adapted from Rogers’ core conditions for effective psychotherapy—unconditional respect, empathy, and authenticity, as it played out at the level of groups (O’Hara. M & J.K. Wood)

Key to the process was a faith that God does not play dice with the Universe and that living organisms—including human beings—exhibit an inherent drive towards development and self-transcendence. If not repressed by life negating forces--this essential drive—which Rogers called the actualizing tendency and later equated it with David Bohm’s “implicate order” and Ilya Prigogine’s “self-organizing principle”-- (references) in Rogers’ thinking can be relied upon to guide individuals, communities and the entire cosmos to greater levels of development and evolution. Over the years working with a small team of colleagues that included Carl and his daughter, Natalie Rogers, John K Wood , this year’s A.P.A. Division 32 Carl Rogers Award recipient Peter Schmid in Austria, and several others around the world, we served as facilitators of hundreds of large encounters in the US, East and West Europe, Asia and Latin America working in several languages. Rogers and others have described these events, which frequently involved people on opposite sides of bitter conflict such as Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland during the height of the troubles, blacks and whites in racially divided

South Africa, both sides of the Sandanista-Contra war in Central America, pre-perestroika Soviet Union where Chechnyans confronted and listened to Russians and vice versa, and the middle east where Muslims met Jews, and in Cyprus where Turkish Cypriots met Greek (references) .

In these facilitated but largely self-organizing encounters lasting from a short as one days, to as long as a month, participants who might have previously hated, demonized and refused to communicate, learned to listen to each other's stories, empathize with their struggles, respond authentically and without defensiveness about what divides them and discover what unites them. In the safe space of these person-centered group processes people came together to share the universal existential challenges of life from perspectives of vastly varied contexts in which humans live our brief time upon life's stage.

Not a job for the faint hearted, these encounters were often very intense and often laid bare the human capacity for evil, such as the time when an Auschwitz survivor confronted the daughter of a Nazi officer, when an Irish Protestant boy shared with Catholic co-participants seeing his school mate blown up by an IRA bomb, when an African-American exploded in rage at a white South African only to learn that the South-African had been jailed for defending blacks who had violated pass-codes, or the time a woman sobbed out the story of a violent rape by a Serbian soldier while she watched her mother murdered, or once when an entire group attempted to identify a scapegoat for its unacknowledged frustration and eject him from the group , or another group found itself unable to resolve a bitter conflict and dissolved into self-destructive aggression and ultimately paralyzing despair.

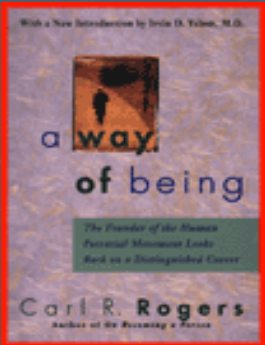
Most of the time, though, these groups provided incontrovertible evidence that given time, openness, empathy and trust and a willingness to remain engaged in authentic dialogue, forgiveness and compassion will usually trump bitterness and hatred, creativity will somehow break through, and out of even the bitterest of conflicts or seemingly intractable stalemates, if people stay open to hearing

with their hearts, there can emerge new levels of understanding and increased collective wisdom to address common concerns. In each of these encounters we were able to learn a little more about how given some shared cultural framework (in this case the ideas of person-centered practice) and a climate of trust people can resolve differences without the abuse of power, can turn diversity into an asset, can make space for the voices for all and can manage their own social space without manipulation oppressive force.

As the years went on, and the contexts of our encounters multiplied and diversified, my colleagues and I began to gain a sense that we were living at a time in history when a larger human story might be unfolding, an emancipatory story that had both great promise and threat, and I wanted our work our work in humanistic psychology in terms of this larger emancipatory story.

A NEW PSYCHOLOGY FOR A WORLD IN TRANSITION

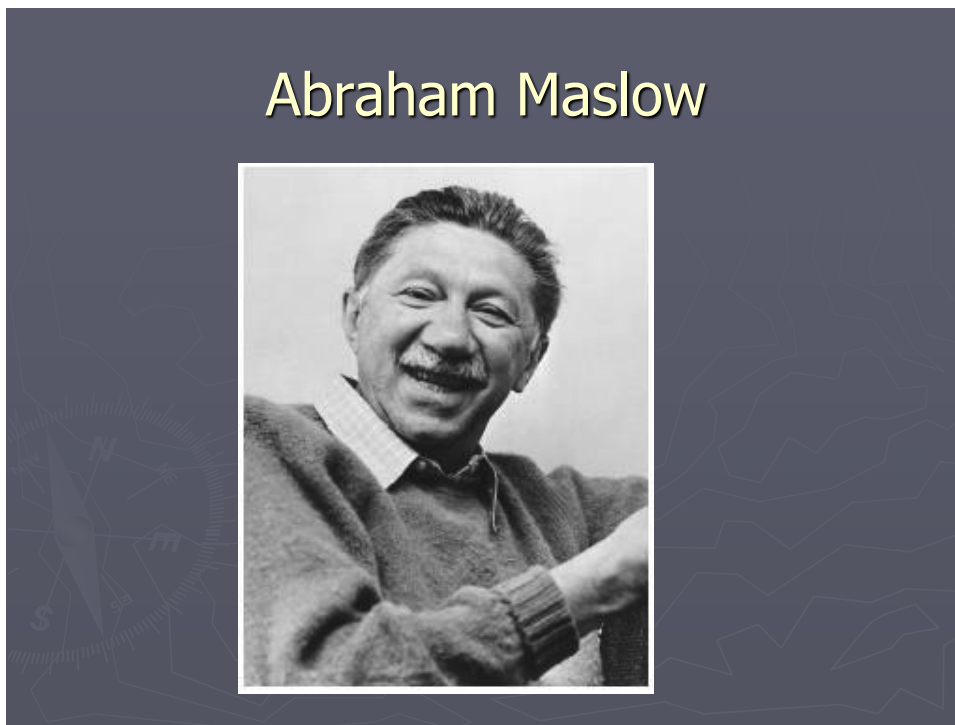
A new psychology



- The many converging trends ...constitute a paradigm shift. We will try of course to live in our familiar world, just as people lived upon a flat world long after we knew it was round. But as these new ways of conceptualizing the person and the world sink in, becoming increasingly the basis of our thinking and our lives, transformation becomes inevitable.
- Carl Rogers, 1980 *A Way of Being* p348

What drew me to the ideas of humanistic psychology was not the promise of an alternative approach to counseling or psychotherapy, or its challenge to psychoanalysis and behaviorism, but rather its far more ambitious social transformation agenda of expanding human consciousness in the service of improving the world for individuals and for humanity. And beyond even that, though not a religious person, I gained glimpses that in the story of human consciousness was the story of all Being, and of matter becoming conscious of itself.

In my view, humanistic psychology has always been about this bigger story, about humanization, about the wellbeing of humanity and about a more humane future.



Beginning in the 1930s, Maslow was a participant in the émigré enriched psychological community of New York City. He met regularly with Adler, Horney, Goldstein, Fromm and other psychological intellectuals who had fled the darkening clouds of Hitler's Germany. The 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor brought the threat home to America and from that day, too old to serve in the military, Maslow dedicated his efforts to putting psychological knowledge to the service of improving the world.

Maslow said, "I had a vision of a peace table, and people sitting around it, talking about human nature and hatred and peace and brotherhood....I realized that the rest of my life must be devoted to discovering a psychology for the peace table." (Hoffman, 1988, p.148).

Maslow and those who joined him in the new humanistic psychology movement, including Carl Rogers, Rollo May, Clark Moustakas, Gardner Murphy, and anthropologists Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict, saw themselves as involved not only in an academic discipline but in a psychologically informed explicitly moral social movement that sought to prevent repetition of the monstrous behavior that had occurred on a global scale, to heal the casualties of both violence and neglect, and to create the social and interpersonal conditions that would lead to greater social justice and expanded opportunities for human fulfillment and ultimately to an advancement in consciousness. And most urgently they wanted to prevent a nuclear holocaust. (Hoffman, 1988)

And it is be fair to say that in the years since some of their hopes have been realized at least for some. I am not suggesting that these great social advances were directly the result of humanistic psychology I would argue that it undeniable that sustained efforts by countless people in all sectors of society in their own domains to advance issues of social justice, liberalize societies and improve the quality of life have been informed by the same emancipatory aspirations and humanistic vision of humanity capacity that drove Maslow. In 1945 delegates to the first United Nations meeting met amidst the giant redwoods in Marin County to affirm an international agreement that has lasted 64 years. UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights has also held for 60 years, and over the decades has become real to ever more people; around the world women and minorities have made progress towards gaining their voices and their social equality (uneven though it may be), almost all children receive some level of education, infant and maternal mortality rates are down, life expectancy has increased, and the notion that environmental sustainability is essential for human wellbeing, is now universally acknowledged. Higher order or as Maslow would call them, *Being values* are showing up in international

policy documents. UNESCO has declared that the universal aims of education include learning to BE, and to BE WITH, as well as learning to know and to do. There is hardly an organization that does not quote Maslow's hierarchy of needs and recognize the value of empowerment, networks, flattened hierarchies, democratic participation, the importance of good communications, listening, systems thinking, authenticity and transparency, to a degree unimaginable in the 1960s. [Granted in many cases these innovations in management as often as much style as substance. But the fact that the humanistic language and style is employed at all reflects the higher expectations of today's employees that they be treated as competent whole persons]. When a few years ago the Harvard Business Review selected articles for its 15 classic articles series they selected an article on communication by Rogers and Roethlisberger (reference). And, perhaps even more indicative that progressive cultural change has occurred, [though quickly derided by the right], President Obama introduced the idea of the importance of empathy as well as objectivity, when it comes to leadership and governance, and even foreign policy. And so far, no nuclear war (though we should not be too sanguine about that with more countries seeking such weapons every day)

PROGRESS BUT NOT ENOUGH

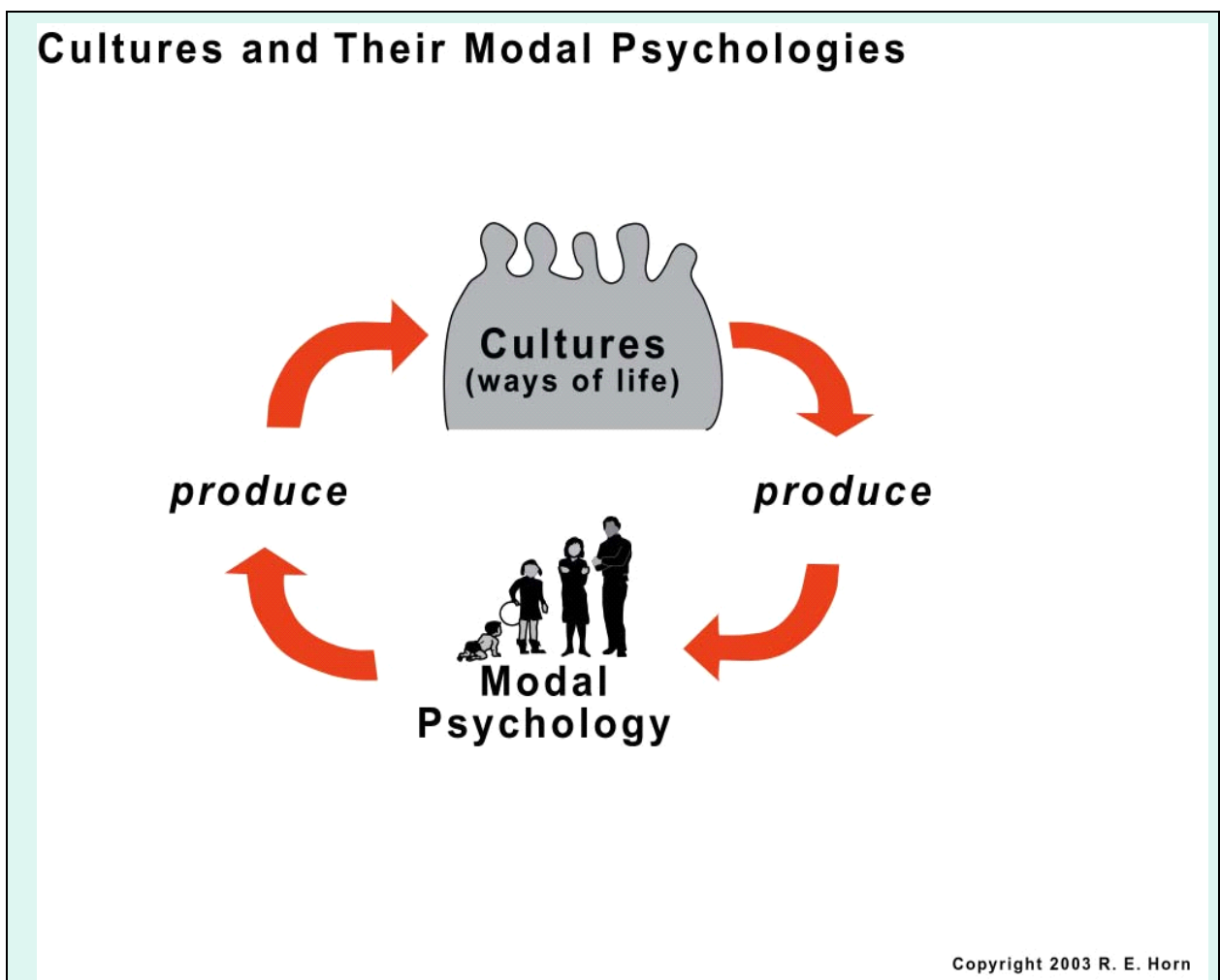
But I am pretty sure that if Rogers and Maslow were alive today they would be disappointed in our movement and how we seem to have turned ourselves inwards and away from the huge looming issues facing humanity. They would be looking with alarm at the global juggernaut bearing down on a psychologically unprepared world, and asking if and how humanistic psychology might help to address or mitigate the challenges before us. They would be seeking to liberate the power of human creativity, capacity for empathy with those who are suffering, and capacity to innovate and learn, to address the crisis and turn it into opportunity for growth and learning. They would want humanistic psychology to be at the center of research and praxis about new forms of social intervention based on a more accurate,

more inclusive, less ethnocentric view of human potential. They would be looking at the global changes underway and aiming themselves squarely at the coming humanitarian crisis. They would realize that the context of all our lives—whether rich or poor-- is now threatened and they would want to do anything they could to be part of the solution not part of the problem. And above all, I think they would realize that the future is made by decisions that are made in the present, and how we see our possibilities is a direct result of the kind of worlds we inhabit and the kind of psychology we cultivate, nurture and reward in our human community.

Colleagues, I speak here today to ask you to join with me to reclaim the social transformation agenda of humanistic psychology because humanity is now facing life threatening challenges, and unimaginable opportunities that is radically altering the context of our existence. In places like the USA and Canada the signs of this turbulence and coming crisis are not yet obvious in our daily lives, though any newspaper, web search or TV channel offers plenty of evidence for those who are awake. But elsewhere the signs that we are involved in a life or death struggle with the future of consciousness are everywhere.

Because I wish to describe a process underway that affects everything that impinges on our experience I find I need a new word-- one that can encompass the wholeness of the multiple systems we both create and are created by. English does not have such a word, so I have made one up-- ***psychosphere***. By analogy to the term “ecosphere’ used to describe the wrap-around context of organic life in the natural world, I coined a new term *psychosphere* and to describe a holistic, interconnected, interpenetrated system of narratives, symbols, images, representations, language, metaphors, patterns of life, values, epistemologies, cognitive habits, rituals, religions, sports, forms of commerce, metaphysics, art, technologies that together provide the raw materials of identity and the psychological context of individual and group life

Psychopheres are the wrap-around circumstances of conscious life and influence everything from internal neuronal pathways in the brain, values, cognitive habits, and external artifacts such as art and the content of curriculums and libraries, the organization of family life, drug use, to political agreements. More than “culture” or “environment” which imply something external to the conscious person, different psychopheres result in variations in brain structures, emotional responsiveness, identity, self structures and processes, perception (what is actually seen and heard); motivation (what people think is important to strive for or die for); meaning making (what we understand and value); conceptual routines, cognitive rules and strategies for using humanity’s accumulated knowledge; and how we put all this together into what we consider superior human wisdom.



Cultural psychologists recognize that for any society (from tribal band to nation state) to be stable and maintain levels of social harmony that allow for successful identity formation and psychological and social well being, they must share a collective narrative that accounts for the central existential facts of life (reference –Shweder). I have discussed this relationship in earlier papers (references)

As long as psychopheres change gradually psychological shifts for individuals and groups that occur as a consequence can be managed within the existing narratives, structures and institutions. People have ways of explaining changes from within their shared narratives. This makes stable cultures resilient and resistant to fundamental change. When Western narratives about the natural inferiority of women and blacks changed in response to civil rights struggles and feminism, for instance, previously all male professions accepted women and previously all white universities accepted blacks. Struggle, strikes, demonstrations and even riots but the world as we now it didn't come to an end-- no culture shock, no disintegration of the university system--though many experienced intense fear that that would happen. Institutions adapted, people's values shifted and the American narrative of the "self-made man" was rewoven as "everyone can make it" such that with forty years, the U.S. has its first Black president and a woman secretary of state.

When change occurs too fast, or too radically, however, established institutions cannot cope, familiar ways of addressing difference and dissention become inadequate to restore "life as we know it," and anxiety rises to unbearable degrees. Most infrequently societies fall into violence, chaos, collapse and sometimes disappear [reference]. Historical evidence suggests that when empires conquer and occupy, when nations are defeated by invaders, or religious revelation sweeps away stabilizing belief systems as happened after Luther's and England's Henry VIII ruptures with Rome., or when revolutions like the French, Bolshevik and Marxist-Leninist revolutions swept away the ancient regimes, it resulted

in generations of violence, disorder, and brutal repression before stability was restored and a new coherent psychosphere established.

When the shifts in deep cultural assumptions that follow such changes are later commemorated with ceremonies, proclamations, and histories, this darker side of cultural transformation is rarely accounted for. The dead of the victorious side are honored, and those fallen on the other side are assumed to have deserved their fates. The stories of mayhem are woven into the new narrative accounted for as the inevitable, if unfortunate, concomitant to social disruption and more often than not blamed as the aberrant behavior of resisters.

We think of the European Renaissance from the 13th to the 15th century as the dawn of the modern world --a time of great breakthroughs in consciousness evidenced by changes in art, science and political processes.

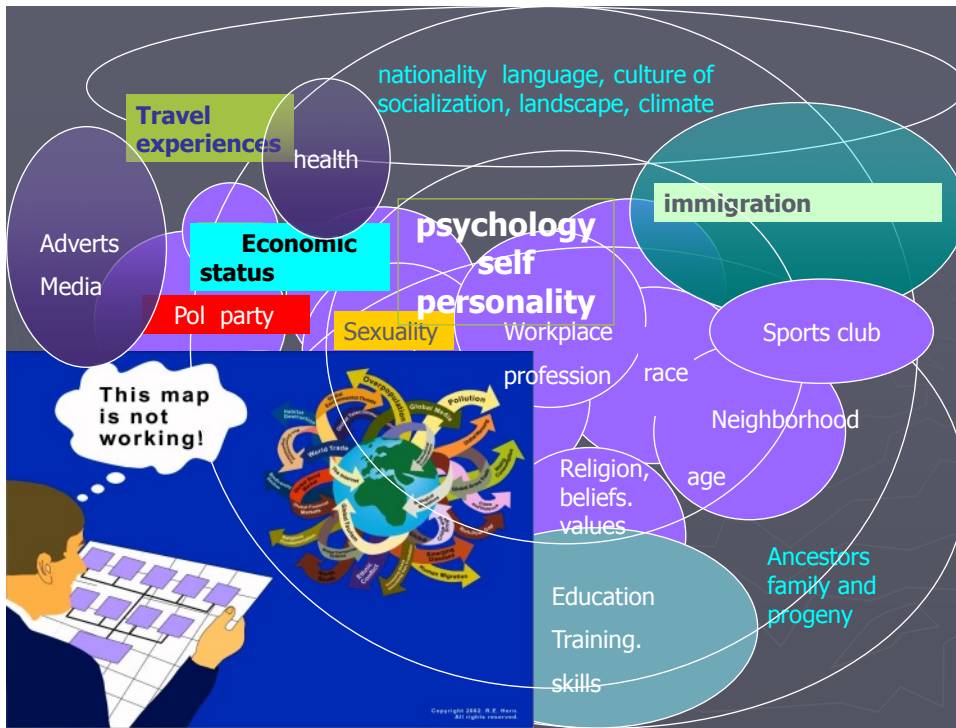
In schools European children hear stories the victories and advances of Western Christian civilization, its defeat of Islam, institutionalization of the rule of common law, and rise of popular education, and come to see the immense social and cultural transition of those centuries as a story with a "happy ending." In the vernacular telling of the story we disconnect the darker realities of millions massacred and martyred, (as many as 4 million deliberately and sadistically murdered as witches and heretics), lost civilizations, pandemic plagues, famines and endless wars (reference Tuchman). The psychosphere we call modernity that produces the familiar psychology of the Western world was not stabilized overnight. Nor without victims, but involved almost three centuries of learning, insight, argumentation, scientific discoveries, art, poetry, story telling, urban planning and architectural shifts AND epidemics of psychic terror, bitter and brutal conflict, persecution and merciless oppression of dissident views such as folkways, Islam and Judaism, before the modern mind and modern ways of life became established as "the way things are".

I spend time discussing this historical amnesia because you and I, and most certainly our children and grand children, are living at a time of psychospheric upheaval on a scale and at a speed beyond anything humanity has faced before—including the European world changing 1300-1600 . This time the destruction of the psychosphere is global and reaches into the furthest tributaries of the Amazon and to the most rarified science labs of the West and it is happening over a single generation not three centuries. Driving this great unraveling is the combination of such factors as

- Globalization of culture(destruction of local cultures and intensification of Western hegemony
- Innovation in technology (genomics, robotics, informatics and nanotechnology)
- Accelerating urbanization—largely in slums
- Shifting age demographics
- Radical changes in geopolitics—end of cold war, disintegration of old Soviet Union, emergence of an enlarged European Union, rise of China and India
- Shift from energy-based industrial economy to knowledge society
- Travel, migration and an explosion of the number of refugees
- Rise in expectations and demand for economic and political justice
- Rise in fundamentalism and intensified religious fervor
- Instant unmediated communication and bringing information overload and incoherence
- Unbridled consumerism and extra-societal corporate domination of mass culture.
- Degradation of human beings into “consumers” rather than citizens.
- Environmental pressures including population increases and climate change. (reference OHara, Futures paper, Marsella, APA 2009 presentation)

The combined result of this “era of thousand revolutions” (reference, Bob Horn’s Meridian document) is that long standing frames of perception, cognition, and patterns of life-- through which individual and group identity is preserved, and existential anxieties managed, are literally breaking down on a global scale. Stable psychospheres no longer exist and within a single generation has grown a mismatch between inherited local psychologies and the demands of the world we now inhabit. In this Futureland we will all be immigrants and many of us will be involuntary refugees.

In societies across the world, people are trying to make sense of what is happening, and trying to hold on to what coherence they can even while all about them becomes more confusing all the time. . **This is creating a global conceptual emergency.** And with it rising anxiety that will become become increasingly dangerous.



Humanity is now challenged to adapt and evolve new kinds of persons—persons of tomorrow—with consciousness that is coherent with the world as it is now becoming and above all psyches that can tolerate the level of complexity and rapid change (Reference, O’Hara, Pottsdam). Even if this global identity crisis were not acute and overwhelming enough to question if we have the capacity to learn our way forward into the strange new all connected boundary-less world we are creating, we now discover that thanks to the inventiveness of the human mind this far, humanity is now fighting against self-created forces that may put an end to life as we know it. **I am talking about the threat to the sustainability of planetary ecosystems due to climate change and the prospect that we may have damaged the earth’s self-reguating mechanisms beyond its capacity to self-repair.**



BEYOND INCONVENIENT TRUTHS

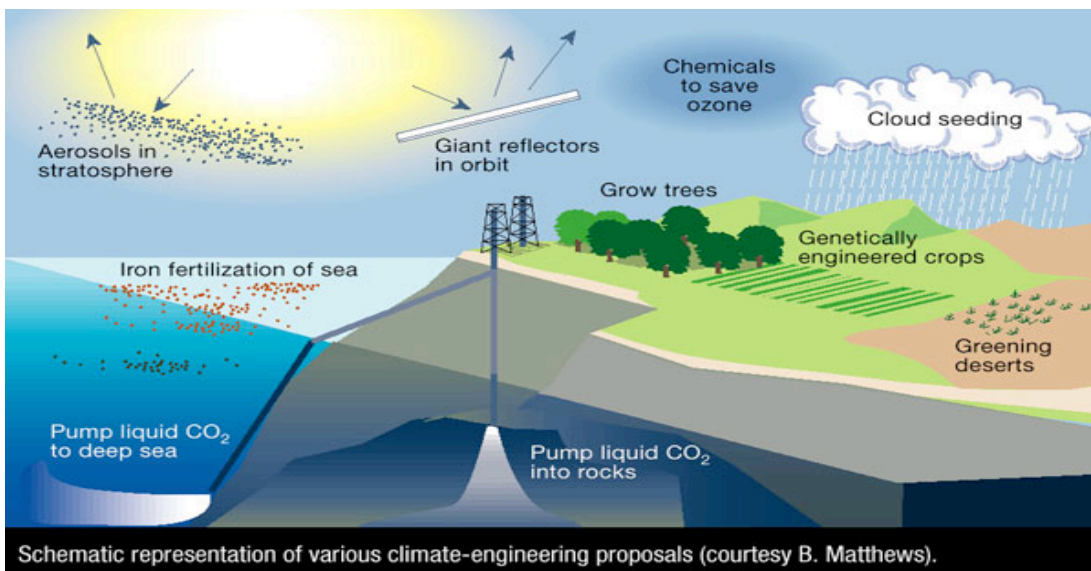
Former Vice President's Al Gore's film brought the "inconvenient truth" of accelerating climate change to everyone and served to break through the collective denial about the impending global catastrophe that global climate change will bring. His efforts brought him the Nobel Peace Prize, (Reference, Al Gore's film) .

No matter what we do at this point, there are no scenarios being advanced by climate experts today that do not include in the near and midterm future extreme challenges to the inhabitants of planet earth.

Information from many sources shows that we have pumped so much carbon into the atmosphere that we have already set in motion climate changes that will inevitably result in 1.5-2.0 degree rise in global temperatures. The good news, if you can call it that, is that if the planet warms less than 2.5

degrees in the next 25 years, though provoking extreme conditions for those in already hot areas, massive species die off, famine, drought, pandemics, and more mega-storms, human beings and the planetary eco-systems that support us can probably eventually adapt to that. Massive levels of suffering will be unavoidable (and indeed are already reality from many people beyond the privileged safety of the developed world) but eventually a new homeostasis may be established that is sustainable.

But Canadian writer Gwynn Dyer in his book, *Climate Wars I* that if temperatures rise to more than 3 degrees above pre-industrial levels, a cybernetic engine is unleashed that triggers accelerating warming to over 10 degrees above acceptable targets. These levels mean irreversible environmental collapse. No longer just the doomsday scenario that we use to scare ourselves but that no one really expects, planetary death is now being discussed openly in scientific meetings around the world, and fantastical feats of geo-engineering such as artificial sky darkening, and deep earth carbon sequestering (Army Corps of Engineers meets global atmosphere) have moved from science fiction books into science journals, to White House advisors and DARPA (reference). How many of you are including this information in your intro psychology classes?



If the nightmare scenarios occur and warming reaches tipping point levels, experts like Dyer says, “humanity will in all likelihood be headed towards war: war over access to water, over arable land, over dwindling resources”, distracting us from the urgent job of discovering the escape route into a sustainable future.

In Dyer’s final chapter, “Childhoods End” he argues that in the long history of the evolution of consciousness successful avoidance of nuclear annihilation in mid 20th century was but humanity’s “mid-term” –which we passed. But in his view, and that of many others including my own, we are so far into the destruction of the planet’s capacity to restore itself that if we do nothing planetary destruction at least as far as more advanced life forms are concerned is inevitable. He is not alone in this conclusion. In fact, all climate scientists who look at this problem agree that simply reducing the **rate** of carbon emissions, which is the most those negotiating international treaties like Kyoto are talking about, is already insufficient. We need to stop all further carbon dioxide emission, and actually remove some of the carbon that we have already released. [Note: I am focusing on Carbon dioxide here, but we might also include a long list of toxic metals, water pollutants, hormone mimics and other threats to the eco-sphere survival] .

We as a species have so disturbed the ecology of the planet and damaged Gaia’s capacity to self-heal such that whether we like it or not, responsibility for avoidance of planetary death and the continuation of evolved life is now in human hands—yours, mine and your children and grandchildren’s. Business as usual is not a survival option.

According to geo-scientist Paul Crutzen we have entered a new geological epoch where human activity is the main contributor to global geological changes. Crutzen has named this period the Anthropocene period (reference). During the 3.5 billion journey from *cyanobacteria* to us, natural evolutionary processes gradually created the balanced ecology upon which we and all other complex life

forms rely. In a few short centuries, however, we humans have so disturbed the balance of this ecology that to pass the next challenge to conscious life on Earth and avoid an irreversible collapse taking most complex organisms with us, will require that we successfully steward the planetary life support systems long enough to mitigate and reverse some of the effects of our 200 years of burning fossil fuels and for renewable forms of energy to be developed to replace them. Dyer writes, “Now it’s the final exam, with the whole environment that our civilization depends on at stake. It’s not just about knowledge and technical ability; it is also about ***self-restraint and the ability to cooperate. Grown up values if you like.***”(Dyer, 2009, italics added)

I agree with him, but, like almost all those writing about the coming global catastrophe, including Al Gore, Dyer says absolutely *nothing* about how self-restraint and cooperation and “grown up values” might be developed. This neglect of the psychological dimensions of the impending crisis is common. In a recent series of meetings by the World Business Forum on Sustainability, for instance, to create scenarios for the year 2050 to aid the business community in its planning, run at a cost of several million dollars, one participant reported a distressing pattern to the process. Working groups of leading experts deliberate on economics, energy, health and disease, immigration and other aspects of the possible futures and then each group draws up their scenarios of what might be expected and needed. They commonly end their specialized reports with the idea “for this to happen, behavior and values will have to change”. When asked to imagine how human consciousness might change few ideas are offered. Significant to add that in the collection of experts recruited as expert participants, there is not one psychologist!!

The “other inconvenient truth”, we need to face then, is that in all likelihood the most difficult challenges facing planet earth in the 21st Century ***are not technological but psychological.*** Surviving this period of anticipated ruptures in the established fabric of life may depend upon enough of us being

able to tolerate the inevitable anxieties and social disruption that such cultural upheaval bring, without turning on each other in hatred and violence or sinking into self-destruction and despair as societies have in other times of cultural disturbance. As Frank Rich said in his NYT op ed piece this week, the overreaction to the Obama comment after the Louis Gates arrest is an indication that as we move into a new culture no longer defined by white men, anxieties are rising and we are seeing an escalation in intolerance, paranoia and hair trigger reactivity in the erstwhile privileged classes. In my view the vitriolic outbursts at the health care town hall meetings says a great deal about the state of anxiety already loose upon the land that has as much to do with ruptures in the established psychosphere as it does health insurance.

In the grand upheaval now engulfing planet earth, unless we do something to head it off, this kind of over reaction is likely to become a global story. And this is why psychologists must enter the story and NOW.

Though in the longer term survival of the coming disruptions in the physical world such as climate change, water shortages, famines and overpopulation, will certainly depend on scientific and technological inventions, our collective response to disruption and disintegration in people's psychological environment may be even more critical in the shorter term. The biological effects of climate change will be gradual—over a generation or two, but the psychic collapse occurs much more rapidly--a few years (as we saw in Europe leading to the Holocaust, and now see occurring in indigenous populations); in months, (as in the chaos that followed the break up of the former Yugoslavia) , or in days, as in Rwanda where the breakdown in the rule of law resulted in the slaughter of a million people (half of them Hutus and half of them Tutsis) in a 100 day orgy of rape and slaughter. (reference <http://www.genodynamics.com>)

So to recap: The world is already into a period when the anchors of consciousness that have sustained local societies for generations are changing more rapidly than we can adapt to –this is as true for whether egoless indigenous people or ego-bounded Europeans

The psychological damage these cultural disruption are causing causes is plainer all the time. In the 20th century alone mass killing or (democide) has resulted in 169,198,000 deaths, many of these accompanied by sadistic behavior, rape, torture, humiliation, and most of them justified by the perpetrators as necessary for survival of their psychosphere (or way of life as we know it) The same psychosphere that creates a sense of stable identity, resilience and social harmony in the face of threat at the local level, can also provide the justification for oppression, neglect, massacre and extreme violence against those outside. The psychological damage underway is huge,

WHO data show that a billion people world wide are suffering some kind of mental distress that interferes with their capacity to enjoy life. Costs to individuals and economies are staggering. In the US alone, treatment costs and indirect costs in lost earnings and productivity amounts to an estimated \$300-500 billion annually in the US and an estimate 77 billion pounds in the UK. . But the costs in human misery are even more terrible. Worldwide, one million commit suicide annually, 20 million attempts; (1 in 11 American teen’s attempt suicide, and there is a huge increase now in India), Alcoholism and drug use is up 67% in 15 years; 40% of all disability claims in Canada are for “stress”. Violence rates are up in all developed nations. 1 in 4 European teens have a diagnosable mental illness. Teen on teen homicides are increasing every year. 1 in 4 US grade school children use drugs. As access to global media increases so does exposure to violence, (by 18 y the average US child, for instance, has seen 200K acts of violence and witnessed 16K murders). Divorce rates are up everywhere. In Japan 750,000 young men never leave home because they “can’t cope” with the pressures of life (they even have a special diagnosis hikikomori) Russian, Japanese, Italian and urban Chinese women are refusing to bear

children as they lose faith in the future. War trauma now results in millions with PTSD including children, warriors and the elderly caught in the firing lines (Reference, Israel Center for Psychotrauma. <http://www.traumaweb.org/content.asp?>)

Costs for providing treatment to those who seek it, which a recent British report (reference Sainsbury report) suggests that even in advanced societies like the UK amounts to no more than 20% of those who are suffering, are already prohibitive and heroic attempts to do so are resulting in a pathetic dilution of what from efficacy research we know is actually needed. In one minimum security prison in the UK, counselors reported that they are so short handed that incarcerated women, many of whom have been severely victimized and traumatized receive five minute sessions every two weeks, and every week if they are a suicide risk. The counselors refer to this pattern of “pretending” to give care as “pseudo-care” (personal interview).

Similar stories are echoed in reports from around the globe.

I submit to you that the level of acute and chronic psychological suffering—which has sequelae in child neglect and maltreatment, family dysfunction, violence, suicide, physical illness, homelessness, poverty, community decay, and other social pathologies too many to mention, will not be significantly lessened by psychotherapy or counseling—humanistic or otherwise.

In my view, if Maslow and Rogers were alive today they would not be focusing energy on the debate about empirical validated treatments, trying to marginally improve psychotherapy outcomes for Americans, debating whether psychologists should prescribe drugs, but would be focusing on helping humanity develop the psychological theories and social practice that can help humanity [and all other life forms] make it through the coming crisis. They would be urging us to put psychology at the service of the “final exam” --to prevent the end of life as we know it, and to call upon the power of consciousness to learn and grow our way out of the current crisis into a new stage of conscious evolution where “us” is

defined as all of life, and “other” is seen as an appealing opportunity for diversity and not as a threat and where our accumulated knowledge of the earth’s necessary systems lead us to live in ways that the planet can sustain. In other words, developing the grown up values Dyer and I believe we will need.

As Maslow said in the 1950s, we need a “new enlightenment” to develop our capacities for aesthetics, compassion, creativity, ethics, love spirituality –expanded conceptual and emotional capacities that would result not only in those unspecified, “grown up” values, but also in our capacity to live, work and create, in a world that whatever we do will be radically different from that of any of our ancestors. Carl Rogers, explicitly sought what he hoped might be law-like behaviors that would enable us to avoid alienation, nuclear war, genocide and ecological devastation and to facilitate the transformative trajectory “formative tendency” he believed existed in nature from the outer reaches of galaxies to the inner reaches of the human heart. And these are essentially moral agendas. They are not values free neutral science but clear moral investments in a more just and hopeful future not just for the “haves”, but for the “have nots” as well. And such a moral emancipatory psychology has never been more urgent.

But in recent years, humanistic psychologists have abandoned our roots in the social transformation agenda. social transformation. In my view the huge strategic mistake we made after Rogers and Maslow and the other evolutionaries left us, **was allowing their radical framing that deliberately put the humanistic discourse outside of, alternative to, and critical of modernist, reductionist, medicalized psychology, to become seduced and coopted by it.**

When a couple of years ago the decision was made for the division to change its name and become the *Society for Humanistic Psychology* we gave ourselves the opportunity—and I think obligation--to rethink that choice . In my view such rethinking is long overdue and may be just in time to respond to

others shifts in American society—one that has many points of contact with earlier emancipatory moments when crisis presents opportunity.

The signs are everywhere that the mental health “industry” is close to collapsing under its own ineffectiveness. People across the spectrum—from left to right and from consumers to Presidents—are crying out for innovation in how we address the psychological wellbeing of individuals and communities without going bankrupt. The gravy train that fueled the rise of professional psychology in the 1980s and 1990s and made our compromises lucrative if not wise, is running on empty and if we are to avoid suffering on a massive scale we need new ways of thinking about psychological health. Business as usual is no longer adequate and new ideas are in short supply.

As the huge ineffective systems face their limits, there are signs that things may be beginning to change. People are waking up to the need to reframe the problem of health. In a recent session with health care workers dealing with a funding crisis in a metropolitan mental health system run by the **International Futures Forum** (www.internationalfuturesforum.com), facilitators asked participants the question, “What are we all pretending is true that we know in our hearts is not?”

Their collective answers shook everyone and revealed a disturbing level of complicity in a failing system. Answers ranged from “pretending a 5 minutes med check is sufficient to establish trust and figure out what’s wrong”, “people from the mildly anxious to the acutely psychotic need the same expert care” ; “ there is a correlation between years of training and practitioner effectiveness”; that “the despair we see every day is due to “illness” that we can “treat” with CBT and drugs, when we know it is the result of poverty, deprivation and abuse,” and “what I do as a counselor will lead to a better outcome for a homeless client than a job, a friend and what they can do for themselves when evidence points in the other direction”. Even more shocking for a group of mental health professionals was that they volunteered that they believed the mental health care system contributed more to the well being

of providers—in salaries, status and professional identity--than it did those seeking help, who were often subjected to dehumanizing revolving door pseudo-treatment and subtly encouraged to become dependent on counselors, therapists, welfare workers, rather than empowered participants in their own recovery.

It is not hard to find people in leadership roles who will say they think the system is broken. That is the bad news, and the good news. Prone as I am to seeing opportunities even in very dark scenarios I am willing to predict that as the old mental health system melts down, a huge opportunity for radical innovation is going to open up. I anticipate (and not unreasonably if California is any bellwether) that no matter how conservative those in power within APA have become, the era of psychologist domination of the mental health world is rapidly ending. I also expect that if practitioners have the gumption to offer innovative approaches that seek to prevent suffering and develop approaches that will mobilize clients' resilience and inborn drive towards self-healing and self-actualization, the best days of the humanistic vision may be ahead of us, not behind us.

In 2004, Californians passed the Metal Health Services Act that mandates funds for an entirely new approach to mental health care and the language in the Bill opens the door for a humanistic response. One section reads, \ This program combines prevention services with a full range of integrated services to treat the whole person... These successful programs, including prevention, emphasize client-centered, family focused and community-based services that are culturally and linguistically competent and are provided in an integrated services system.

(Accessed at www.dmh.ca.gov/prop_63/MHSA/default.asp)

Thanks to the Proposition 63, between 250 and 500 million new dollars are now available for mental healthcare. (the voters turned down a bill that would have diverted some of this money during these economic hard times). But there is a catch. These monies cannot be used to support "business as usual". In the language of the bill itself consumers and taxpayers demanded a non-pathologizing,

resilience, prevention and community oriented, client--centered approach. Yes, the term “client-centered” is right there in the bill. I do not think they are referring to classical Rogerian therapy, but to a philosophical shift from seeing authority for care as being vested in experts to a democratic view in which people are empowered participants in their own healing and growth. And they are making this shift because the research supports such a move and that is what empowered Californians demand.

What does this mean for the future of humanistic psychology?

Firstly it means that we need to snap out of our denial and recognize the scope of the crisis bearing down on humanity. We must reassert our position as a moral voice within psychology, seeking systemic interventions, social justice, embrace of diversity and expansion of our thinking to include diverse ontologies, epistemologies, values and ways of life. If we don't do this, we are doing no more than fiddling while Rome burns.

We must give up give up the benefits of sleeping with the enemy. If battered women and other oppressed groups have taught us anything in their struggles to get free of abuse, or addicts about how to get free of their dependency, we need to stop kidding ourselves that being inside the medical tent means we are free, and we have won the fight for legitimacy. We have taken on protective coloration, maybe, but we have sold out the critical game-changing agenda that was at the heart of the humanistic alternative. As long as we are willing to tailor humanistic and transpersonal doctoral programs to become acceptable to a legitimization industry whose world view, values and framings we fundamentally reject, we will never be able to establish a humanistic alternative on its own terms. You cannot obey the instruction to “not think about diagnosis” even if you think you can.

We must change the way we educate our students and prepare them for the new world, where useful psychological practice will come from unexpected and un-licensed places. Future psychologists will be working with people who are displaced, violated, unschooled, traumatized, destitute and from

across the globe. Most psychotherapy will be done—if at all—by masters level practitioners—at lower market rates. Despite APA’s ever expanding curriculum mandates we must make sure our graduates are prepared for careers as leaders in search of a new practice for the coming challenges. With many leaving grad school with 150K in debt we owe it to them to be honest about what their employment prospects are. We need leaders, administrators, program designers, managers and team members for new kinds of systems of care. And we must make sure they are able to work as teachers in the diverse new BA and MA programs that will be needed. And we must insist that they understand that psychology as it has been taught this far is narrowly ethnocentric, does not reflect other psychospheres or psychologies and, the world it strives to serve has suddenly changed.

We need to focus our research on creating the new psychology that is adaptive to a global psychosphere. We are now a global society. We may live in locally very diverse environments—a Sudanese desert demands a different psychology than does suburban Minnesota. But though locally diverse, we are all now aware that humanity’s destiny is a shared destiny. We need a new psychology that takes this shared future as its core assumption. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights must become part of everyone’s psychosphere, taught to every child, and respected by every community—including psychology. The Western enlightenment paradigms must be put in context—as one among many—and now subject to dialogue and engagement with other forms of knowledge, other wisdoms and other ways of life. Our students must be opened to the resources of other cultural assumptions about psychological life.

We must return to the research on human development that will enlarge our repertoire of emancipatory pedagogies and therapies that will cultivate the minds for the 21st century. Humanistic psychologists must develop and make known new Masters degree programs that are not watered down clinical or counseling psychology programs, but are new compilations of knowledge, skills and attitudes

that can more directly address contemporary the concerns. We will have to merge disciplinary boundaries, between education, psychology, sociology, social transformation, community organizing, media and communication. Needed specialties will include prevention through effective parenting and early interventions to build resilience , elder wellness, client self-care, community organizing, immigrant integration, facilitation of the creation of civil society initiatives for housing, conflict resolution, trauma care, child care, spiritual comfort and guidance, and a host of other human-to-human activities. These new skills should not be additions to the curriculum studied after students have mastered the DSM and psychopharm, but should BE the curriculum. There is now plenty of evidence to suggest that most forms of therapy work for most kinds of distress (Reference Bohart APA 2009). There is even more evidence that most people get no services at all, and get better through education, books, Oprah, church or mosque (Rennie, APA 2009, Bohart and Tallman. 1999))

We must also prepare ourselves and our students to enter the policy discussions swirling around the future of health care. We need to be a very powerful voice in policy discussions impoverished by too many years of reductionist, top down, command and control thinking. Policy makers are looking for new ideas—let give ‘em some. Let’s try to persuade those who make funding decisions to focus on emancipatory approaches that liberate the self-healing potential of clients and put the professionals in the role of educators and facilitators who are there, as Albee said, “to give psychology away”. It’s a win-win. People find resources for self-healing, health care costs come down. (but watch out for smearing by special interests—like psychologists)

We should create a global coalition, maybe a summit, of practitioner organizations within and beyond APA that support the various transformative psychologically based communities—person-centered, critical psychology, transpersonal, gestalt, existential, bioenergetics, psychodrama, integral, feminist, community etc. and revisit the question of alternative licensing for wellness oriented

practitioners. There is precedent for this as new professions such as marriage and family therapists, coaches, bereavement counselors, health advocates, become established because of unmet needs, develop standards of practice and accreditation, and then lastly, recognized by State agencies as safe and legitimate.

And we should not compromise with scientism, positivistic and reductionist thinking about human realities even though the recent success of positive psychology might seem tempting. But humanistic psychology was born as a critical psychology, a political psychology, a social practice in the interests of peace and the betterment of humanity. It offers an entirely different philosophical and political framework for discussion of virtually every aspect of human experience--science, mental health, education, business, religion, business and politics. Maslow's psychology was to be a Copernican revolution, with a new world view, a new understanding of the uniquely human experience, a new way of thinking about how to organize self and society. To the degree to which this led to therapeutic change, well and good, but for Rogers and Maslow, that was an additional benefit, not the highest purpose of the humanistic program.

Humanity stands at a tipping point. Here I have focused on climate change as an example of the threat we face, as I believe this might indeed be the end game that trumps all the others, but even if it is not, there are so many other challenges facing us that the species wide anxiety levels are off the scale and we need to put our collective resources into action.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR TRANSCENDENCE

As psychologists and teachers we know that it is often at the points of confusion, cognitive dissonance and anxiety that new advances in consciousness --breakthroughs--occur. In a long forgotten volume that had a huge impact on me (and incidently, on Carl Rogers) economic historian L.K. Stavrianos proposed that when empires come to an end the collapse is never total (1976). Humankind has

answered previous threats to its survival by grit, invention and creativity. If people can contain their anxiety long enough to tolerate and actually indwell in dissolution of past certainties they can sometimes find the growing edge of innovation and insight.

So, in conclusion I would suggest that over the next year or two our division needs a new mission statement, one that incorporates some of the ideas I have shared today.

As its President, soon to be Past President, I urge that we position the Society for Humanistic Psychology as a global society, as being both part of APA but also beyond it. We should create new rules open full membership to more than those with doctorates and more than psychologists. We should actively recruit BA and MA level practitioners working in multiple settings such as schools, refugee camps, prisons, homeless shelters, hospice, schools, community organizations and agencies. We should be open to anyone with a professional interest in emancipatory social and individual practice. We should as an organization join and support the work of other similar organizations outside the US. Seek out articles for our journals and comments for our Newsletter's from humanistic psychologists world wide. We can recruit people who can help non-English writers get their ideas known in the English speaking world. There are European, Asian, South American, African and Australian humanistic psychology societies. Using the power of the Internet we can reach out and create collaboratives not possible for a small division just a decade ago.

In my view, the most important work that Maslow and others started is not yet done and is needed now more than ever. Humanistic psychologists have an obligation to put psychology to the service of a world in peril. Though in my view in our quest to be accepted by the mainstream of clinical psychology we have strayed from the emancipatory project envisioned by Rogers, Maslow, Fromm (and compadres Friere, Laing and Basaglia) we have much accumulated knowledge and experience to offer to a world in need if we so choose. As Rogers' said in 1980,

If the time comes when our culture tires of endless homicidal feuds, despairs of the use of force and war as a means of bringing peace, becomes discontent with the half lives that its members are living—only then will our culture seriously look for alternatives....When that time comes they will not find a void. They will discover that there are ways of facilitating the resolution of feuds. They will find there are ways of building communities without sacrificing the potential creativity of the person. They will realize that there are ways, already tried out on a small scale, of enhancing learning, of moving towards new values, of raising consciousness to new levels. They will find that there are ways of being that do not involve power over persons and groups. They will discover that harmonious community can be built on the basis of mutual respect and enhanced personal growth. As humanistic psychologists with a person-centered philosophy—we have created working models on a small scale which our culture can use when it is ready. (Rogers 1980)

The world does not know this humanistic knowledge base exists, it is time that we began to publish where the public will see us—on blogs, magazines, government reports, newspaper Op Ed columns, and not only in our journals where we talk to each other. It is time we reminded people of their untapped capacities, help them co-create a livable global future and perhaps realign with the creative forces in the universe and help midwife a new life-affirming humanity.

References

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