Developing Social Science and Religion for Liberation and Growth

By

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Acknowledgements

Parts of Chapter 2 have some textual overlap with an article on critical realism by Chris Adam-Bagley, Alice Sawyerr and Mahmoud Abubaker published in *Advances in Applied Sociology*, in 2017. About a half of Chapter 3 draws directly from Chris Adam-Bagley's pamphlet *Islam Today: A Muslim Quaker's View*, published by the Quaker Universalist Group, in 2015. We hold the copyright to these works, Chris Bagley adopted the Muslim name *Adam* after his conversion to Islam in 2010, becoming "Chris Adam-Bagley". In the references below his publications before 2010 have all adopted the changed appellation of "Adam-Bagley".

Dedication

We dedicate this book and its ideas to our children and grand-children: Michael, Daniel, Abigail, Jessica, Richard, Khalid, Mohammed, Yousef, Zain, Logan, Falan and Devon; to the many hundreds of children who are our nieces and nephews in England, Jamaica, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Gaza, Palestine, Jordan, Canada, Germany and America: and to children, everywhere, past, present and future.

Contents

Introduction and Overview of Chapters

Chapter 1 establishes the intellectual grounding of this book in the discipline and approach of *humanism* (both secular and religious), as the compass for a set of beliefs (derived from different branches of philosophy, social science, and religion) for understanding a humanity which is born 'without sin'. Given the loving care of parents, we grow into adults who seek the companionship and welfare of others, through our social contract with the whole of society.

In describing these goals we are inspired by the research and writing of Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow, Karl Rogers, Erik Erikson, Rollo May and others, in creating a methodology and focus on humans as unique individuals, with stories to tell which enable us to learn from one another in the crucial tasks of improving society in ways which serve the needs of children, in our doctrine of *Child-Centred Humanism*. Margaret Archer too in her critical realist model of morphogenesis shows how we can develop the sharing of ideas, stories and experiences in ways which may engineer such positive change.

We are impressed by Martin Seligman's adoption of humanist ideals in developing, through classical learning models, the ideals of promoting happiness in all children and adults. The social connexions which result are built into the human psyche, in which positive social relations become functional for civilization's growth. We emphasize the importance of the *Social Contract* as the implicit but crucial way in which democratic societies share values, and respect each other's needs and rights, in the making of the good society. We draw on the philosophical ideas of Descartes, Hobbes, Hume, Rousseau and Green in developing this social democratic model.

The evidence from many studies shows that love and stability in childhood is crucial for adult adjustment, happiness, prosocial behaviour, and the ability to engage creatively and synergistically in 'the social contract', which knits us together in a powerful bond.

Chapter 2 explains the philosophical grounding of *dialectical critical realism* and its guiding principle *Child-Centred Humanism* which is passionately concerned with the unmasking of the alienation which clouds the consciousness of alienated or oppressed families and their children (who in England temporarily contain ethnic and religious minorities, and refugees; but with a solid phalanx of 'poor whites'). As Graham Scambler writes of Margaret Archer's view of Marxian theory: "To introduce the concept of ideology is necessarily to introduce that of false-consciousness." And dialectic critical materialism's reflexive model can in its reflexive, morphogenesis help those with "fractured reflexivities" to grasp "true consciousness", sharing with similarly oppressed people, a fuller realisation of their position.

Everyone, in Thomas Green's and Margaret Archer's models of social action may achieve upward mobility, to the life of the gentleman or gentlewoman. In Matthew Wilkinson's Islamic Critical Realist model, it is the journey on the Straight Path that ensures that the faithful may imitate Prophet Muhammad's peaceful example of social behaviour. For Muslims, the soul given by God resides in each human being, not merely in Muslims. The Muslim's task is to seek out and serve (as do Quakers) the soul of everyone. Again Child-Centred Humanism's model of reciprocal love, and Critical Realism's reflexive morphogenesis seem to converge in this social contract.

In *Chapter 3* Chris Adam-Bagley describes his intellectual, moral and spiritual journey from Judaism, through Anglicanism, into Quakerism and then into Islam, inspired by a pacifist ideology.

Adam-Bagley makes the case for Islam as a peace-making movement, based on the idea that humans are born "without sin". These themes are illustrated by accounts of research with colleagues in Gaza, Bangladesh and Pakistan. But critical conclusions are also reached, arguing that neither Bangladesh nor Pakistan have properly applied Islam in ways which fulfil Qur'anic principles. For Gaza, we reach to the pacifist core of Judaism and Islam in seeking both justice and rapprochement. Thus Adam-Bagley's most recent challenge has been the engagement with Palestinian brothers and sisters, which has significantly modified the way he thinks about himself as an ethnic Jew, and about Israel in general, but has certainly reinforced his pacifist confidence in Islam.

> "God is the Light of the heavens and the earth; the likeness of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp (the lamp in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star) kindled from a Blessed Tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil well-nigh would shine, even if no fire touched it; Light upon Light." (The Qur'an, Surah 24 Light, verse 35).

The image and metaphor of this *light* is shared by both Muslims and Quakers. Adam-Bagley's goal, as a religiously-motivated social scientist has been to understand and assist oppressed populations, including abused children, exploited girls and women, victims of racism and Islamophobia – and to understand and perhaps counter the negative social forces which initiate such oppressions. As a value-based social scientist he follows ethical and moral principles derived from (and shared by) Islam, Judaism and Christianity.

A value-based approach to humanism and social science has led the authors of this book to receive with enthusiasm new directions in the epistemology of social science, pioneered by Roy Bhaskar. This value-based ontology has been used fruitfully by Muslim scholars, by Catholic educationists and social scientists, and by a Quaker child welfare advocate. Critical realism has also enabled us to begin to

understand the complex layers of value-based social structure embedded in the Arabic society of Gaza, as this nation endures chronic siege and warfare.

Chapter 4 addresses the paradox of explaining the nature and prevalence of evil, which seems to contradict the idea that human beings are born without original sin, seeking for goodness in themselves, their families, and in society. Writing about evil is both easy and hard.   It's everywhere, and its multiple forms in individuals, groups and occasionally in nations is easy to describe but hard to understand.

We offer redemption and change in society's evils through the humanist methodology of the "telling of stories". This is illustrated by the accounts of death camp survivors (Viktor Frankel, Eugene Heimler, Elie Wiesel and others) who create optimist movements of narrating human goodness and creativity, themes carried forward by Art Frank, Rollo May and Ken Plummer.

Another theme in this chapter is that of eliciting goodness in humans through the nurture of children, treating these precious beings with love and tenderness, within safe environments, with an education which enables them to cope with life's challenge. We must also nurture them with systematic structures, offering affection, guidance and praise. We need also to emphasise a moral education which them to become good citizens, able to take part in a social contract which avers: *I am, because you are; I serve you, my fellow citizen, with respect and esteem, and I know that you will value me likewise.*

Chapter 5 turns to the spiritual power of humanism, religious and secular, impressed and inspired by scholars writing about a "post-holocaust" world in which both spiritual excellence and social harmony seem attainable. If we treat our children well, there is hope for all of humankind. Through stories, and humanist case studies of adversity, struggle, triumph and transcendence, we share values

and critical rationality, a form of morphogenesis, the remaking of ourselves and the world around us.

Evil still lurks in the telling of false and malicious stories that beget hatred and violence. It is therefore essential that *our* stories must focus on "the moral beauty of others". The stories of holocaust victims and survivors are the most moving. As Vincent de Paul has taught us, the experience of extreme poverty, slavery and genocide does not defeat us, nor eliminate our goodness of spirit.

"Religious experience" enervates humankind, giving us awe and transcendence. Being religious brings many unexpected benefits in physical and emotional health. Evidence shows that the sharing of religious bonds and rituals helps rather than hinders the survival of humankind, in constructive ways. We honour the great scholar Abraham Maslow, ostensibly a secular Jew, but whose psychology nevertheless has much spiritual healing power for those of all religions, and for secular humanists. This humanism, of treasuring the worth in each other regardless of ethnic or religious origin, is the only way forward for the social contract of a civilized world.

Abraham Maslow's model of development has much overlap with and support from the developmental models offered by other humanist psychologists. This synergy which is central to these models engenders a universal social contract, in which the two of us relating creates a third force, a metaphysical goodness in which goodwill begets goodwill, with a growing synergy. Martin Seligman's positive psychology movement is an excellent example of how humanist psychology increasingly informs mainstream psychological research and practice.

We experience with delight Scott Barry Kaufman's taking forward Maslow's models of fulfilment through self-other relationship. Maslow tossed his ideas forward in 1968 like a 'Hail Mary' throw. Kaufman caught the ideas and has enlarged them in forging towards

the touch-down. Abraham Maslow began his humanist journey with the Blackfoot people, and the synergy and transcendence of this people inspired him (and us) in careers in nursing, social work, clinical psychology, and management.

Evil lurks everywhere, but so does goodness which shines through and transcends in all human institutions and religions, including secular humanism. What matters on the final day is that God believes in you, not that you believe in God. But loving and listening to the divine is an excellent way to go forward.

Chapter 1

Humanism, Religious and Secular: Charting Childhood and Humanistic Psychology

Chris Adam-Bagley, Alice Sawyerr and Mahmoud Abubaker

> The final and unavoidable conclusion is that education-like, all our social institutions must be concerned with final values, and this in turn is just about the same as speaking of what have been called 'spiritual values' or 'higher values'. These are principles of choice which help us to answer the age-old 'spiritual' (philosophical? humanistic? ethical?) questions: What is the good life? What is the good man? The good woman? What is best for children? What is justice? Truth? Virtue? What is my relation to nature, to death, to ageing, to pain, to illness? How can I live a zestful, enjoyable, meaningful life? What is my responsibility to my brothers? Who are my brothers? What shall I be loyal to? What must I be ready to die for?
>
> Abraham Maslow (2021).
> *Religions, Values and Peak Experiences*, p. 64.

What is humanism?

We follow, with joy and inspiration, the questions posed by Abraham Maslow who in his short life laid down further principles of humanism (religious and secular) which relate to and inspire management studies and ethical economic enterprise, as well as providing the groundwork for a social psychology of human growth. Maslow was Jewish, a secular humanist, and also an inspirational writer for modern humanism (Maslow et al., 1937 to 2022; Kaufman, 2020).

Today, *Humanism* is often claimed as the worldview of secularists (particularly non-theists) who wish to position themselves in an

ethical relationship with a world which they do not see as divinely inspired or created. These people (for example, some of our children) lead excellent lives, committed to family and community in a deeply moral way. This is important. You do not need to have any religious belief in order to be a good citizen, and a morally committed and fulfilled person. God, like the dutiful parent, still loves you!

Critical humanism for secular humanists such as Ken Plummer (2020)

> " … engages with (and tells the stories of) the perpetual narrative reconstructions and conflicts over what it means to be human. Ultimately it does this with the goal of building on these contested understandings to find pathways into better futures and worlds. Critical humanism is an emerging project to remake sense of all this. Even as it will raise many problems, it enables us to ask questions about what kind of human world we want to live in, what kind of person we want to be in that world, and how it needs to be transformed." (Plummer, 2020, p. 7)

There is often a peacefulness and a calm in the lives of these secular humanists, and we (two Muslims and a Christian) admire them. Humanism is the philosophy of social action adopted by the radical Christian political scientist, Palestinian Edward Said, who averred that: "…humanism is the only – I would go so far as saying the final – resistance we have against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history…". (Said, 2016, p. 417)

For Jerome Bruner (1990), humanism was the starting point for a leap forward from the mechanistic discipline that psychology had become, trying too hard to imitate the methods of natural science, and missing "the whole picture", the very humanity of psychology's human subjects. He addressed "… the failure of the cognitive revolution to unravel the mysteries of the workings of the human mind, as the creator of meanings", as the beginning point for his book *Acts of Meaning*. Bruner argues that psychology's new, human

face must become a cultural psychology, absorbing folk cultures and "the autobiography of the self."

We elaborate some of these themes in this book, drawing on Abraham Maslow's experience of the Blackfoot Nation's psychology in his accounts of synergy and self-actualization; and the telling and recording of stories to reframe our human(ist) identities, advocated with elegant force by Ken Plummer (2000).

Another leading advocate of humanism whom we commend as a scholar and political advocate, the valuing of all people as being of equal worth (and therefore "equally grievable") is the Jewish feminist writer Judith Butler (2020), who advocates pacifism through seeing all human beings as equally valuable – and has applied her generous intellect and profound scholarship to advocating for Palestinian women's pacifist struggle against occupying forces.

Humanism, religious and secular, is the intellectual, moral and emotional thread which allows us to weave together a cross-disciplinary understanding of how seemingly diverse religious and ethnic groups may knit together a cloak which encompasses a *social contract*, in which we love our neighbours as ourselves, doing good by small acts of humility and kindness which are at the core of all world religions. This is the message, for example, of the Muslim scholar Faysal Maulawi (2012) on *The Muslim as a European Citizen*.

When people ask one of us (CAB) why he believes in God, he may reply: "It's not that I believe in God: rather, I know that God believes in me." From his earliest Christian childhood (and later, as a Muslim) CAB had the powerful intuition that an immanent God watches, with loving understanding, his every move. Muslims believe that late in the second trimester of the foetus, Angel Gibreel breathes a spirit of light into *every* human. Thus if one becomes a Muslim one becomes a "revert", not a "convert", in beginning a

journey of self-discovery. Secular humanists also have the light of a divine spirit within them, and it is this innate goodness (of which they may not be aware) which is the quiet engine of being for all humanists, secular and religious.

'Innate goodness': the crucial link between positive humanism, religious humanism, and positive social science

The chapters in this book have an underlying thread: describing, intuiting and understanding the potential for goodness (based on innate personal and social drives) of human beings, and how this goodness may be evoked in programmes of research and social action (such as Critical Realism, discussed below).

The journeys we describe are those of ourselves in understanding the journeys of inspiring scholars, from Descartes to Maslow and Bhaskar, as well as the journeys of intellectual movements such as humanist psychology into positive psychology; and of critical realism, into dialectical critical realism and morphogenesis (Archer, 2017). We continually try to make links between these intellectual, social and moral journeys both in parallel, and in their intellectual contact and buffering. We are concerned too with the ways in which children can be nurtured and educated so that their innate tendencies towards 'goodness' may flourish. We acknowledge too that this growth may be corrupted or negated by adult forces of greed and hatred.

Much of Christian theology focuses on how humans may be redeemed from the sin of Adam. Wrapped up in this ideology is blame attributed to the "murderers" of God's son, the Jews who (allegedly) shouted in favour of the murder of Jesus – perhaps meaning according to Matthew's Gospel, that Jews should bear responsibility for this murder "forever", an ideology which justified

even modern holocausts and pogroms (Sandmel, 1978) – a false theology carefully deconstructed by Wilson (2022).

A minority of Christians (e.g. Quakers) are not motivated to seek an extirpation of the sin of "Old Adam" and Eve's surrender to the will of Satan which caused the subsequent suffering of humankind – a sin that could only be redeemed by the "New Adam", Jesus himself. An alternative Christian view is that the incarnation has involved the unfolding of God's loving kindness (and its manifestation in humans) throughout history – a view expressed by some Catholics such as Duns Scotus and Teilhard de Chardin, and a number of Protestants, who advocate peace-making and pacifism in human conflict, as a way of energising the innate goodness of humans.

Muslims in particular have a different view of Adam, whose initial sin of gaining knowledge was readily forgiven, the penitent Adam and Hawwa being rewarded as stewards of a green earth. This, for us, is the crucial difference between Islam and Christianity: in Islam a loving and merciful God is ever-ready to forgive any wrong-doers. In Islam there is no 'original sin'.

Positive, non-religious humanism believes in reform rather than in the punishment of wrong-doers; *positive religious humanism* (e.g., that inherent in Islam, Quakerism and some other Christian groups) has a similar approach. And both groups frequently have similarities in their approaches to social action, social reform, and social science methodologies. That is the theme of this book.

Humanism's history: Our personal review

René Descartes

Our first figure in modern humanism is the polymath scholar and former Jesuit, René Descartes. Descartes is dismissed by some

scholars as the author of a "mistake", that of Cartesian Dualism in which the mind is conceptualized as separate from, and in command of the body. We do not see this as a problem. Of course, "I" am separate from, and not determined by my physicality: this separation is the basis of freedom of choice, or free will.

Descartes was a mathematician (founder of modern algebra), and also a humanist educator whose focus on individual learning and a personalised curriculum for each pupil, is still the foundation of European educational systems: we may paraphrase Descartes "You think, therefore you are free, a self-directing, moral individual." (Gibson, 2016). Freedom is a central theme in Descartes's philosophy, where it is linked to the idea of the infinite: "It is through the freedom of the will, experienced as unlimited, that the human understands itself to bear the 'image and likeness' of the infinite God." (Xyst, 2016, p. 11) Having the freedom to make choices for good or ill, is according to Descartes a sign of God in human nature, and human beings can be praised or blamed according to their use of this power of choice. (Berman, 2004).

There is an interesting link between the Islamic philosopher Abu Hamla al-Ghazali and René Descartes, established by Catherine Wilson in her *History of Islamic Philosophy* (1996). Descartes knew al-Ghazali's work on 'spiritual dualism', in which the soul is separate from the body: it is 'the mind' or soul which is the driver of the body's actions, the engine of free will (Zamir, 2010). Parvizian (2020) in comparing the concordance between the models of rationality offered by al-Ghazali and Descartes argues that there is a striking concordance between the approaches of these two philosophers: but al-Ghazali uses "divine light" as the metaphysical driver of his logic, while Descartes uses the "natural light" of reason. Between religions, there is a shimmering light of concordance in understanding the world.

In terms of modern sociology (Giddens, 1992) offers the view that: "A person's identity is not to be found in behaviour … but in the capacity to keep a narrative of life going … Taking charge of one's life involves risk, because it means confronting a diversity of open possibilities." (p. 78) In this he echoes Jackson (1984) on "elaborating the self through personal stories." This idea of "the narrative self" we develop in Chapters 4 and 5. Creating your own story as a willful, forward-moving action in "being your own hero", is the essence of David Robson's (2022) idea of personal, self-willed emancipation when faced with a variety of choices.

Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow: Founders of modern humanistic psychology

Mark Kelland's excellent textbook (building on Perrin's 2013 account of positive psychology addressing racism), on *Personality Theory: A Multicultural Perspective* (2017) offers a valuable perspective on these two key scholars:

> Carl Rogers is the psychologist many people associate first with humanistic psychology, but he did not establish the field in the way that Freud established psychoanalysis … Rogers felt a need to develop a new theoretical perspective that fitted with his clinical observations and personal beliefs. Thus, he was proposing a humanistic approach to psychology and, more specifically, psychotherapy before Maslow. It was Maslow, however, who used the term humanistic psychology as a direct contrast to behaviorism and psychoanalysis … and it was Maslow who … led to the creation of the American Association for Humanistic Psychology. Rogers was included in that group, but so were Erich Fromm and Karen Horney, both of whom had distinctly humanistic elements in their own theories, elements that shared a common connection to Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology. In addition, the spiritual aspects of humanistic psychology, such as peak experiences and transcendence, have roots in the work of Carl Jung and William James …" (Kelly, 2017, p. 5)

Alfred Adler (on successful engagement with relationships in the world as a social individual: Carl Jung on the spiritual depth and potential of humans; and Sigmund Freud, on individual struggles to find ego-balance) all have some validity in mapping the ways in which humans strive to succeed in the world, and provide intellectual guidance and challenge for the newly developing discipline of humanist psychology (Adler, 1940; Jung, 1958; Kelly, 2017; Obuchowski, 1988; Schott & Maslow, 1992; Ewen, 2014; Sedikides & Brewer, 2015).

Rollo May

We add to the cadre of humanist psychologists and social philosophers Rollo May (2007 & 2015), with a perspective on humanistic psychology in his book *Love and Will*:

> "Will without love becomes manipulation … I feel again the everlasting going and coming, the eternal return. The growing and maturing of dying and growing again. And I know that human beings are part of this eternal going and returning, part of its sadness as well its song." (May, 2007, p. 1).

This *Will* is both the ability and the ambition to wish for a better life for oneself and others. This idea links too with Matthew Ridley's "rational optimism", for all human transactions. Thus on economic exchanges Ridley observes that: "We only trade productively when we trust one another." (Ridley, 2010, p. 4). This trust and a spirit of openness and honesty is exemplified, for example, in the success of Quaker business enterprises.

"Free will" and the natural choosing of the pathways wrong or right, turning, making amends, loving and growing as May puts it, is at the heart of every form of interaction between adults, and between adults and children: our freedom to love one another means that *I* acknowledge *your* spiritual essence, and this act of interchange is

mutual. It is, in the Catholic sociologist Margaret Archer's (2017) analysis, *morphogenetic*, always leading to something new, each light created by human interchange creating a new flux in the process of social change.

This is part of what the pioneer of humanist psychology, Gordon Allport and colleagues (1954 to 1978) described as *becoming*, transcending the mundane account of personhood offered by behaviourist psychology (DeCarvalho, 1989 to 1992). Thus "The humanist is concerned with the fullest growth of the individual on areas of love, fulfilment, self-worth, and autonomy." (Allport, 1954, p. 6). Allport's emphasis on autonomous selfhood as the basis for loving, growing, and being an excellent citizen was grounded in his Christian theology of selfhood (Allport, 1978). And William James, another pioneer of the social psychology of religious belief, remains a stalwart intellectual guide for humanistic psychology (Taylor, 2010).

Rollo May's essay of 2015, in taking forward the humanist concepts of Maslow, Rogers and others, offers an elegant analysis of the influence of humanism on personality theory: "Humanist personality theory offers the realization of the human spirit in intentionality, care, love, will and ultimately in 'stories' (the narratives we live our life by)." (p.20) This is similar to the approach to humanist psychology charted by Jerome Bruner (1995): "There are two forms of thinking which inform 'the science of psychology': the first is based on classification, categorization, manipulation and measurement. The alternative approach to psychology is based on the 'narrative organization' of the world in storied form." (p.162).

To this opinion we add Kenneth Gergen (2016) who lauds the approach of humanist psychology in his essay "towards a visionary psychology": we should tell our stories to others not as pessimist

ruminations about the past, but as stories not only retelling our past, but also about what the future for ourselves and others might be. In this remaking of the future through optimism "humanistic psychology should be at the core of interdisciplinary research." Rollo May's use of life-stories is also used with effect by Dan McAdams (2001 & 2011) in research on "narrative identity". We add to this approach Andrew Bland's (2019) humanistic model of creating stories based on hero figures. An excellent example of this is the retelling of part of Homer's *Odyssey* by the feminist writer Madelene Miller in *Circe* (2019).

Child-Centred Humanism

We add to our catalogue of humanists both Thomas Hobbes and David Hume, whose common-sense reasoning liberates humans from "original sin", and also establishes ways in which freedom of the will (being 'determined' by the matrix of choices which previous interactions have crafted) may be a central issue in social science research, in ways which are compatible with Islam's idea of freedom of choice. As Hobbes said, pragmatically it is not "the will" that is free: the issue rather, is whether human beings are free to act. The issue is one of human liberty, not the metaphysical clutter of clerical (non-Cartesian) notions of 'free will' (Seligman, 2012).

Hobbes is for us an important philosopher because of his common sense "under-labouring" which is like the cobbler sticking to his last, crucial in the application of critical realism, outlined in detail in the next chapter. This *under-labouring* involves evaluating every human action and institution to the extent that these meet the ethical goals of our chosen research model (Wilkinson, 2015a). The grounded value which we choose is that of *Child-Centred Humanism* (CCH), in serving the basic needs and rights of children. *Children* first is the principle that serves and guides our approach to both secular and religious humanism.

This idea of CCH grew out of Adam-Bagley's (1973) review of literature on legal decisions surrounding childcare and adoption, in which it became clear that the higher courts in Britain were increasingly likely to put the child's interests first, when the rights (or demands) of adults for possession and control of the child conflicted with what judges thought were the child's best needs and interests. Adam-Bagley translated this idea of "children first" into a more general philosophy of child welfare and child care (e.g. Adam-Bagley, Young & Scully, 1993; Adam-Bagley, 1997), termed "total child welfare" meaning that all human institutions and actions should be designed and operated on the principle of "children first".

Inspirational here was Chris Adam-Bagley's mentor Colin Ward, and Ward's 1990 book of joyful anarchy on *The Child in the City*, which showed how children adapted to, and then took over, city spaces. Adam-Bagley expressed outrage at the violation of children's space and movement, involving (in critical realist terms) an "absent" army of victims, by the power given to an adult-centred, materialist world in which the motor vehicle and its right to move speedily through children's spaces, had primacy. Adam-Bagley showed that in Canadian and in British cities (1992 & 1993) that many thousands of children were killed or severely injured each year by these steel assassins as the children ran, played, or crossed roads to reach play spaces or schools, or cycled on city streets. Moreover, it was children of the economically poor who were most likely to be killed in this way, since they perforce lived in areas most cut through by traffic.

In introducing the idea of child-centred humanism in the understanding and treatment of children who had been victims of sexual abuse (Adam-Bagley, 1997), we quoted the American poet, Walt Whitman. We reproduce that quote here, since it sums up both religious and secular humanist ideas - we are, like Whitman: *A novice beginning yet experient of myriads of seasons; Of every hue and caste am I,*

of every rank and religion; A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker; Prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest. (Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*, lines 346-349).

Carl Rogers

Child-Centred Humanism (CCH) has strong psychological roots in Carl Rogers' humanist psychology, the "third way" (the middle ground of integration between Skinner's behaviourism, and Freud's psychodynamics), work which is elaborated, explored and applied by Gordon Allport, Erik Erikson and other 'fathers' of humanistic psychology (DeCarvalho, 1989 to 1992). From Rogers (1951 to 1995) and his school CCH draws pedagogic ideals of knowing each *individual* child in a group, and (following Descartes) caring deeply about his or her needs, strengths and aspirations.

Abraham Maslow's humanistic idea of positive psychology (which we elaborate in a later chapter) fits well within this CCH philosophy of serving the developing needs of the child, adolescent and adult for nurturing, physical care, safety, love, esteem, and stimulation, to reach the fullest fulfilment for both the child and the adult. This *Psychology of Being* (1968) is embedded in religious ideals and values which enables the individual through positive supports in childhood and adulthood, to achieve "peak experiences" of actualization and self-transcendence (Maslow, 2021).

CCH has a *theological underpinning*, assuming (with Quakers and Muslims) that all children are born, not sinful, but are joyfully seeking from birth with their inmost spirit a search that must inevitably flower as the spirit of playfulness, love and joy which exists in all children, as they "play cheerfully in the world" (to paraphrase George Fox). CCH treats each child as a unique human being, with a special combination of needs, abilities, strengths, and aspirations. This the parent, the teacher and the counsellor need to understand, in the

Thomas-Chess account of the uniqueness of child in the developmental matrix – and the principle that adult actions and interactions regarding the child must be modelled on the "goodness of fit" between the unique combination of each child's biological, personal and social gifts, and the adult nurturing of those gifts (Chess & Thomas, 1976 & 2013; Adam-Bagley & Mallick, 2000). Humanist psychology has identified ways in which we can enable "the authentic happiness" of children to develop (Wellik & Hoover, 2004).

Children's rights

Children's rights are central in the Child-Centred Humanism (CCH) model (CRAE, 2007). For children there are three kinds of rights: *transcendental or absolute welfare rights* (e.g. the right to have basic needs for nutrition, safety and love to be fulfilled); *contractual* (e.g. those mutual rights and obligations as the child grows older, and becomes of age); and *social* (e.g. the developing citizen's right to freedom, and their obligation to respect the freedom of others, in the social contract on which society is crucially founded.)

Children have a special set of rights, and for further definition of these we turn to the developmental psychology of Abraham Maslow (1987). Maslow's pyramidal diagram of human needs is well-known, and we revise and restate it in Chapter 5: at its base are the child's physiological needs for good prenatal care, safe birthing, food, water, warmth, safety and security in the first three years of life. In the CCH model the child has an *absolute right* to have those needs met by surrounding adults. As the child grows older, she or he is socialized and educated, within a growing body of reciprocal relationships. "I help you" is implicit in the relationship in which "you help me."

These reciprocal relationships grow into a set of interactions which make up *the universal social contract*. Society has a duty to enable

young people to maximise their talents, and to esteem themselves (and others) psychologically. Near the apex of Maslow's developmental pyramid is *self-actualization*, which involves making the most of the talents and the psychological, social and material wealth which society has given us, for the benefit of our own spiritual growth, in ways which maximise the welfare of our fellow citizens: and of course, the welfare of the most precious citizens, who are our children.

Even beyond this is the idea of *self-transcendence*, in which individuals achieve their final, spiritual goals through successful interactions. The parallel with Roy Bhaskar's stage of final fulfilment of self-other relationships in *ubuntu*, is striking: in this principle (discussed in detail in the next chapter): *We are no longer … subjects opposed to an object world, which includes other subjects. Rather we approach the thought embodied in some southern African languages by the notion of 'ubuntu' which means roughly 'I am because you are'.* (Bhaskar, 2015, p.211). Now self-transcendence becomes cultural self-transcendence (Wong, 2016). D'Souza & Gurin (2016) characterise Maslow's psychological thinking as " … embodying humanist ideals and philosophy … Maslow's theory of self-actualization is synonymous with seminal psychological, philosophical, and religious theories that support the noble human transition from self-indulgence to selflessness and altruism." (p. 210).

In defence of Descartes, we offer the idea that the "loving ego" can only achieve transcendence through first loving oneself, and then loving others. The final destination is Maslow's transcendent self. As another teacher put it: "Love your neighbour as yourself."

Abraham Maslow

The ethical thrust of humanism in modern psychological thought is well illustrated in this quotation from Abraham Maslow (1971) on a

pinnacle of human development, that of self-actualization, a theme we expand on in the final chapter:

> A[n] assumption of self-actualization theory is that it very strongly requires a pluralism of individual differences …. Such a true acceptance of individual differences has several key implications that should be stated briefly … it means that we try to make a rose into a good rose, rather than seek to change roses into lilies. It implies a kind of Taoism, an acceptance of what people really are; it necessitates a pleasure in the self-actualization of a person who may be quite different from yourself. It even implies an ultimate respect and acknowledgment of the sacredness and uniqueness of each kind of person. In short, humanistic psychology involves an acceptance of people as they are at their intrinsic core and regards their therapists as simply Taoist helpers for them. We strive to enable to become healthy and effective in their own style. (Maslow, 1971, p. 100)

Maslow has also made important contributions to developmental psychology, making the humanist case for child-centred education and emotional support which parallels the work of Carl Rogers (Bland & DeRobartis, 2021). In the humanist tradition, cognitive achievements are not enough for the child: creativity and quality of relationships are crucial too (Sternberg, 2003; Seligman et al., 2009). For humanists too, the educational study of science and human nature, in school and college, is "awe-some" (Valdeslo et al., 2017).

The Social Contract

For us, the idea of humanist society, describing a community with shared values within a mutually supportive social structure must draw on John Locke, and his influence on Rousseau's development of the idea of the social contract (Rousseau, 1979). In this model every person (man and woman alike) is truly free because they have surrendered part of that freedom to every other citizen, by mutual

consent: you have a right, and I have a mutual obligation to fulfil that right This mutual exchange of liberty and obligation is the essence of humanism, both religious and secular. What remains then is to define who is human, and what are the best social systems and cultures in which this network of rights and duties may develop most fruitfully. The essence of this liberal ideal is that these principles apply to *all* humans (regardless of say, age, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation), and to *all* human societies.

The social economist Ove Jakobsen (2017) draws on Maslow's writing on synergy, in developing an idea of the social contract which marks social health and economic well-being in the wider society: "The society with high synergy is one in which virtue pays." Doing good and being good, in Jakobsen's thesis is rewarded by reciprocal goodness from one's neighbour, and a kind of "loving your neighbour as yourself".

Thomas Hill Green, 1836 to 1882

Thomas Green was a remarkable thinker, a religious humanist who in his brief life laid (or under-laboured) the intellectual and moral ground for the development of the British welfare state by Beveridge and his followers (Beveridge, 1968; Greengarten, 1981). Green argued that the twin goals of human activity should be to maximise the citizen's welfare <u>and</u> to maximise that citizen's freedom. Green argued that being economically poor, being poorly educated, enduring degraded housing, physical environments and working conditions, undermined the citizen's freedom, including that citizen's ability to contribute interactively in any kind of metaphysical social contract, to the welfare of others (Wempe, 2004; Porter, 2011). Green stated: "An interest in the common good is the ground of political society, in the sense that without it no body of people would recognise any authority as having a claim on their common obedience." (Green, 1986, 45-46).

Green's ethical socialism had a metaphysical ground, which he took from Hegel's *Propaedeutik*: that in self-reflection the individual citizen *recreates himself or herself* in daily reflection in acknowledging their duty (maximising concern for others, and the freedom in oneself). In this practice the citizen elicits such actions in fellow citizens, in a dialectical system of interchange with oneself and with one's compatriots seeking as Quakers would say, that of the divine light in everyone. In elaborating this ideal Green was a committed religious socialist - Boucher & Vincent, 2006.

It should be noted that Green took on board Hegel's "naïve idealism", which is criticised and reformulated by Roy Bhaskar (2008) in his marriage of critical realism and the dialectical method (Norrie, 2010). But it should also be said that for all its challenging complexity, Roy Bhaskar's *The Philosophy of Metareality: Creativity, Love and Freedom* (2012a) also has much to commend itself to Child-Centred Humanism (CCH). We are also glad to sign up T.H. Green as a patron of CCH, since his heir, the British welfare state, is a crucially important element in fostering "total child welfare" (just as dismantling the welfare state is an attack on children and their welfare).

In Green's personal self-development in supporting a benevolent social contract (Leland, 2011; Brooks, 2014), there is an interesting parallel in Margaret Archer's (2003) idea of *morphogenesis*, part of the critical realist model. Indeed, Green's model of metaphysical introspection and recreation of the self-other bond of mutual generosity in daily thought and interaction, seems to us to fit well with Archer's idea of a morphogenesis - social structure grounded in a process of continuous reflexivity in which social actors understand themselves, in entering dialogue with others in "unmasking alienation".

Margaret Scotford Archer

Archer's ideas (Archer, 1995 to 2017) on reflexivity fit well within the Child-Centred Humanism (CCH) model outlined here, and also with the ideas of the loving interchange between human beings advocated by Carl Rogers (1995). The critical realism that Archer proposes is a revolutionary model (following Bhaskar, 2008) of how humans conduct themselves in everyday life, achieving high levels of "ethical autonomy" in which one appraises oneself in relation to other agents in the wider social system. This reflexive self-other system is a "morphogenetic" one of continuous change, based on social dialogue. Everyone, in this reflexive process, engages in "internal conversations" which are shared with the reflexivity of others who are also reflecting on and communicating their own internal conversations about novel situations. Each day these collaborating individuals in their networks of support and friendship, both negotiate, and create the matrix of change (Power 1, *liberation* versus Power 2, *oppression*, in Bhaskar's model).

But of course evil remains in the world, including existing power systems of rich over poor, and the subsystems of controlling or ignoring children remain too (Sawyerr & Adam-Bagley, 2017; Adam-Bagley, 2022), Archer's emphasis on liberation and 'upward mobility' through an increasing self-consciousness in all of our actions is clearly an optimistic one. One is struck by similarities between Thomas Green's Hegelian dialectic in recreating selfhood on a daily basis (in Green's case, through daily prayer and contemplation), and Margaret Archer's perpetual reflexivity in finding ethical pathways for oneself in relation to one's fellow citizens with the Muslim's daily dialogue with the divine, through the five daily prayers. For both Green (an Oxford don) and Archer (advisor to The Pope on women's issues), the goals seem to be freedom, choice, and autonomy in reaching goals of social

justice.[1] Likewise, Muslims review their actions each day, asking Allah for further spiritual guidance which accords with the Qur'anic interpretation (the Sunnah) of Prophet Muhammad.

Maslow, Kelly and Rogers

Abraham Maslow, George Kelly and Carl Rogers have been categorized as "phenomenological personality theorists" (Chamorro-Premuzi & Furnham, 2014) who are ideologically grounded in notions of personal freedom and personal development (the essence of Child-Centred Humanism). Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology which focuses on individual uniqueness and the possibilities for "harmonic growth" - that is, achieving fulfilment through meeting ethical goals involving other people - is important in CCH *provided that* self-development is intimately linked to social development, in that it serves the community. Rogers teaches the psychology of human development not by statistical materials, but by a series of individual case studies of adults reflecting on how they have experienced challenge in childhood and young adulthood (Rogers, 1995).

We learn, says Rogers "to be free" firstly through our parents' care and the kindliness of our teachers - the reciprocal rewards that being a good (child/adolescent/adult) citizen brings. "Trust" and "empathy" are the markers of the progress of the adult. "Being free" has to be learned, through self-discipline. It is a reflexive process, in which learning to love ourselves, we love others: we love "our" child, we love children, we love "your" child.

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[1] Wilkinson (2015) uses an Islamic model of critical realism in a similar way: the five daily prayers and reflection on The Qur'an and Sunnah (life and teaching of the Prophet Muhammad) are models by which human reflection can be liberating, enabling the ideal society created by the Prophet Adam, to roll out across the earth.