

# Sunflowers, Sardines and Responsive Combodying: Three Perspectives on Embodiment

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## ABSTRACT

This paper explores the topic of ‘embodiment’ from the author’s explication of Eugene Gendlin’s philosophy, a philosophy which flows through the practice of Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapy. A little of Buddhist thought is also incorporated. From these explorations, the term ‘*combodying*’ is coined to express the processing-generating of bodily living ‘together with’ other beings. Combodying is processing-generating-living newly at every moment, prior to our reflexive awareness. Aspects of combodying are mostly implicit in a sense that they occur before we bring our awareness to them. Reflexive awareness enables new explications about aspects of combodying. These explications are not mere ‘explanations’ of combodying in a sense that aspects of combodying respond to our explications.

**Keywords:** Embodiment, Combodying, Focusing, Reflexive Awareness, Eugene Gendlin

## INTRODUCTION

This special issue on embodiment has provided me with an opportunity to build

upon some ideas that had been in the corner of my mind for a while. In this paper, these ideas are developed to a considerable extent, though there may be some room for further developments. Three perspectives, ‘sunflowers’, ‘sardines’ and ‘responsive combodying’, are presented on the subject of embodiment, and some implications at the end of this paper attempt to tie

together the three perspectives and ground the paper in Person-Centered theory and practice.

One's thoughts are no doubt influenced by his or her background, and the thoughts elaborated in this paper are no exception. I will briefly introduce my background as it might provide a road map for the reader to grasp some of the thoughts presented in this paper. Having been born and raised in Japan, Buddhist thought and practices have always been at close proximity, although I have never studied them formally. Eugene Gendlin's philosophy and therapy, which I had studied at the University of Chicago, has had a deep impact on me, as evident in this paper. His phenomenology of the implicit and of explication, and particularly his views of bringing the body into the center of our thoughts and interactions have had profound influences on me. Moreover, the view of persons as creating novelty, new meanings and new stories of their lives, is a fascinating view, some aspects of which are elaborated in this paper. As a therapist, I started out working in a psychosomatic unit of a hospital, and perhaps it is because of this background, that I have had a continued interest in the body. This had led me to study physiology at a medical university, where I obtained my doctorate. Starting with such personal introduction, I invite the readers into this article.

## **SUNFLOWERS**

I first thought of sunflowers, when I started to think about the body and embodiment. I was remembering that Eugene Gendlin wrote, "We have plant bodies". I thought he gave an example of sunflowers to explain what he meant in his article, "Three Assertions About the Body" (1993). But when I reread the text, the sunflower wasn't there. He was referring to plants in general. So the sunflower must have been in my imagination.

What did Gendlin mean by his assertion? I will return to sunflowers later, but first, let us see exactly what he wrote in his article, in the section "#2 We Have Plant Bodies" (Gendlin 1993, p.25).

*A plant does not have our five senses.* It does not see, hear or smell. And yet obviously the plant contains the information involved in its living. It lives from itself; it organizes the next steps of its own body-process, and enacts them if the environment cooperates to supply what it needs. So the plant has the information about its living in and with the soil, the air, the

water, and the light. It *has* the information, or we could say it *is* the information, since the plant-body is made of soil, water, air and light. It makes itself out of those, and so, of course, it contains (it *is*) information about those. But it is not about soil and water just lying out there by themselves. Rather it is much more complex information about the plant's living with those, making itself out of them....

In the first part of this excerpt, Gendlin rejects the commonly held notion that what we know must have come into us from our senses. Commonly, we believe that information has to be put in, "inputted", through our five senses. In this popular view, as well as in most psychology and philosophy, there is nothing there in human nature unless information is inputted. "Innate ideas" are questionable, and what we know must have been "acquired" through our senses, holds this popular view.

Gendlin has repeatedly argued against this popular view, both in philosophy and in psychotherapy theory. In philosophy, his point is clear from the title of his article on this subject: "The Primacy of the Body, Not the Primacy of Perception" (Gendlin 1992). In psychotherapy theory, he recalls that he tried to convince Carl Rogers of the idea that the three core conditions did not need to be perceived by the client (Gendlin, 1990). For him, the body *is* the interacting with the environment whether we perceive it as such or not. Thus, the client's body is already affected by the therapist, even if the client does not perceive the therapist's unconditional positive regard or empathy as such.

The plant has no perception input channels, and yet it knows exactly how to live. In the middle part of the excerpt, Gendlin writes:

It lives from itself; it organizes the next steps of its own body-process, and enacts them...

The body has the capacity to "live from itself", it "organizes the next steps" of living. The body is a *processing*, in a sense that it organizes information, and it is a *generating* of its own living. The sunflower turns to the sun, although it does not have eyes to see the sun, although nobody has taught it to do so. It grows taller and sometimes a little sideways, so that leaves of other plants do not get in the way of the sun. If you go to a field of sunflowers (or any flowers) you will notice that each sunflower plant is a little different from the others. The size of the flowers may not be

identical; the shades of color may vary slightly from leaf to leaf, from petal to petal, from plant to plant; the heights, widths and shapes of stems are not all the same; the shapes of the flowers also vary. They are not identical to one another, like products produced in a factory. Each plant processes the various and delicate information of soil, water, sunlight, wind, temperature, insects and so forth, and they *generate* their own bodily living.

Continuing in the middle part of this excerpt, Gendlin writes:

It *has* the information, or we could say it *is* the information, since the plant-body is made of soil, water, air and light. It makes itself out of those, and so, of course, it contains (it *is*) information about those. (underline added)

Of course, ‘information’ is a human concept. So the plant does not *have* them, it *is* them. It took me a little while to understand how the word *since* functions in the quote above. It does sound a little awkward. Let me try to give another example using *since* in the way that Gendlin does.

The human body is said to be about 57% water. More specifically, the weight of the body water averages to be about 57% of the adult human total body weight. In infants, it could be as high as 79%. Thus, to a large degree, our bodies are *made of* water, and reduction in body water immediately affects the whole body. A person may not *have* the information about the decreases in sodium ion (Na<sup>+</sup>) levels, or may not *have* the information about ‘dehydration’, but when this happens, the human person *is* thirsty. Thus, being thirsty *is* the living and enacting of dehydration, *since* the human body is made of water. I don’t know if this is any better than Gendlin’s use of the word *since*, but I hope that this additional example highlights what Gendlin intended to say in this line.

Moving to the last line of the excerpt:

Rather it is much more complex information about the plant’s living with those, making itself out of them....

The complex, delicate and multiple ‘information’ *is* the plant’s living, it’s own making. Gendlin often uses the expression *living* rather than life (see Gendlin 1973 for example). It conveys a *generating*, a *process* of living forward.

Like a field of sunflowers, where each plant is a little different from the others, human bodies are different from one another. Of course, these differences are to some extent genetically determined. However, if you observe a crowd of people walking, you will notice that each person has a somewhat different way of walking. Persons have their own delicate balances of so many factors involved in walking. Weight and mass of different parts of the body; the length of the legs and arms; size and shape of the feet (which may even vary from left to right foot); muscle tones in the calves, thighs, hips, shoulders, neck, and other parts of the body; the structures and conditions of so many joints; respiration; circulation; digestion; the person's current emotion and schedule; the type and fit of shoes; bags and other items carried; climatic conditions as temperature, humidity, wind chill, wind velocity; results of modeling and learning ... this list is probably inexhaustible. All these delicate and multi-faceted information affect the walk. More precisely, the walk is the processing-generating, the living-forward of all these information. Pain in some part of the body, or fatigue in the muscles of the thighs, indigestion, a slight elevation of the street, for example, result in an instant adjustment of the walk. Like plants, human bodies *process and generate* their own living, with *every step* that they take!

The *processing-generating-living* is not often understood, especially in psychotherapy. For instance, one client asked me: "how does the felt sense know the *right* direction for me? Is it something I learned from my parents, stored in my unconscious?"

I didn't know how to respond to this question right away. It seemed to me that there was so much I had to say, to answer his question. After a short pause, I asked him: "how come the sunflower knows it is *right* to turn to the sun?" Obviously, dad and mom sunflower didn't teach that, so that teaching cannot be stored in its unconscious.

The client looked puzzled. So I told him, "not everything is a consequence of previous learning or acquisition. The body can organize and live further from itself." I wonder if I made sense to him. This interaction highlights at least three commonly held assumptions in psychotherapy. Firstly, what we feel must have come into our bodies from our senses. Secondly, this must have happened in the past, and hence what we feel are incomplete representations of some memory-contents. Thirdly, those memory-contents of which we are not accurately aware of must be 'in' the 'unconscious', in an area that has been repressed or inhibited, prohibited from conscious

awareness. These assumptions are commonly held and may be a legacy of psychoanalytic theory, which attempted to trace conscious phenomena to their unconscious origins. Or conversely, psychoanalytic theory may have been build upon these commonly held assumptions.

If we reject, with Gendlin, the first of these assumptions, then we will also be rejecting the other two. In other words, if what we know was not inputted, then it is not memory, and hence it cannot have been stored in the unconscious.

Of course, memory and acquisitions influences us. There are like minerals in the soil for the sunflower. The *processing-generating-living* body processes whatever information it has (or is). Thus, memory and whatever we have acquired are processed together with multitudes of information to generate the next steps of living.

My client's question, furthermore, points to another commonly held assumption in psychoanalysis and in everyday life. Gendlin (1990, p.208) criticizes Freud's psychoanalytic theory, on the grounds that in psychoanalysis "the body has no behavioral order at all". Unorganized drive energy is stored in a hypothetical place called the *id*. Id is a 'cauldron' of drive energies that can only be discharged through the ego, which is where they are made to fit social patterns. "Every human action - he [Freud] assumes - is patterned by patterns which are imposed from outside the body.... There is nothing but imposed organization in that theory! ... The body is assumed to have no order for behavior, and no interaction from itself." With the assertion that *we have plant bodies*, Gendlin puts forward a view of how the body has or is an order that is generated from itself. In another article, Gendlin (1973, p.324) exemplifies this by stating that no one has taught a baby how to crawl. The bodily movement of crawling is processed and generated by the infant's body itself.

In psychotherapy, reflexive explications *generate* new living. (Some aspects of 7

this will be mentioned later in this paper.) Gendlin writes:  
One changes in therapy; one does not only come to know the past more fully. New ways of being are generated - obviously those don't follow logically from how one has been. Nor can one simply impose new ways on oneself from top down. There is, indeed, a role for designing ourselves

newly, but that *alone* does not usually change us much. We must let our wished-for design relate to the felt sense of how we are. Then new and much more intricate little steps of change arise which lead us not quite to what we designed, but rather to something much better and more finely wrought. (Ibid., p.27, underline added)

In therapy, a new way of being is *generated*. This view is in contrast with the commonly held view that what we enact comes from memories in the unconscious, that the direction of our living is pre-determined by whatever has been inputted to us in the past, or that our living is an enactment of social patterns imposed on us. Rather, what is generated is ‘more finely wrought’ than social forms, than the dictates of the past, than even our own vision for the future. It is a continuously generating novelty.

## **SARDINES**

Quite often, I think of schools of little fish: sardines, for example. I am filled with awe when I see the whole school of fish dance in formation, or react instantly and together, when some predator comes. When a large tuna comes, for example, the whole school of sardines shifts in a certain direction at once, or it may split into two schools in an instant and each of these schools will go different ways. How could this happen?

It cannot be that there is a Captain Joe Sardine somewhere in the school that gives directions.

“Large tuna approaching us from ten o’clock direction. OK, on the count of three, we all shift starboard 17 degrees, climb bank 18 degrees and an increased velocity of 25 knots/hr. Here we go...”

This simply cannot be. If the captain’s orders had to be relayed from fish to fish, fish at the tail of the school will probably be moving in progressive delays. But this does not seem to happen. So sardines do not seem to be communicating from one fish to another. Nor could the sardines have rehearsed the approach of a predator from all possible directions and depths. Thus, although I am no expert on marine biology, the movement of the school of fish does not seem to me to be based on communication, nor on learned behavior patterns.

This makes me wonder whether there is an individual ‘body’, or individual identity of each fish. It does not seem like Captain Joe Sardine is this one

here, and that there is Bill Fish and his wife Sally next to him. Rather, it looks like the whole school is one identity, or one body, which can sometimes split into two or more bodies, or merge with other bodies instantly.

Looking at the school of sardines in this way, I am reminded of the Buddhist sutra, the Heart Sutra. '*Rupa* is Emptiness and Emptiness is *rupa*', is one of the famous parts in this short sutra. According to the Dalai Lama (2005), the Heart Sutra depicts a scene where hundreds of monks assembled around Shakyamuni Buddha in a place called 'Vulture Peak'. While the Buddha was in a deep state of meditation, one of his followers, Sariputra asked about the practice of wisdom. In answer, the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara spoke what is now transmitted as the Heart Sutra. When Avalokitesvara was done with his speech, the Buddha applauded and praised his words.

The line quoted above says that the *rupa* is empty. *Rupa* is a Sanskrit word meaning 'heap', which is often translated as 'form', 'physical form' or 'body'. In Chinese and Japanese translations, the character 'color' is used to refer to *rupa*. It is one of the five *skandhas*, or the 'aggregates' that make up human existence along with the four others, which are sensation, perception, mental formations and cognizance.

It may be possible to translate this into our sardine example by saying that the physical form of an individual sardine has no intrinsic self-identity. It is not Joe here and Bill there. The individual sardine is empty of intrinsic existence. But once we realize that the individual sardine is empty, then we see a larger existence. The school of fish, the current of the ocean, the tide, the depths of the sea, the temperature of the water, the direction of other fish and birds in the sky above, the predator, the climate, wind and so much more. All these are 'in' the movement of the school of fish. What we see, therefore, is not a single fish, but *inter-being*, to use the expression of Thich Nhat Hanh (2009).

The universe is 'in' the body, and the body is 'in' the universe. The sun and wind and soil are 'in' the sunflower, and the tide and moon are 'in' the school of sardines. Nature is abundant with such examples. Sea turtles lay eggs on the night of the full moon. Scientists believe it is related to the tide during the full moon, since when there is a full moon, the tide is high, taking the turtles farther inland than when the tide is low. In any case, the



light of day and the dark of night, the sun and the moon, the rising and lowering of the sea level---all these are 'in' the turtles. Gendlin (1973) makes reference to squirrels in his paper.

...a squirrel raised from birth in a metal cage, having never seen a nut on the ground, when given a nut at a certain age, will "bury" it. That is to say, it will scratch the metal floor, will pick up the nut, place it at the spot at which it scratched, and heap imaginary soil on the top of it. (p.324)

The soil is 'in' the squirrel, even if it is raised from birth in a metal cage. the *Process Model* (Gendlin, 1997b) uses the expression 'body-environment' to articulate the ways in which the body is one with the environment.

The human body is vastly more complicated than the examples above, because humans also live 'in' a symbolic world, and the symbolic world is 'in' the human body. We communicate with words, which has culture and history 'in' it. We worry about numbers—income, stocks, exchange rates, time---they *are* our bodily living. So are our speech and what others say. We live in and with symbols.

The English word 'embodiment' may have a dualistic connotation originating in Western culture. An exact Japanese translation of this word does not exist. The word may have come from a cultural background where the spirit was assumed to be incarnated or 'embodied', encapsulated in our physical bodies. The prefix 'em-' denotes a 'putting into'. Thus far, this paper has described a sort of '*com-bodiment*', where the body points beyond itself 'altogether with' (*com-*) the universe. The body is seen as a *processing-generating itself* with the whole universe at every moment of its living. This view of the body will be referred to as '*combodying*'.

## **RESPONSIVE COMBODYING**

### **Pre-reflexive and Reflexive Modes of Awareness**

In another paper, I have discussed pre-reflexive and reflexive modes of consciousness or awareness as it pertained to felt meaning and felt sense (Ikemi, 2013). In this paper, I will discuss these two modes of awareness with regards to the *implicit*.

Pre-reflexive awareness is consciousness before it is aware of itself, or before contemplating or reflecting about such a way of having consciousness. In reflexive awareness, people contemplate about their experiences. For example, in driving a car, I may be absorbed in driving. Me-and-driving are one in that pre-reflexive instant. I do not reflect about how hard my foot should step onto the accelerator to achieve a certain speed that I feel is appropriate for this road situation. I do not contemplate about why I think this speed feels right for me, even though it may be slightly above the speed limit. I do not calculate how many degrees I must turn the steering wheel at this speed in order to change lanes. These acts involved in driving come to me *pre-reflexively*, in other words, before I reflect on them.

I can become reflexive in my driving, when I notice that I am speeding more than I normally do and start to become aware of my heartbeat and shallow breathing. I may notice that I am feeling aggressive for some reason or another...yes, I do feel aggressive... did the slow truck that blocked the fast lane a while ago get me upset, or... no, it's got to be something else...oh, it's the argument with that person...am I still angry? In this instant, I am in a *reflexive mode of awareness*.

This example illustrates how we switch back and forth between pre-reflexive and reflexive modes of awareness in our everyday living. More precisely, I can maintain a pre-reflexive mode of awareness on certain aspects of driving the vehicle, while at the same time, I can reflect about the aggression I am feeling in the background of my driving.

This example also shows that with *reflexive awareness*, I can explicate my anger about the argument, which *was implicit* until a moment ago, in the *pre-reflexive* moments of driving. Once the anger is explicated, I realize that I *was* angry the whole time that I was driving, and that *was* the reason that I was driving so fast. I will return to the special kind of 'was' in a later part of this paper.

To my knowledge, Eugene Gendlin has not written about such relation between the implicit and pre-reflexive awareness. However, in one article (Gendlin, 1973) he mentions pre-reflexive awareness in parenthesis in the following passage. "This is what is meant by the word 'preconceptual' (some other words sometimes used for this are: preontological; prethematic; *prereflexive*) [p.322, italics added]. Here, Gendlin states that the preconceptual nature of our experiencing can be

called pre-reflexive, but in this article, I am trying to show the relationship between pre-reflexive awareness and what *was implicit*.

## **Sunflowers, Sardines and Reflexive Awareness**

The *combodying* exemplified by sunflowers and sardines in the above, is always happening in every instant of our living, with every breath we take, and every step we take. Combodying, or the *processing-generating-living-with-the-universe-and-symbols*, is happening pre-reflexively and we do not often reflect on it. However, we can explicate the nature of aspects of combodying to the extent that we can reflect on it.

The body is not a chaotic jumble of instinctive impulses. It has order, or it is the order that is being *processed-generated-lived*. Instead of saying that ‘the body is the unconscious’ I prefer to say that aspects of bodily existence (combodying) are pre-reflexive, in other words, they have not been reflected upon yet. To the extent to which aspects of our combodying has not been reflected upon yet, it would seem like those aspects are ‘unconscious’ or they seem to lack meaningful form. We can turn this assertion around and say that to the extent to which we can reflect on aspects of combodying, can we explicate meaningful forms of our bodily existence.

In order to reflect on aspects of combodying, conceptual or experiential knowledge is necessary. Humans are capable of creating vast and finely detailed concepts. These concepts allow us to reflect upon aspects of combodying. Medical sciences, for instance, has generated greatly detailed concepts about our bodies. Take concepts such as ‘enzyme’ or the enzyme ‘cyclooxygenase (COX)’, for example. We cannot experience how COX feels like in us, hence COX is not an experiential concept. However, with this conceptual knowledge, the mechanism of inflammations can be explained. Consequently, medicine such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) that inhibit COX, can relieve us from pain and inflammations. With such conceptual knowledge, people are able to reflect on their bodily conditions to understand that they have ‘inflammations’ and that NSAID would probably work to relieve their symptoms.

Although unexplainable in Western medicine, ancient Hindu and Buddhist tantra practitioners discovered ‘chakras’ that affect bodily processing. Ancient Chinese medicine discovered ‘meridians’ in the body which when

stimulated with acupressure or acupuncture can produce healing effects. It is said that even surgical operations can be done without using anesthesia when acupuncture is performed on certain meridians. Similarly, a Qigong practitioner can understand the disorder of qi energy and help heal the patient using qi energy. With concepts such as chakras, meridians, qi, a practitioner can reflect on the bodily condition of the patient and explicate meaningful forms for aspects of combodying. We can reflect on the body to the extent that we have knowledge of chakras, meridians, qi and Western medicine. When different systems of knowledge are found, different ways of reflecting on combodying can be explicated. Thus, with expanding knowledge, the extent to which we can reflect and create meaningful forms will be expanded.

In addition to conceptual knowledge, experiential knowledge also expands the scope of our reflective awareness. Let us take physical training at the gym as an example. When people who are not accustomed to physical training are told that they are tense and that they need to “relax the muscles around your shoulder blades”, they may not know what to do. They may not even notice the tension specifically around their shoulder blades, and only complain of ‘stiff shoulders’. Only when a trainer shows by touching the muscles around the shoulder blades, do they notice the tension in that specific area, and only when they are shown how to exercise those muscles, would they find a way to relax them. But once they have experienced relaxing the muscles around the shoulder blades, they are now able to direct their attention to those muscles. The muscular tension that has been in the dark, can now come into the light of reflexive awareness. Another way of saying this, is that a particular muscular tension which *was implicit* in the ‘stiff shoulders’ has now become explicit.

Similarly, Yoga practitioners, chiropractors, focusing trainers, ayurveda physicians, osteopathic medicine therapists, body-workers of various orientations can show us aspects of our combodying of which one has never been aware. In Focusing, for example, many clients are unable to find a felt sense at first, but once they ‘find it’ they are able to experience situations differently. With awareness of the felt sense, they do not react to a situation emotionally, but are able to attend to the felt sense of the situation. With expanding conceptual and experiential knowledge, different meanings can be explicated about our bodies and about our symbolic situations.

## **Combodying Responds**

Aspects of combodying, or more precisely, the order that is the processing-generating-living, responds to our reflective explication. It is not as if our conceptual and experiential knowledge can uncover an order that lies stable, unchanged, and hidden, waiting to be discovered. The discovery *changes* the order.

Let us return to the example of the stiff muscles around the shoulder blades. With tense muscles around the shoulder blades, one's body is generally tense and the movements of the shoulder blades are significantly impaired. People who practice martial arts, for example *kobudoh* (ancient Japanese martial arts) say that the shoulder blades are like two reverse triangles that can turn, and the two blades can come together, almost stick together, or they can part away from each other. People who have not practiced these movements have lost delicate control over the movements of the shoulder blades. But once they are able to bring attention to the shoulder blades and are able to restore some of their movements, the whole body's functioning begins to change, including respiration, general vitality, posture, movements, general muscle tones, moods. A small lady, who came to a *kobudoh* workshop for the first time, learned to restore the movement of the shoulder blades to some extent. By the end of her very first session, she was able to throw a big, heavy man with ease. Her body had changed. The body *responds* to our awareness.

'Our procedures **do** change nature', Gendlin (1997a) writes. After some training in moving the shoulder blades, a person with a tense body is no longer such. The person *was* tense before. But, 'the retroactive 'was' does not move back; it is a carrying forward' (Gendlin, 1997a). Because the body's tension is carried forward by the training, can we now say that the person *was* tense before. The procedure, the training, carries forward the body in such a way that the body is no longer what it *was* before. There is a special temporality, a special *Zeitgestalten* (Gendlin, 2012) to explicating the implicit. Reflexive awareness takes us ahead, or carries us forward, and this forward position enables us to discover what *was* there. Hence, I have used the expression "was implicit" throughout this paper.

It is not as if reflexive awareness only explains or uncovers the unchanging order of nature. The body does not remain the same after our concepts or experiential awareness about them. Combodying is responding to our awareness about them.

## SOME IMPLICATIONS

The thoughts put forth in this paper share common ground with what Carl Rogers' named as the 'actualizing tendency'. Rogers (1989, pp.380-381) recalls how in his boyhood years, he was moved by the sight of potatoes stored over the winter in his basement, several feet below a small basement window. Pale white sprouts would begin to grow from these potatoes, two or three feet high to reach out for the distant light of the window. Even in this unfavorable condition, the potato sprouts grew towards the light as they were 'striving to become'. Like the sunflower in this paper, the potatoes in Rogers' basement were *processing-generating their own living*. This aspect of the actualizing tendency corresponds to the first perspective presented in this paper, as exemplified with sunflowers, and serves as a shared ground between Rogers' thinking and this paper. In therapy, we can understand a person's living, including symptoms as a person's 'striving to become' or a ways of *processing-generating- living*.

With the second perspective, exemplified by sardines, this paper adds to Rogers' thinking. The concept of *combodying* attempts to show that the potato's 'striving to become' is not independent of the sunlight, air, dampness and temperature of the basement storage. For instance, the photosynthesis process of the potatoes delicately affect the air in the room, as more oxygen is released, and this in turn delicately affect other plants, molds, microorganisms, and all living beings in the basement. Conversely, other living beings in the basement also delicately affect the potato's growth. Combodying reminds us that everything is affected by everything, which roughly echoes what Gendlin (1997b, pp.38-46) called "everything by everything" in his *Process Model*.

The third perspective of responsive combodying, raises some interesting questions about Carl Rogers' actualizing tendency. I would not call responsive combodying an 'actualizing' tendency, since the term 'actualizing' implies that there is a pre-determined entity to which one becomes. It is pre-determined that a sunflower seed will become a sunflower plant, for example. However, when it comes to persons, this becomes vastly more complicated. In many of his writings, Rogers used the phrase 'he becomes what he is' to articulate the process of actualization. It is as if there were a pre-determined self, or an 'essence' of existence called 'self' to which one becomes. Instead, I believe that human living is radically open. Combodying keeps generating its own living and there is no knowing whether such living is approaching or actualizing a

self, which is supposed to exist beneath living. According to the third perspective of responsive embodying presented in this paper, 'what one is' does not preexist one's living, but emerges in our reflexive awareness about our living. A brief illustration from case material might clarify what is meant here.

A client who thought that his true personality was introverted and socially phobic, came to a sudden realization in therapy that he had been 'victimized' by a crises situation and ensuing labor conditions at work. After this felt shift, he said: 'actually, I like people, and I like working with people'. Now, with the realization that he was a victim of a crises situation at work, he no longer attributed his anxiety symptoms and subsequent leave of absence from work to his introverted personality. Now, he recalled instances in his life where he liked being social and extraverted. In the interview, he related that he had founded a mandolin club at the university where he studied and greatly enjoyed performing with his colleagues. An introverted and socially phobic person is 'what he thought he was', but 'what he is' had changed during the reflexive moments of therapy. Reflexive awareness generates what one is.

Actually there are some ambiguities in Rogers' writings, as to what he meant precisely by 'the self' to be actualized, and my views may not be much different from his, after all. He did write about 'existential living', which was: 'to say that the self and personality emerge *from* experience, rather than experience being translated or twisted to fit preconceived self-structure' (Rogers, 1961, pp.188-189). The clinical example above would seem to match such quotes from Rogers. On other instances, however, Rogers' seems to have characterized the self in different ways, even within a single article. For instance, in 'What it means to become a person' (in Rogers, 1961), Rogers wrote about a momentary 'experiencing of feeling', and that a person is, in that moment, 'his dependency' or whatever feeling is being experienced at that moment (pp.111-113). But on the same page, Rogers wrote: 'when a person has, throughout therapy, experienced in this fashion all the emotions which organismically arise in him...then he has experienced *himself*, in all the richness that exists within himself. He has become what he is' (p.113). Here, the self is not a momentary experiencing of feeling, but to be attained when *all* the feelings had been experienced. It may also be noted that Rogers may have conceived of a set of feelings that constitute 'all' the feelings. In the next page, Rogers refers to a client and writes: 'to be herself means to find the pattern, the underlying order, which

exists in the ceaselessly changing flow of her experience' (p.114). Here is another view of the self, which is not a momentary experience of feeling or an experience of all the feelings, but a pattern or order, somewhat like an 'essence' of that person. Given these ambiguities in what Rogers meant by the 'self' to which one becomes, the perspectives put forth in this paper may or may not disagree with his 'actualizaing tendency' or the 'process of becoming', depending on how Rogers is read.

The perspectives put forth in this paper advocates seeing bodily living as generating its own living together with the universe, and emphasizes the person's reflexive awareness with which one can make sense of, and change one's combodied living. These perspectives may have similarities as well as differences with related theories and practices of psychotherapy. Can these enhance the practice of Focusing (Gendlin, 2007) or WholeBody Focusing (McEvenue & Doi 2004)? And what about the relations of these perspectives with the issue of reflexivity in Person-Centered Therapy (Rennie, 1998), or with the relational perspective (Cooper & Ikemi, 2012)? Buddhist perspectives such as Zen Therapy (Brazier, 1995) and meditation practices such as mindfulness or *vipassana* may be relevant to the perspectives presented in this paper. A detailed investigation into such topics may bear much fruit to enhance the understanding of responsive combodying in relation to the practice of psychotherapy.

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