Person-Centred Therapy

Person-Centred Therapy

The Focusing-Oriented Approach

CAMPBELL PURTON

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For Val, Dinah and Tom

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Terminological Note

I have for the most part chosen to use the pronouns ‘they’, ‘them’, ‘their’ and ‘themselves’ as singular forms in place of the gender-specific ‘he’, ‘him’, and ‘his’ and ‘himself’. This is because I find that the consistent use of ‘he or she’, ‘him or her’ and so on often leads to impossibly contorted sentences (how, for example, could one live with such a rendering of ‘He himself might feel that he would like his work to be more congenial to him’?). ‘S/he’ is unpronounceable, and the device of alternating the use of feminine and masculine pronouns runs into difficulties in contexts where gender-specific pronouns *are* required, and the distinction between a gender-specific ‘him’ and a gender-neutral ‘him’ is lost. There can be awkwardnesses in the singular use of the grammatically plural forms; for example, I have preferred forms such as ‘while they themselves think’ to the grammatically correct ‘while they themselves think’ (though my word-processor keeps ‘correcting’ this); however, I find I can live with these awkwardnesses more comfortably than with any of the alternative ways around the problem. Singular uses of grammatical plurals are not unknown, although some readers may echo Queen Victoria’s apocryphal ‘We are not amused’.