**Section 2d - Psychological Libertarianism by Carl Rogers**

**Background**

* Potential libertarian support comes from the psychological school of thought called ‘Humanism’.
* Humanism is a psychological approach that encourages people to reflect on their own behaviour, as opposed to the psychologist drawing conclusions about their behaviour (as behaviourist’s like Pavlov do – see earlier notes). Humanism is sometimes referred to as the ‘phenomenological approach’.
* One of the early founders of Humanism was American psychologist Carl Rogers (1902-1987).

**People lives can become determined**

* Rogers believed that people were born experiencing beings, who live in the present and have the potential to respond freely to their current situations.
* However, Rogers concedes that a person’s life can become determined by external conditioning (behaviourist theory – supported by Pavlov). Roger’s particularly believed that conditioning can occur due to parental, peer or social pressures e.g. to conform to societies ‘norms’.
* Rogers argued that young children do have their own developed thoughts and ideas about numerous aspects of life, such as: politics, religion, sexual matters etc.
* When a child’s parents, peers or society disapprove of their thoughts and feelings the child considers such thoughts are wrong.
* Moreover, the child believes the only way to achieve acceptance (from their parents, peers or society) is to forget about their own free willed thoughts and feelings and instead embrace those of their parents, peers etc.
* Therefore, the child is, in essence, rejecting their own ideas and thoughts and just become a deterministic robot copying the ideas and thoughts of their parents, peers etc. e.g. a child may freely feel they are attracted to someone of the same sex, however, because of parental, peer etc. pressures, the child will bury away these free willed feelings.

**Self-Actualisation: the theory**

* Rogers, however, rejected that such deterministic factors were permanent. This is because he believed that people can still achieve freewill through the process of: ‘self-actualisation’. Self-actualisation basically involves a person getting in touch with their own feelings and then acting on them.
* Rogers’ believed that this was a personal journey that was unique to each person. As Rogers stated: **"As no one else can know how we perceive, we are the best experts on ourselves."**
* Rogers believed that if a person can act on their own free will feelings, they can break the ‘chains’ of determinism and express their own freewill i.e. they can self-actualise.
* Rogers’ believes that full self-actualisation occurs when a person’s ‘ideal self’ (i.e. who they would freely like to be) is the same as their actual ‘true self’.

**Self-Actualisation: develops full potential**

* Rogers believed that it is only when a person achieves freedom, through self-actualisation, that they can fully fulfil their full potential. Rogers describes an individual who has self-actualised as a fully functioning person.
* As Rogers stated: **“The paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change for the better.”**