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BETWEEN MIND AND HEART: FROM HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY TO EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The article explores the philosophical and psychological evolution that redefined emotion as a vital dimension of human intelligence in the mid-twentieth century. Thinkers such as Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Rollo May and others transformed psychology into a discipline concerned not only with pathology but with authenticity, meaning, and growth. Together, they established the conceptual and ethical foundations for what would later be called emotional intelligence – the integration of thought and feeling, cognition and compassion, reason and value. The article argues that emotional intelligence should not be seen as a contemporary innovation but as the culmination of a humanistic tradition that redefined intelligence as the harmony between mind and heart, between knowing and caring, between awareness and empathy – the moral essence of what it means to be human.

Keywords: emotion, mind, heart, empathy, emotional intelligence.

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МІЖ РОЗУМОМ І СЕРЦЕМ: ВІД ГУМАНІСТИЧНОЇ ПСИХОЛОГІЇ ДО ЕМОЦІЙНОГО ІНТЕЛЕКТУ

Стаття досліджує філософську та психологічну еволюцію, яка в середині ХХ століття переосмислила емоцію як життєво важливий вимір людського інтелекту. Після двох світових воєн, коли віра в раціональність і науковий прогрес була глибоко підірвана, гуманістична психологія постала як «третя сила» у психологічній думці. Відкидаючи як психоаналітичний детермінізм, так і біхевіористичний редукаціонізм, вона прагнула відродити емоційні, моральні та духовні основи людського буття. Такі мислителі, як А. Маслоу, К. Роджерс і Р. Мей, перетворили психологію на науку, що зосереджується не лише на патології, а й на автентичності, сенсі та зростанні. Ієрархія потреб Маслоу піднесла любов і самоактуалізацію до рівня внутрішніх рухів розвитку; клієнт-центрована терапія Роджерса поставила в центр процесу зцілення емпатію та безумовне позитивне ставлення; а екзистенційна психологія Мей повернула тривогу й творчість як джерело мужності та самореалізації. Їхні ідеї продовжили Е. Фромм, В. Франкл, Ш. Бюлер і Д. Бюєнтал, наголошуючи, що любов, сенс і автентичність становлять сутність психологічної цілісності. Разом ці мислителі заклали концептуальні та етичні підвалини того, що пізніше отримало назву емоційного інтелекту – інтеграції думки й почуття, пізнання й співчуття, розуму й цінності. У статті доводиться, що емоційний інтелект не є сучасним нововведенням, а радше кульмінацією гуманістичної традиції, яка переосмислила інтелект як гармонію між розумом і серцем, між знанням і турботою, між усвідомленням і емпатією – тобто

моральну сутність людського буття. Звертається увага і на сучасну актуальність цих ідей у добу цифрової комунікації та інформаційного перевантаження, коли емоційна чутливість стає ключем до збереження людяності, здатності до співпереживання та критичного мислення. Відновлення балансу між раціональним і емоційним постає як необхідна умова гармонійного розвитку особистості та суспільства.

Ключові слова: емоція, розум, серце, емпатія, емоційний інтелект.

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Introduction

The mid-twentieth century marked a decisive turning point in the understanding of human nature. After the moral and psychological devastation of two world wars, the world faced an urgent need to reconsider what it meant to be human. Scientific rationalism, though instrumental in technological advancement, had failed to protect humanity from cruelty and alienation. Psychology itself faced a profound crises of meaning as it had become fragmented – one branch dissecting the unconscious as pathology, another reducing behaviour to mechanistic response. Both approaches neglected the inner moral and emotional life that gives human existence its depth. Against this backdrop, a new movement arose, seeking to reawaken the moral and emotional depths of human existence.

The humanistic psychology movement, often termed the “third force” of psychology, tried to reawaken the emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions of intelligence, placing the person – not the mechanism or the symptom – at the centre of psychological inquiry. By tracing the contributions of Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Rollo May, and other thinkers, the article argues that the roots of what we now call emotional intelligence lie deeply embedded in their humanistic and existential insights.

Thus, **the aim of this article** is to examine the intellectual and moral continuity between mid-twentieth-century humanistic psychology and the later concept of emotional intelligence, demonstrating that emotional intelligence is not a modern innovation but the maturation of an earlier humanistic vision – one that integrated emotion, empathy, and ethical awareness into the very definition of intelligence.

Presentation of the main material

After the devastation of two world wars, the mid-20th century ushered in a profound moral and psychological reckoning. Humanity, having witnessed the collapse of reason into barbarity, could no longer trust in the Enlightenment dream that rationality alone would guarantee progress. The mechanization of death at Auschwitz and Hiroshima exposed what the philosopher Theodor W. Adorno later called “the administered world,” [1], a

society in where intellect divorced from empathy becomes complicit in destruction. Against this background of disillusionment, a new question arose: What does it mean to be fully human?

The humanistic psychology movement, emerging in the 1950s as a “third force” alongside psychoanalysis and behaviourism, sought to answer this question by restoring the emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions of intelligence. It should be mentioned that the humanistic psychology movement was not merely another theoretical school – it was a moral and existential correction to a psychology that had lost sight of the person. Against the Freudian vision of humanity as driven by unconscious conflict and the behaviourist model that reduced the mind to stimulus and response, humanistic psychologists strove to revive a sense of inner freedom, dignity, and wholeness. Moreover, they aimed to restore to psychology the very qualities that made life meaningful: emotion, morality, purpose, and transcendence. They insisted that to understand the mind, one must also understand the heart and that intellect divorced from empathy becomes sterile, and feeling unanchored by reflection becomes chaos.

Thus, figures such as Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Rollo May re-imagined psychology as the study not merely of behaviour or pathology, but of human potential, authenticity, and meaning. Maslow’s theory of self-actualization suggested that beyond survival and success lies a deeper striving, i.e. the realization of one’s inherent potential through authenticity and compassion. Rogers, with his radical insistence on empathy and unconditional positive regard, reframed therapy as a meeting of consciousnesses, a dialogue grounded in mutual respect and emotional presence. And May, drawing on existential philosophy, reminded psychology that to be human is to stand within the tension of freedom and fear, love and loss, and that meaning is born not in escape from emotion but through it.

These thinkers converged on a single insight: to understand the mind, one must also understand the heart. Intelligence, they argued, is not complete without the capacity to feel deeply, to relate ethically, and to respond to the world with sensitivity and purpose. In this sense, humanistic psychology became the philosophical soil from which the idea of emotional intelligence would later grow – affirming that reason without empathy is empty, and emotion without reflection is blind.

In his work “Motivation and Personality” (1954), Abraham Maslow described the Hierarchy of Needs, a framework that elevated psychology from the study of deficiency to the study of fulfilment. He proposed that human life unfolds through a series of ascending motivations – from physiological survival to safety, love, belonging, esteem, and finally, self-actualization, the realization of one’s fullest potential. Yet, for Maslow, this

hierarchy was never merely a ladder of individual ambition; it was a map of the human spirit. The higher needs – love, belonging, and self-actualization – were not sentimental luxuries to be indulged once material conditions were met, but intrinsic drivers of growth, the very pulse of what it means to live meaningfully [6].

Maslow's insight was revolutionary because it redefined emotion not as an obstacle to intelligence but as its vital expression. When he wrote that “the full use of one's capacities is a kind of love of life itself,” [6, p. 25] he was describing more than personal achievement – he was naming a moral and emotional awakening, a state in which cognition and feeling converge into purpose. In this sense, Maslow's psychology prefigured what would later be understood as emotional intelligence: the capacity to align awareness, empathy, and action in service of authentic growth.

For Maslow, intelligence divorced from feeling was sterile, a tool without direction. It was love, curiosity, and wonder – the affective energies of the psyche – that animated human creativity and ethical imagination. To be fully human, in his view, was not simply to know, but to care; not merely to reason, but to revere. His hierarchy was therefore less a structure of needs than a moral topography of the self, a vision of human flourishing in which the mind and heart ascend together toward wholeness.

If Maslow offered a vision of human potential as ascent, Carl Rogers grounded that potential in the immediacy of relationship – in the sacred, transforming space between self and other. In “On Becoming a Person” (1961), Rogers departed radically from the detached clinical stance of mid-century psychology, arguing that genuine healing occurs not through diagnosis or manipulation, but through presence. The therapist, he believed, must enter into a relationship characterized by empathy, congruence, and unconditional positive regard – qualities that allow another person to feel seen, accepted, and free to grow. “When I look at the world,” he wrote, “I'm pessimistic, but when I look at people, I am optimistic.” [10, p. 19].

Rogers's approach was revolutionary because it relocated the centre of psychological change from technique to authentic encounter. He understood that emotional attunement – the capacity to listen without judgment and to respond with sincerity – was itself a form of intelligence, a way of knowing that transcends analysis. “When someone really hears you without passing judgment on you,” he wrote, “it feels damn good.” [10, p. 116]. Beneath the simplicity of that statement a profound truth lies: that emotional understanding is not secondary to cognition but a precondition for it. Only when we feel safe enough to be ourselves we can begin to think clearly and creatively. His faith in relational attunement anticipated the essence of emotional intelligence – the capacity to perceive, understand, and

respond to emotion as a source of connection rather than disorder. In Rogers' view, the emotionally intelligent person is not one who controls feeling but one who listens to it with authenticity.

In Rogers's person-centred vision, emotion is not noise to be managed but a signal of life's authenticity. To live congruently – with harmony between feeling and action, inner truth and outer expression – is to embody integrity. Such congruence is the essence of what later theorists would call emotional intelligence: mindful awareness of one's own emotions, coupled with the capacity to perceive and respond to those of others with compassion.

Rogers thus transformed psychology into a philosophy of presence, one that recognized empathy as both method and moral stance. In an age dominated by technocracy and alienation, he re-humanized the act of knowing, reminding us that understanding another person – or even oneself – is ultimately an act of love.

Where Maslow illuminated the heights of human aspiration and Rogers explored the tenderness of human connection, Rollo May turned toward the shadows – the anxiety, loneliness, and moral struggle that define human existence. Drawing on existential philosophy, he refused to separate psychology from the question of meaning. In works such as "Man's Search for Himself" (1953) and "Love and Will" (1969), May argued that the modern person lives in a spiritual vacuum, estranged from both self and world. Yet for him, this confrontation with emptiness was not pathology but possibility. "The opposite of courage," he wrote, "is not cowardice; it is conformity." [8, p. 49]

May understood emotion as the crucible of authenticity – the place where fear and desire meet to forge identity. Anxiety, he suggested, is not simply a symptom to be managed, but the inner echo of freedom itself: the awareness that our choices matter. "Freedom," he wrote, "is the capacity to pause between stimulus and response." [7, p. 100]. This pause, rich with feeling and reflection, is the birthplace of emotional wisdom. Emotional life, in this view, is not a residue of irrationality but a revelation of being. To feel deeply is to live in truth, to acknowledge both the terror and the beauty of existence.

His idea of "the courage to create" [9, p. 5] embodied this stance. Creativity, for May, was not limited to art but extended to the ethical act of shaping one's own life with integrity. Emotion, then, became the wellspring of transformation – the energy through which consciousness engages the world. This insight anticipates later formulations of emotional intelligence, in which awareness, courage, and empathy become the foundation for moral and psychological growth.

By uniting passion with responsibility, May reintroduced the tragic and heroic dimensions of feeling into modern psychology. In an age that prized control and certainty, he reminded us that the heart's turbulence is not an error to be corrected but the source of our deepest wisdom.

Around these central figures gathered a wider constellation of thinkers who extended humanistic ideas into the moral, social, and existential dimensions of life. Erich Fromm, in "The Art of Loving" (1956), redefined love not as sentiment but as discipline – "an art which requires knowledge and effort." [5, p. 16]. For Fromm, mature love joined reason and emotion in a conscious act of care, an active practice of empathy and respect. His understanding of love as an intelligent moral choice rather than a passive feeling prefigures the ethical maturity central to emotional intelligence today.

Viktor Frankl, in "Man's Search for Meaning" (1946), offered perhaps the most searing humanistic insight of the post-war era: that the search for meaning is the primary motivation of human life. Having survived the concentration camps, Frankl argued that those who could connect their suffering to purpose were most likely to endure it. His claim that "those who have a 'why' to live can bear almost any 'how'" [4, p. 104] revealed a dimension of emotional intelligence that later psychology would term resilience – the capacity to transform pain into significance through awareness and inner strength.

To these could be added voices such as Charlotte Bühler, who emphasized purposeful development across the lifespan [3], and James Bugental, who described therapy as "the search for authenticity", saying that "psychotherapy, at its best, is the search for authenticity – the struggle to recover the person one truly is beneath the layers of habit, role, and expectation." [2, p. 17]. Each shared a conviction that emotion, far from being a residue of irrationality, is the medium of meaning, the language through which human beings engage both themselves and the world.

Conclusions

Therefore, these thinkers redefined the psychological landscape of the post-war world. The humanistic movement insisted that intelligence is not a detached faculty of calculation but an integrated mode of being – one that includes empathy, imagination, and moral sensibility. The 1950s – 1970s thus reframed emotion not as chaos to be subdued but as the pulse of meaning, the bridge between reason and value, the essence of what it means to be alive and aware. Taken together, these thinkers reframed psychology as an ethical and emotional humanism – a vision of the person as a self-reflective, feeling, creative being. They laid the philosophical groundwork for the later emergence of emotional intelligence, understood not as a fashionable trait but

as a continuation of this deeper insight: that to know well, one must feel deeply; that empathy is a form of understanding; and that the intelligence of the heart is inseparable from the intelligence of the mind.

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