SELECTED TENETS OF SØREN KIERKEGAARD'S PHILOSOPHICO-RELIGIOUS VIEW OF MAN RELATIVE TO COUNSELING THEORY

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SELECTED TENETS OF SØREN KIERKEGAARD'S
PHILOSOPHICO-RELIGIOUS VIEW OF MAN
RELATIVE TO COUNSELING THEORY

DISSERTATION

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By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As early as the 1930's, and possibly even earlier, there began to appear in this country some indications that the philosophical systems of that era were to receive a challenge from Europe. By that time, existential overtones were appearing in literature, and translations of the writings of such existential thinkers as Søren Kierkegaard were becoming available.

It took more than a decade for the philosophy of existentialism to have any apparent effect on the fields of education and psychology. Once the breakthrough occurred, however, the interest in existentialism was attested to by the large number of books and journal articles in which educators and psychologists made reference to existential themes or sources.

Today, there is ample evidence that existential concepts have moved into psychological, psychiatric, and psychoanalytic theory in this country. The field of existential psychology, for example, is experiencing rapid growth as a part of a "third force psychology"; books and articles on existential psychoanalysis, such as Existence by Rollo May, are in wide circulation; and the Journal of
Existential Psychiatry and the Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry are becoming familiar items in the libraries of institutions of higher learning.

Since counseling theory has drawn heavily upon theories of personality and behavior that have been developed in psychiatric or psychoanalytic schools, it is likely that existentialism holds promise for counseling theory also. This has been reinforced by the current attempts to develop counseling theories using existential concepts, such as those of Carl Rogers and Adrian van Kaam.

The contemporary existential philosophy has drawn heavily from the writings of the Danish religious writer Kierkegaard, who earned the title "father of existentialism" in his passionate attack upon the philosophical and technological aspects of the nineteenth century. It was from his phrase "philosophy of existence" that the term "existentialism" evolved.

Kierkegaard's interpretations on the nature of man and his existence have stimulated thought in many areas, such as literature, theology, and philosophy. Also, according to Heinemann, he has provided some brilliant analyses of psychological and psychopathological possibilities (7, p. 46).

From the foregoing it would seem apparent that an examination of the thought of Kierkegaard might provide some possibility for further development of counseling theory.
Purpose of the Study

The study is an attempt to explore selected writings of Søren Kierkegaard in an effort to draw from these writings implications for counseling theory based on certain concepts central to his philosophy.

The nature of the study is that of an exploration on a theoretical level utilizing the descriptive method. Although the study will possess certain historical aspects, it is basically an analysis and interpretation of concepts.

The study is not an attempt to demonstrate that the counseling according to the implications derived herein would actually bring about change in the client, or that such counseling would necessarily be more productive than other approaches. Such conclusions could only be inferred from research utilizing controlled studies.

The study is an attempt, however, to provide the counselor with a frame of reference which would assist him in his understanding of the changes that take place within the client during the process of counseling. This frame of reference would be used by the counselor in developing the various systems and techniques which he might utilize in counseling.

Need for the Study

A recent examination of counseling theory and research has suggested that the more that is learned from research,
the more awareness there is that there are certain limitations and inadequacies in current theoretical approaches to counseling (17, p. 860). The emphasis has been on techniques and instruments, rather than on counseling theory in general. Also, practically no attempts have been made to develop theoretical approaches for counseling "normal" persons. Because of such emphases, an adequate theory of human behavior has been slow to develop.

The reason for this neglect of theory, according to Wrenn, can be attributed to the tremendous growth and expansion of the concept of counseling, which has allowed little time to develop a unified theoretical framework. Apparently, the interest has been directed more toward producing results than toward explaining the reasons for these results (21, p. 47).

This neglect cannot be excused on the basis of lack of time, however, for any field of endeavor which deals with human behavior must examine its theoretical and philosophical presuppositions, according to Beck (3, p. 1). To ignore the importance of understanding human behavior is to subjugate the importance of such behavior.

During the past few years there has been published an abundance of literature, suggesting a new approach to the study of human behavior. This new approach has been called
the philosophy of existentialism, and is concerned with the human being both as process and product.

Existentialism is an import from Europe and dates back to the first time when ancient man began to wonder about his existence. It has appeared intermittently throughout the history of man during the times when the individuality of man was threatened by some political, economic, or religious movement.

The impact of existentialism in America has occurred primarily during the last two decades. The concern expressed by existentialism for modern man was expressed initially in the areas of literature, philosophy, religion, and political thought. It was typified by such creative writers as Reisman who, in his book The Lonely Crowd, has pictured modern man as becoming a person directed from some source outside himself, because of which he has lost his true identity, direction, and individuality (16, p. 33).

More recently, existentialism has appeared in the fields of education and psychology as has been evidenced by the presentation of papers concerning existentialism at the American Psychological Association and the National Society for the Study of Education.

Because existentialism was previously limited to fields other than education and psychology, little attempt was made by educators and psychologists to derive implications from
it for their respective fields. Gradually, however, some theorists became interested in examining existentialism for its practical value. Currently, for example, there is developing a division of psychology, called existential psychology, which utilizes the philosophy of existentialism as one source of direction. Also, therapeutic approaches, such as those utilized by May, have been developed from the thought of various existential writers.

In a recent publication, May has expressed the feelings of Gordon Allport, Herman Fiefele, Abraham Maslow, and Carl Rogers who, according to May, feel that the existential development is important and significant and that it has the potential to cast light upon the present problems in psychology (12, p. 51).

Allport has expressed his feelings toward existentialism in his book Becoming, wherein he has suggested that although the extent of the effect of existentialism upon the psychology of personality cannot be predicted, "already it seems to be a needed blood transfusion" (1, p. 79).

Maslow apparently holds similar feelings toward existentialism and has stated optimistically that "it is extremely important for psychologists that the existentialisms may supply psychology with the underlying philosophy which it now lacks" (10, p. 10).
In an article concerning the philosophy of the counselor, Gilbert Wrenn has stated that although existentialism has provided some "uncomfortable explanations," it may be nearer "true reality just because there are no presently known answers" (20, p. 341).

In a review of existential philosophy by the National Society for the Study of Education, Ulrich has optimistically suggested that in addition to the promise which existentialism holds for education, if taken seriously, "existentialism will be a new motive power for civilization" (6, p. 257).

Various areas of existential thought have been explored in recent doctoral dissertations in philosophy, education, and psychology: (a) Beck (3) has recommended that existential psychology and philosophy be examined by those involved in guidance, (b) Johnson (8) concluded that additional research into existential thought be undertaken for its implications for counseling process and technique, (c) Bedford (4) recommended that existential literature become a more significant feature of teacher preparation, (d) Nesbitt (13) suggested that existentialism offers a new attitude toward life with promise for implications for teaching, and (e) Nichols (14) has suggested that existentialism has significance for education in general.

Most of the research dealing with existentialism has considered the philosophy in general with points of view
from many existential writers. No research was found in which only the writings of Kierkegaard were analyzed and implications made from these for counseling theory. This is probably due in part to the fact that some of Kierkegaard's writings have a highly religious flavor, which to some theorists is too limiting in scope and emphasis. Since, however, Kierkegaard is generally regarded as the "father of existentialism," it would appear that his writings could offer much in the way of existential implications for counseling theory, which could make a contribution to the study of human behavior.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of the study, counseling will refer to the face-to-face contact between counselor and client in which the counselor attempts to assist the client in understanding himself and his environment.

The philosophy of Existentialism, although somewhat difficult to define because of the numerous contemporary writers in this area who hold widely diverse views, refers in this study to the philosophic thought which evolved from the works of Kierkegaard and other existentialists. It is concerned with the individual retaining his identity, making his own choices, and providing his own self-direction. It abhors the tendency of science and technology to relegate men into a universal classification of type.
Assumptions and Limitations

The assumptions made in the study were as follows: (a) that certain key concepts central to the philosophy of Kierkegaard could be extracted from his writings, and (b) that implications for counseling theory would be discernible from an analysis of these key concepts.

An analysis of the entire forty-three publications of Kierkegaard was beyond the scope of this investigation. Instead, only those writings which contained concepts obviously pertinent to counseling theory were investigated. It is possible that in limiting the number of works that some concepts were overlooked which might hold promise for counseling theory.

The analytical development of Kierkegaard's concepts may have restricted obtaining their full meaning from these concepts, since they were philosophical rather than scientific in nature. Furthermore, an attempt to systematize and organize the concepts may have led to ambiguous interpretations and meanings, since, according to Kierkegaard, each individual must find his own meanings for only he understands himself.

Since the writings in the study will be translations rather than original writings, it is possible that the concepts identified will not possess all of the original meaning intended by Kierkegaard. The translations were made
by respected authorities, however, and apparently have not been questioned by other contemporary existential scholars.

Design and Organization

The design of the study involved (a) the process of selecting and analyzing certain tenets of Kierkegaard's view of man, and (b) making implications from these concepts for counseling theory.

The study in Chapter II traced the development of contemporary existential thought, indicating the influence which Kierkegaard has had upon it. The study in Chapter III developed certain key concepts central to Kierkegaard's thought by reviewing selected writings and by reviewing pertinent research which Kierkegaard's philosophy has stimulated. No attempt was made to provide a comprehensive investigation of Kierkegaard's writings. Concepts were selected on the basis of frequency, emphasis, and appropriateness to counseling theory. The importance of these concepts was indicated by such writers as George Price, James Collins, F. H. Hainemann, and Howard A. Johnson and Nils Thulstrup. The study in Chapter IV made application of certain of Kierkegaard's concepts to appropriate areas of counseling theory, so that the implications which might follow could be used as a theoretical approach to counseling. The study in Chapter V presented certain conclusions and recommendations for further investigations of Kierkegaard's
writings. Emphasis in developing recommendations was directed to areas of counseling theory which were left unexplored in the present study.

Method of Selecting Material

The materials selected for examination were as follows:

Concluding Unscientific Postscript; Either/Or, Volume II;
Fear and Trembling; Philosophical Fragments; Stages on Life's Way; The Concept of Dread; The Journals; The Point of View for My Work as an Author; and The Sickness Unto Death.

Since Concluding Unscientific Postscript and The Point of View for My Work as an Author seem to have been most frequently referred to by such contemporary existential scholars as Heinemann, Price, Collins, and Johnson and Thulestrup, these writings will be used as major references. The additional references were then used to supplement concepts developed from the major references. All of the works chosen were recognized by existential writers as being significant ones which best portray the thought of Kierkegaard.

For the most part, direct analysis of actual works was employed with reinforced comments from secondary sources to support the views of the writer established in the analysis. The secondary sources utilized in the study were as follows: The Narrow Pass, by George Price; The Mind of Kierkegaard, by James Collins; Existentialism and the Modern Predicament,
by F. H. Heinemann; and A Kierkegaard Critique, by Howard A. Johnson and Neils Thulstrup. The comments of these writers were found to be most helpful in the study.
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CHAPTER II

KIERKEGAARD AND CONTEMPORARY EXISTENTIALISM

This chapter will consider existentialism as a philosophy, its historical antecedents, and the importance of Kierkegaard in its development. According to Kaufmann, "existentialism is not a philosophy but a label for several widely different revolts against traditional philosophy" (3, p. 11). Because of the broad and divergent nature of existentialism, a comprehensive survey of all the existential writers is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, this chapter will consist of a general analysis of the development of existentialism and Kierkegaard's part in this development. Other existentialists whose writing is related to that of Kierkegaard will also be considered. This will provide a basis for understanding the chapters which follow.

The first section of this chapter will consider the growth and development of existentialism, the second will consider existentialism today, and the third will consider Kierkegaard's contribution to existentialism.

The Growth and Development of Existentialism

The contemporary philosophy of existentialism is largely a creation of the genius of Søren Kierkegaard,
according to Barrett (1, p. 14). It was Kierkegaard who first used the phrase "philosophy of existence" from which the term "existentialism" evolved. His revolt against traditional philosophies and their degrading effect upon the individual laid the foundation for contemporary existentialism.

The theme of the "individual" was not original with Kierkegaard, however, who considered Abraham of biblical times to be an example of this individual. Although some existential scholars feel that existential themes can be traced back as far as ancient Greece to the thought of Plato, many contemporary scholars, such as Barrett (1), Heinemann (2), Wahl (8), and Kaufmann (3) focus most of their attention on the works of post-biblical thinkers. However, according to Kaufmann, "existentialism is not a school of thought nor reducible to any set of tenets," because of the wide variety of emphases expressed by existential thinkers (3, p. 11).

Existential themes have appeared throughout history during eras when there was concern for the status of the individual. Tillich has attributed the appearance of existential themes to threats made to individuality by either autocratic governments, technological advances, or rationalistic thinking (7, p. 44). Kaufmann has suggested that these themes have appeared as "revolts against traditional philosophy" (3, p. 11).
One of these early revolts, which appeared to be of some significance, was that initiated by Kant, who, Barrett states, is the "father of modern philosophy" (1, p. 162). Kant's revolt included the insistence that existence cannot be conceived by reason. Furthermore, because of the subjective nature of existence, it cannot even be examined by reason.

Even before Kant's protest, Pascal earned for himself the title of an existentialist, according to Barrett, because of his pessimistic yet realistic view of man (1, p. 112). Pascal viewed man as being in search of some direction in life, only to be continually confronted by his own miserable existence. Barrett has suggested that the negative approach of Pascal could be compared to the morbid view held by the late Jean-Paul Sartre, a French existentialist.

Although Kierkegaard's thought contained some similarity to that of Kant and Pascal, there were differences as to the nature of man. The differences between Kierkegaard's thought and that of Kant and Pascal were not so great, apparently, as the difference between Kierkegaard's thought and that of Hegel, the German philosopher. It was against this classical philosophy of Hegel that Kierkegaard directed his attack from which modern existentialism evolved.

Although Hegel was interested in man's process of becoming, Wahl has stated that his primary interest was in
understanding the world rationally, which he proceeded to accomplish by adhering to a universal reason external to man (8, p. 3). He felt certain that it was thought which produced existence, this being the opposite of Kierkegaard's belief.

Wild has suggested that it was Kierkegaard's violent protest of Hegel's universal truths which led to the disinterest in classical philosophy and interest in a "new kind of ontological discussion" (9, p. 38). This discussion centered around the existence of the individual who possesses reason, rather than being produced by reason, the individual who recognized the limitation of reason in explaining existence.

Although Kierkegaard's attack upon Hegel aroused some interest in his own era, the bulk of his forty-three literary works remained obscure until the early part of the twentieth century when they caught the attention of the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, and of the German school of Phenomenology represented by Carl Jaspers. Heidegger and Jaspers are viewed by Barrett as "the creators of existential philosophy in this century" (1, p. 11).

In 1919, Jaspers published his *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, for which Kierkegaard's thought formed the framework. It was Jaspers who formulated the basis for contemporary existential analysis. Wahl has described the
translation of Kierkegaard's works by Jaspers and Heidegger as being the "second major event in the history of the philosophy of existence" (8, p. 9). Although the philosophical contributions of Jaspers and Heidegger represented secularised and generalized translations of Kierkegaardian thought, the philosophy of Kierkegaard was advanced greatly by these men.

Interest in the philosophy of Heidegger spread to France where it aroused the interest of Gabriel Marcel and Jean-Paul Sartre. Although the philosophical contributions of these Frenchmen were not duplications of the philosophy of Heidegger, there was some similarity. Both Sartre and Heidegger, for example, were concerned with the misery of society in apathy and chaos. Sartre's writings have probably had the greatest popular success of all the existentialist writers. One reason for this success might be attributed to the breadth of his writing which includes philosophy, psychology, and various types of fiction.

Regardless of this success, Barrett states that Sartre's pessimistic writing does not represent the "deepest impulse" of existential philosophy" (1, p. 11). It is for this reason that the existential movement in western countries should be considered of German rather than of French origin.

English translations of the works of Kierkegaard and other existential writers began to appear in this country in
the late 1930's. Existential overtones rapidly became apparent in areas of literature and philosophy. For some time, however, existentialism was considered somewhat of a sensationalism and was partially rejected, this being at least partially due to the pessimistic emphasis of Sartre and the close identification of contemporary existentialism with Sartre. Gradually, however, the movement was made to religion, psychology, and education.

This movement is apparent in education in recent references, such as Kneller's *Foundations of Education* (4), which gives serious consideration to existentialism and its potential for education. The movement is apparent in psychology by the increased number of books and journal articles and in the growth of the field of existential psychology.

**Existentialism Today**

The rapid and continued growth of existentialism in Europe and in this country can be attributed at least partially to the fact that many of the influential existential thinkers are alive today. Such writers as Paul Tillich and Reinhold Neibuhr are still protesting the declining position of the individual in his society.

The principal direction of the current existential attack is as follows: (a) the idealistic philosophies which insist on universals and give little concern to the individual and his place in the world, and (b) the effects
of technology and mechanistic advances which tend to make man as mechanical as his inventions. The existentialist recognizes the importance of scientific advancements, but he insists that a scientific study of man, making him explainable as a group of principles or a collection of parts, is an insult to the dignity of the human being.

The general characteristics of the existential movement as expressed by Musub are as follows:

a. Existentialism is the philosophy of freedom. There is no concern of external values. . . . The human sets his own laws and values. . . . He does not have freedom, he is freedom.

b. Existentialism is a type of humanism. . . . Existentialism believes in man, his freedom, and his autonomy.

c. Existentialism is irrationalism. Existentialism is a counter movement to rationalism and systematics. Reason has its place, but the human being is above reason.

d. Existentialism is a radical subjectivism. World, cosmos, natural law, general law, morals, and ethics are broken down, and the subjective existence is considered law unto him.

e. Existentialism is pessimism. The cultural crisis of the twentieth century in Europe is the basic root of modern existential thinking. The great optimism of the latter part of the nineteenth century, . . . resulted in chaos, despair, distress, fear, and dread. The meaninglessness and the absurdity of existence become obvious.

f. Existentialism is individualism. Existentialism shows little concern with society, the state, and sociological implications.

g. Existence is self-transcendence. "Man is not but he becomes. In each moment he exceeds himself in free decision. He goes beyond himself."

h. Existentialism is self-knowledge. . . . Socrates' imperative "know thyself" goes through all existential thinking and remains one of the basic concepts.

i. The method of Existentialism is dialectic. The dialectic method develops its ideas in confronting
opposite thoughts that are unified in a higher synthesis.

j. Existentialism is not only a philosophical but also a literary school. It stands between science and literature as well as between literature and philosophy (5, p. 151).

As suggested by Muuss, existentialism is not an isolated phenomenon in our world today; rather, it has penetrated many fields. It is not restricted to a particular belief as evidenced by the theistic views of Kierkegaard and the atheistic views of Sartre. It is international in nature as evidenced by the following list: American, Reinhold Neibuhr; Danish, Søren Kierkegaard; French, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Gabriel Marcel; British, Gerald Hopkins; German, Carl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, and Paul Tillich; and Swiss, Karl Barth.

Although these contributors do have some common beliefs, it would be impossible to develop a philosophy of existentialism which adhered to a particular set of beliefs. Most existential philosophers, including Kierkegaard, have felt that to develop such a philosophy of existentialism would defeat the purpose of the movement, which encourages each person to seek his own meanings in life.

This feeling is expressed by Kaufmann in the following:

The refusal to belong to any school of thought, the repudiation of the adequacy of any body of beliefs whatever, and especially of systems, and a marked dissatisfaction with traditional philosophy as superficial, academic, and remote from life—that is the heart of existentialism (5, p. 12).
Regardless of this seeming lack of organization and systematization, the increasing interest in existentialism has suggested that previous philosophical concepts may require re-evaluation in view of the development of newer concepts. "Existentialism is the best in the way of a new and creative movement that these rather uninspired postwar years have been able to turn up" (1, p. 8).

Kierkegaard's Contribution to Existentialism

Existentialism arose, according to Haeusermann, because of a protest against Hegel's inadequate solution for "overcoming the fact of alienation" (2, p. 12). Although this self-alienation may not have been of concern to the common man of the nineteenth century, it was of concern to some of the thinkers of that time.

One of these thinkers was Søren Kierkegaard, a Danish religious writer, whose main attack upon Hegelian philosophy was in two particular areas: (a) truth is not objective fact, but rather subjective understanding, and (b) a true state of existence is not achieved through the intellect, but rather through an intensity of feeling.

Kierkegaard was not content with the complacency of the common man who he felt lives an empty, meaningless life. His aim was to bring the individual to self-awareness and self-realization—to encourage him to be an individual. It
was Kierkegaard's interest in the individual as an individual rather than a universal that has formed the basis for existential thinking since his time.

Although Kierkegaard's use of the phrase "philosophy of existence" was to provide an introduction to the philosophy of existentialism, this was not his intention. Kierkegaard did not desire to become associated with any fixed doctrine, for he felt that a systematised philosophy offered little appeal to the individual (8, p. 1). He, in fact, chose to be called a religious writer.

To become an individual was to Kierkegaard the ultimate goal in life. Wahl has classified Kierkegaard's "existent individual" as one who:

1. . . . is in an infinite relationship with himself and has an infinite interest in himself and his destiny.
2. . . . always feels himself to be in Becoming, with a task before him.
3. . . . is impassioned, impassioned with a passionate thought; he is inspired. . . . This passion which animates the existent is what Kierkegaard calls the "passion of Freedom" (8, p. 4).

This individual is further characterised by maturity and self-consciousness. He no longer seeks direction from without, but rather from within; his need to explore is centered upon himself rather than things removed from him. To emphasize this inner search, Kierkegaard has changed Socrates' saying "know thyself" to "choose thyself."
Kierkegaard felt that a person could not really know himself until he chose to know himself.

Other themes which occupied central positions in Kierkegaardian thought were as follows: (1) the meaning of existence and a description of the spheres of existence; (2) the development of the self; (3) the meaning of faith; (4) the meanings of anxiety, frustration, and self-alienation; (5) the real meaning of truth; (6) the meaning and necessity for choice; and (7) the meaning of becoming. These and other concepts were all for the purpose of providing insight as to the process of becoming an authentic human being.

Heinemann has summarized Kierkegaard's propositions concerning the problem of changing from an unauthentic being to an authentic being as follows:

1. All essential knowledge concerns existence, or only such knowledge which has an essential relationship to existence is essential knowledge.

2. All knowledge which does not relate itself to existence, in the reflection of inwardness, is essentially viewed contingent and inessential knowledge; its degree and scope is indifferent.

3. Objective reflection and knowledge has to be distinguished from subjective reflection and knowledge. The way of objective reflection leads away from the subject to abstract objective truth (mathematics, metaphysics, and historical knowledge of different kinds). In this sphere the existing subject may be disregarded. . . .

4. The objective way of reflection leads to objective truth, . . . objectivity is either a hypothesis or an approximation.

5. Subjective knowledge requires personal appropriation. In subjective reflection truth becomes appropriation, inwardness, or subjectivity. In fact, the only reality which an existing being can know
otherwise than through some abstract knowledge is his own existence.

6. Only ethical and religious knowledge are therefore essential knowledge; they alone are essentially related to the fact that the knowing subject exists; they alone are in contact with reality. In them alone truth and existence coincide.

7. The essential truth is subjectivity or internal; or "truth is subjectivity" (4, p. 39).

These things represent a revaluation of human knowledge and a reaction against the abstractness of modern science. Accumulation of knowledge, unless it is accompanied by increased self-knowledge, is senseless, according to Kierkegaard; and only self-knowledge can lead to authentic existence.

According to Price, the question which Kierkegaard considered and attempted to answer in all his writings is "What is man?" He attempted to answer this question in such a way as to shed light on the questions put forth in the following by Kant: What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope (6, p. 11)?

Although it is difficult at this time to determine the effect which Kierkegaard has had on existentialism and the humanities, he has definitely inaugurated new trends of thought in philosophy and theology. Furthermore, according to Heinemann, he has "formulated questions of such importance that they are still with us" (4, p. 46).

The insights which Kierkegaard has provided into the nature of the individual, according to Wild,
bear on the ultimate structure of being. On the continent of Europe, they have inaugurated what is for modern thought a new kind of ontological discussion. This discussion is still in flux. Whether it will bring forth a radically new ontology is not yet clear. But that it has brought forth a radically new approach to the being of man can no longer be called in question (9, p. 38).
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CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTS

Each concept will be considered in connection with one or more of the following questions central to the counseling process: Who am I? Am I content with my present state of existence? How will I know if I need to change? What must I know in order to change? What must I do in order to change? How will I know when my becoming is toward self-fulfillment?

Who Am I?

An effort to understand human behavior and the changes which occur in the individual involves an inquiry into views of the nature of man. Since Kierkegaard devoted much of his life to becoming an individual, much of his writing was concerned with providing a more accurate understanding of man as an individual. He apparently felt that an understanding of the nature of man as an individual was a necessary part of the process of establishing an identity.

*Identity as Individuality*

Everyone has the "power to become what he is," according to Kierkegaard, and thus has the possibility of becoming a
unique "individual"*(10, p. 119). This becoming is a possibility because the extent to which each man strives to develop his individuality varies considerably from man to man. This individuality is not the possession of a person at birth, however. Rather, says Kierkegaard, "he will have to attain it by means of his own activity," and only then can it be realized (3, p. 309).

Within this frame of reference it would be impossible to provide a list of characteristics which would necessarily be indicative of individuality. This is true because the characteristics which make for individuality are those possessed by each individual, which might vary considerably from person to person. Body structure and intelligence, for example, are not characteristics of individuality for these

*Kierkegaard did not use the term "individual" merely for the purpose of description; for him it was an "essential category." He felt that the only hope for relieving man's anonymity is for man to "learn what it means to be a single individual man"(10, p. 44). This possibility for becoming an individual is not limited to a select few, but rather lies within the capability of all man. One does not need to be gifted or strange to be an individual. Individuality requires more than just demanding attention, such as would be the case of a "missionary who deals with pagans" (10, p. 138).

It is necessary for a person to seek strength and direction within himself, rather than merely within society, in order for him to exercise his individuality. Anyone who is dependent upon society for his direction, "flees in cowardice from being an individual" (10, p. 115). Although Kierkegaard was aware of the necessity of the existence of society, he felt that when a person allows himself to be dependent upon society for his direction, this "weakens his sense of responsibility" (10, p. 114), and deprives him of his individuality.
are shared by all individuals. Even if two individuals did possess the same personality traits, each would be different because of his own individual frame of reference.

The person who mistakes individuality as meaning "to be different" is probably no closer to becoming an individual than is the person who is content to be a conformist. This is true because the person who desires to be different is in reality allowing others to determine what he does not want to be, rather than allowing this to be determined by himself. Instead of seeking his own direction he is allowing others to direct him.

Individuality, then, is not determined by a comparison of external characteristics or traits, but rather by determining the extent to which a person is realizing his potential to become an individual. A person may stand out from his associates because of peculiarities, but this is not a true indication of individuality, according to Kierkegaard, for "the truly extraordinary man is the truly ordinary man" (3, p. 274). According to this analogy, the more a person exercises his individuality, or becomes his possibility, the more "universal" he becomes. Being different just for the sake of being different would not be considered by Kierkegaard as a criterion for individuality.
Identity as Freedom

Man by inheritance is an animal and is limited in his ability to move beyond his physical environment. However, within these confines, man possesses the most important freedom of all—the freedom to become. This freedom is expressed by man's very existence, for life itself is a choice and to live is to exercise the freedom of choice, which is to choose to live.

Kierkegaard's freedom is more than mere recognition, however; it is a commitment to the task of becoming an individual which is initiated the moment a person recognizes himself for what he is and realizes that he has the freedom and responsibility for any change that might take place within him. A person has freedom only to the extent to which it is actively utilized, for "he can remain in his freedom only by constantly realizing it" (4, p. 236).

Freedom such as this could be identified in a person as a passionate interest in self-direction, for once the "freedom is aroused" it must remain active. It is a necessary possession of the person in the process of realizing his possibility.

Similarly, the absence of this freedom would be indicated in the person who expresses some reluctance in assuming responsibility for himself. This person might excuse his inability to become an individual on the basis
of some ability which he did not possess. He may even express the desire to be another person, thereby indicating that he does not possess the freedom to realize his own possibility (4, p. 218). Another example of an unfree individual might be the client who asks of the counselor, "What do you think I should do?" In so doing, he refers a choice back to the counselor, or to someone else, and thus indicates a reluctance to accept his own responsibility.

Such a freedom as Kierkegaard has described, although possibly influenced by environmental restrictions, does not originate within the environment; it originates within the person. It is a matter of choice. A person can choose freedom or bondage.

Identity as Synthesis

Kierkegaard has defined man as "a synthesis of the soulish and the bodily."* Emphasis should be placed upon the term "synthesis," for there must be a unification, or else there is nothing of value to the individual. The body

*Many substitutes are provided by Kierkegaard for the terms "soulish" and "bodily," although in many of the references to these terms suitable substitutes would seem to be "mind," with all its potential, and "body" respectively. Other substitutes for "soulish" are "intellect," "reason," "transcendence," and "possibility"; substitutes for "bodily" are "sense-perception," "transcendency," "sensuousness," and "necessity."

The most common substitutes for "soulish" and "bodily," however, are "infinitude" and "finitude," which relate to man's possibility and his limitation.
and soul are worthless commodities unless they are synthesised. Unless they can relate to and complement each other they will not develop as a unity. A dichotomy would represent a paralysis of the realization of possibility.

This dichotomy emphasizing "soulish" might be represented by a person who cannot accept his limitations and has compensated for this either by manufacturing an illusion of greatness, or by identifying with strong persons. An example of this might be the client with a physical defect who has deluded himself into thinking that he has great athletic potential if only someone would give him an opportunity to develop it, or to exhibit it. Another example might be the client who has become obsessed with obtaining knowledge in a particular area which would detract from his inadequacies in another area.

A dichotomy emphasizing "bodily" might be represented by the person who is so concerned with his own physical needs that he is unable to make plans for the future. This might be represented in the client who becomes devoted to an organization, which represents a source of strength and security, to the extent that he neglects other important things. Another example might be the client who is controlled by his desire for affection, because of a lack of love as a child, and finds himself compelled to react in
such a manner as to please others so they will react to him favorably.

A synthesis of possibility and limitation might be represented by a person who recognizes his limitations and his potential, and plans in such a way as to maximize his potential. An example of this might be the client who recognizes a physical or mental limitation but seeks a career in which this limitation would not be obstructive to his success. He would find strength and encouragement in exemplary lives of others who have limitations but have risen above these.

**Identity as the Self**

There is yet a third element in Kierkegaard's definition of man, for the synthesis of possibility and limitation is accomplished by the "spirit." This "spirit" is the "self" (8, p. 39; 11, p. 17).

In this context, the self is described as a synthesizing agent which directs the articulation of man's possibilities and limitations. Thus, the self would seem to be a pattern of behavior which is characteristic of an individual. Since this pattern is continually changing in keeping with the adjustment of the individual, it could be said to be in process—process of becoming.

On the other hand, the pattern is not inherent but rather comes into being as a person becomes aware of himself
as an individual with certain possibilities and limitations. In this context the self could be described as a result or product. Since this product occurs only as man recognizes himself as an individual and chooses to exercise his individuality, the self must be considered as a potential which may or may not be synthesized.

Thus, the self as described by Kierkegaard is both process and product. It is product in that it is result of choice; it is a process in that it is continually synthesizing man's possibility and limitation.

The self as awareness.—Initially, the self comes into being as the individual becomes aware of himself as an individual and decides that he desires to exercise his individuality.

The development of the self is predicated upon this awareness, which, according to Kierkegaard, "is the decisive criterion of the self" (11, p. 43). Unless a man becomes aware of his individuality there is no self; the self remains a potential.

The level of self-development is in direct proportion to the level of self-awareness; the more awareness, the more self. The individual with a highly developed self would be described as also having a considerable awareness of his individuality.
Self-awareness develops as the self is able to "relate itself to itself," and in so doing to define a frame of reference (ll, p. 17). Until this self-awareness occurs, a frame of reference is merely a possibility, and individuality is a dormant feature.

The self as reflection.—Accompanying the awareness of self there is self-reflection which "begins the act of discrimination whereby the self becomes aware of itself as something essentially different from the environment" (ll, p. 86). Thus, as the individual becomes aware of himself as an individual, he seeks to explore himself further. In this process of introspection, the person attempts to define his possibilities and limitations. It is only through this self-reflection that individuality is recognized as being something different from the environment, "from externalities and their effect upon it" (ll, p. 86).

The self as acceptance.—As self-reflection proceeds and the individual begins to define his individuality, he must decide whether or not self-development will continue. If the early experiences of the self are rewarding and a synthesis is produced, the individual then accepts his own self as the self which he must develop. If, on the other hand, a synthesis does not result from the early experiences of the self, then the individual may decide that
self-development is not appropriate. Thus, self-acceptance is a matter of choice.

**The self as choice.**—Self-acceptance is a matter of choice rather than of selection. When an individual chooses himself, he is merely accepting himself as himself with all his possibilities and limitations.

The self that is chosen is not a self which appears to be the most attractive one available; neither is it self which others say is desirable. Instead, the self that is chosen is the individual's own self, "for the great thing is not to be this or that but to be oneself, and this everyone can be if he wills it" (4, p. 150).

When a person chooses his own self, he is not making an antisocial move. In reality, as a person chooses himself he does not transcend the norms of good and evil, but rather he becomes more of an "ordinary man." The more ordinary he becomes, the more he is able to realize his individuality (4, p. 274).

The act of choice is self-synthesizing, and as such, establishes certain patterns of behavior which will govern future activity. If a complete synthesis occurs as a result of choosing, an individual will feel free to make future acts of choice. If, on the other hand, the acts of choice do not produce a synthesis, the consequences may be undesirable.
A child, for example, who has been severely punished for his behavior may not be indicative of a complete synthesis and may not feel free to make future choices. Thus, the feeling of freedom arising from early acts of choosing is an important factor in complete self-synthesis.

The self as freedom.--Kierkegaard has frequently emphasized the importance of freedom in the development of the self. Apparently, this freedom is of sufficient importance to be equated with self (4, p. 180).

Not only is the self synthesized in freedom, but freedom is also the expression of the self which makes for individuality. This freedom is both experienced and expressed by the self, being a necessary ingredient of choice.

Furthermore, freedom is an act of choice, wherein a person must choose to be free to choose. He can just as easily choose to be unfree.

The choice of freedom is not merely a once-and-for-all act, however. A person "can remain in his freedom only by constantly realizing it" (4, p. 195). In order to continue his freedom, the individual must continue to exercise his freedom of choice.

Once the individual really feels freedom, however, he has a "passion" to develop it further. "... when the passion of freedom is aroused, the self ... will by no means allow it to remain undetermined" (4, p. 187). The
choice and expression of freedom may be described as a venturing forth in order to discover the possibilities of the self.

The self as concrete and abstract.—If the self is a synthesis which results from an act of will, then it must of necessity be a combination of the concrete and abstract, according to Kierkegaard. It is abstract in that it is somewhat indefinable and certainly not permanent or touchable; it is concrete in that the awareness of the self and the existence of the self are probably the only things of which the person can be reasonably certain.

The concrete self then is nonexistent until the person chooses his own self, and he becomes aware of its existence. When a person's own self is the "goal for which he strives... this self is not an abstraction but absolutely concrete" (4, p. 229). It becomes further concrete as the person becomes conscious of his goal and assumes responsibility for attaining it (4, p. 210).

The self as equilibrium.—It is possible for the self to develop abnormally because of undue concern for either the concrete or the abstract. For example, any time there is an imbalance between imagination and reality, the self does not represent a synthesis and there is disequilibrium.
Imagination can lead a person away from reality and prevent "him from returning to himself" (II, p. 46). This occurs because the imagination has given the person a sense of power which detaches him from reality. The self feels that it can accomplish anything and thereby loses its possibility to become a genuine self.

The opposite effect occurs when the person spends all of his time being concerned with his day-to-day existence and forgets his potential. In this case, reality has such a grip on the person that he is unable to think beyond his present condition. He is so captivated with triviality that his potential is ignored.

This latter condition occurs when a person finds himself compelled to seek a logical reason for all his activities, which he finds by increasing his storehouse of knowledge. Unless this increased knowledge is accompanied by increased "self-knowledge," the person's time is wasted, for man is more than merely the sum of his parts.*

Equilibrium occurs when a person is able to "transcend" his immediate existence, but in doing so he does not forget

*The law for the development of the self with respect to knowledge, in so far as it is true that the self becomes itself, is this: that the increasing degree of knowledge corresponding with the degree of self-knowledge, the more the self knows, the more it knows itself. If this does not occur, then the more knowledge increases, the more it becomes a kind of inhuman knowing for the production of which man's self is squandered (II, p. 47).
himself and the necessity of his living in a world of reality (11, p. 44).

As soon as there is a synthesis resulting in equilibrium of the self, then the self is ready to become a genuine self.

Kierkegaard has described this equilibrium of self as analogous to breathing, which consists of an equal amount of "in- and an a-spiration" (11, p. 62). Both inspiration and aspiration are necessary in equal amounts in order to complete the synthesis of self.

The self as process.--The self is never finished with its process of development; it is always in the process of "becoming."

... a self, every instant it exists, is in the process of becoming, for the self ... (potentially) does not actually exist, it is only that which it is to become (11, p. 44).

The direction of this process is toward the becoming of possibility, rather than necessity, for once the process begins the self "cannot become nothing" (11, p. 52). The self must continue to become because the individual will never completely understand himself and can never discontinue his search for meaning.

The self as understanding.--The task of the self in process is that of a continual effort to understand itself, to determine itself. The task, then, of the existing
individual is that of "understanding himself in his existence" (3, p. 314). In order for the individual to understand others and his relationship to them, he must first understand himself.

Self-understanding occurs not as a result of increased knowledge, but rather of increased self-knowledge. This self-knowledge occurs as a result of self-reflection wherein the individual searches inwardly for meaning and direction.

The self as fulfillment.—Through the process of becoming, an individual develops more of an "ideal self," according to Kierkegaard. This ideal self was not considered to be more externally perfect self, however. Instead the "ideal" self is nothing more than the "real" self which the individual has the potential to become, for "it is his ideal self which he acquires nowhere but in himself" (4, p. 217). To attempt to copy another man, or a supposedly normal man, is to chain oneself to an abstraction and thereby become immobile, as far as true becoming is concerned.

The ideal self is not a selection of the most desirable attributes of an individual; it is rather a synthesis of the desirable and the undesirable, and an acceptance of both. Kierkegaard has described the ideal self as being a "synthesis of the negative and the positive" (3, p. 74).
The ideal self is nothing more than the true self of an individual, which is his goal when he accepts himself and strives to become himself. When an individual strives for self-improvement and looks outside himself for a guide, he is striving superficially and his process of becoming is thwarted.

The Normal Process of Development

Man is born with only the potential to develop a fully functioning self; the self at birth is only a possibility, not a complete product.

Early in life, an individual becomes aware of himself, establishes an identity, and recognizes that he is capable of directing himself. This particular reaction occurs only in an atmosphere of freedom, however.

As a result of this early choice, a synthesis occurs which establishes a pattern for future behavior. If the synthesis represents an equilibrium of possibility and necessity, the individual will accept becoming as a challenge; if, on the other hand, the synthesis represents a disequilibrium, the individual will be limited in his process of becoming because he will continue striving for equilibrium.

As the individual becomes more aware of himself, he recognizes his own individuality and begins to understand that his task in life is to become what he has the potential
to become. He accepts the responsibility for becoming and obtains his direction from within his own frame of reference, rather than from the average person.

In his attempt to become himself, the individual does not become antisocial, but rather more like the ordinary man. He is able to accept his limitations, but he also recognizes his possibilities to become.

The individual recognizes that the source of his motivation is a compelling desire to become himself for his own satisfaction, rather than to please others. He also recognizes that this process of becoming is a lifelong task, never finished.

Am I Satisfied with My Existence?

This is a question, the answer to which might provide an individual with some indication of the quality of his process of becoming. If a person is satisfied to the extent that he feels he has finished the process of becoming, this person has ceased to become. His self is in a state of disequilibrium; he is concentrating on necessity and is ignoring possibility.

If, on the other hand, a person is satisfied with his existence to the extent that he realizes his present existence although in continual transition is a result of a genuine attempt to become, then his satisfaction is not an indication of a retardation of becoming. This satisfaction
is by no means complacency, however; it is rather an uneasy type of satisfaction because the object of satisfaction, becoming, is continually in transition. Just as the person is becoming satisfied with himself, he finds reason for making a change, which is in keeping with his possibility.

Kierkegaard has compared the becoming person to Adam, in that both have become alarmed with the recognition of freedom. This alarm is expressed in a desire to explore, to be adventurous. Such a freedom can be retained only by constantly realising it, which makes the person pursue additional areas in which to investigate his freedom (4, p. 195). This pursuit is more than a passing fantasy; it is a passion which causes the self to become more accurately defined (4, p. 187).

The recognition by men that he can control his own destiny, his own becoming, and that he has the freedom to direct as he sees fit is alarming. This is the source of man's "dread."

**Dread**

The recognition of the freedom to become produces within the individual an apprehension of what is to come. This is not to be thought of as a fear because "fear and similar concepts . . . refer to something definite, whereas dread is the reality of freedom" (8, p. 38).
Dread is not guilt, not a burden, not a form of suffering because it is seen in little children in the form of "seeking after adventure, a thirst for the prodigious, the mysterious" (8, p. 38). It is the recognition of responsibility accompanied by the awareness of freedom to become.

Dread as paradox.--Dread contains both positive and negative implications for the individual, for "even though it alarms him it captivates him nevertheless by its feeling of apprehension . . . he loves it and flees from it" (8, p. 38). Dread does not provide the temptation of a definite choice, but it does alarm and fascinate when the possibility is considered.

Dread as anticipation.--Dread might be described as the desire for, yet apprehension about, a new state of existence which an individual feels compelled to bring about in his process of becoming. This is not a state which comes about accidentally, but rather one which a person brings about through act of choice.

Dread as choice.--Only the person in the process of becoming who chooses a new level of existence experiences dread. Kierkegaard has compared dread to the feelings of dizziness experienced by a person who, while traveling on a high, mountainous road, looks into the yawning abyss below. The abyss cannot be considered the cause of the dizziness
for if man had not chosen to look down he would not be dizzy. The choice is as much a cause of the dizziness as is the abyss (8, p. 55).

**Dread as possibility.**—An individual does not experience dread in connection with other people or with things. Experiences with other people or with things might bring about fear, but not dread.

Since a fear relates to concrete things, it can be overcome; but since dread relates to man's possibility of becoming and his freedom to become as he chooses, it cannot be as easily overcome. Kierkegaard has indicated that fears are usually quite insignificant when compared to the anticipation of possibility.

**Melancholy**

When a person experiences dread and makes no choice, he is plagued by melancholy. Deep regret or disappointment arising from lack of commitment or choice are positive indicators of melancholy.

**Melancholy as hysteria of the spirit.**—Kierkegaard has defined melancholy as the "hysteria of the spirit." Melancholy occurs when a person's life is "ripened and the spirit demands a higher form," but the "movement is checked" (4, p. 159). This might be experienced by the person who recognizes his present state of existence as one not of becoming,
but has not the courage to pursue something different, some higher level of existence.

Another example of melancholy might be shown by the client who has recognised the nature of his problem but feels inadequate to attack it. His lack of choice is a source of regret and disappointment.

Melancholy does not subside if the choice is postponed; rather it intensifies. It cannot be forgotten by absorbing oneself in work, social affairs, or by any means other than choice. The melancholy may intensify further when a person realizes that the moment of choice has been lost, possibly forever.

**Melancholy relieved.**—If the individual is confronted with the choice of becoming, and he chooses to make the movement to a higher level of existence, he averts melancholy. For when a choice is made and "movement comes about, melancholy is essentially done away with" (4, p. 160).

Kierkegaard has qualified this complete eradication of melancholy in the following:

But even the man in whose life this movement comes about . . . will, nevertheless, always retain a little melancholy; but this is connected with something far deeper . . . and is due to the fact that no man can become perfectly transparent to himself (4, p. 160).

In all his becoming, man can never completely understand himself and his existence. There will always be the
question in his mind as to the appropriateness of his choice and subsequent movement.

Dread and Melancholy Reviewed

The existence of a person in process of becoming is probably seldom characterized by complacency. His recognition of his possibility will prevent him from being completely satisfied with his present existence. He recognizes that he has arrived at his present state of existence through change, and that to continue to become will require even more change.

The realisation of the possibility of change is often accompanied by apprehension, for the individual knows that change will bring about a new state of existence which will be temporarily uncomfortable. The individual also realizes that he cannot become stationary, for this would ultimately require him to forfeit his possibility to become. Thus, in order to continue the process of becoming, the person chooses to move, which choice is accompanied by feelings of apprehension or dread.

If the individual postpones his choice, he experiences regret and disappointment, or melancholy. This melancholy declines only after the choice is made and movement to a higher state of existence comes about. It never completely disappears, however, because the individual can never
completely understand himself and can never really be sure that he has made the appropriate move.

**How Will I Know When a Change Is Necessary?**

Although the feelings of dread and melancholy may be somewhat uncomfortable, these are quite mild when compared with the deep sense of frustration which Kierkegaard has called "despair." Despair is a sickness of the self.

**Despair**

The person in despair is the person who is not becoming what he was meant to be—himself. He can be moral, amoral, or immoral and not despair, but if he is not what he was meant to be, he is in despair. Such despair is a deep sense of frustration and dissatisfaction with the present state of existence.

**Despair as doubt.**—Although doubt is a basic component of despair, there is a difference between the two. "Despair is far deeper and more comprehensive than ... doubt" (4, p. 178).

Doubt is a "despair of thought," whereas despair is a "doubt of personality" (4, p. 178). A person may have doubts about the genuineness of his thoughts, but a person does not experience despair until he doubts the genuineness of his own personality. A person can accept disarrangement of thoughts, but a disarrangement of personality is too
basic and too threatening for a person to accept and live with.

Despair as disequilibrium.--As has been suggested in the description of the development of the self, in order for the self to become the self it should become, there must be an equal representation of the infinite and the finite and these must be present as a synthesis. To lend undue emphasis to one or the other results in an impairment of the becoming process, and "in so far as the self does not become itself, it is not its own self; but not to be one's own self is despair" (11, p. 44).

Despair as a misunderstanding.--The despairing person does not understand the nature or source of his plight. He feels that if he could just change himself in some way, then his troubles would be finished. For the present, however, he wants to be rid of himself.

What the despairing person does not realize is that he despairs because he has not become himself, and that the only cure for his despair is to become himself, rather than to become someone else. As soon as a person recognizes that the object of his search is himself and chooses to become himself, he begins the cure for his despair, for "to will to be that self which one truly is, is indeed the opposite of despair" (11, p. 29).
Despair as related to awareness.—A person who, in his choices early in life, does not feel free to become, will not develop sufficient awareness of himself and will not feel the despair that the becoming person would feel. According to Kierkegaard, "despair must be viewed under the category of consciousness, . . . the more consciousness, the more self," and, "the more consciousness, the more intense the despair" (11, p. 43). Apparently, Kierkegaard has suggested that the more self-conscious an individual is, the greater will be his despair over the ambiguity between his real self and his ideal self.

Examples of Despair

In order to provide additional insight into the concept of despair, Kierkegaard has provided some examples of people in despair. Although it might be expected that these people are somewhat abnormal in their development, Kierkegaard has described them as normal people striving, sincerely but unsuccessfully, to become themselves.

The scholar.—This person concentrates upon scholarship, knowledge, imagination and reasoning power on the assumption that an increase in knowledge will be accompanied by an increase in self-knowledge. He concentrates on the infinite and forgets to integrate this with the self. He becomes very knowledgeable in everything but his own self. The
genuine self which he hoped to gain through knowledge never develops. Instead, the person "loses himself more and more." Eventually, the "self is squandered," says Kierkegaard (11, p. 47).

The imitation.--This person was described by Kierkegaard as follows:

... by getting engaged in all sorts of worldly affairs, by becoming wise about how things go in this world, such a man forgets himself ... does not dare to believe in himself, finds it too venturesome a thing to be himself, far easier and safer to be like the others, to become an imitation. ... (11, p. 31).

This person has become a success at the price of his own self, for he is "just what a man ought to be" (11, p. 51). He has allowed his self to become as "smooth as a pebble," so that it can roll easily in any stream of life, for he has not the courage to take a stand, to be himself.

The experimenter.--This person spends his life grasping for anything new which might be the "best" self for him to become. Just as he is about to commit himself to one self, a new possibility appears and he dashes madly after it. Soon he becomes so concerned about chasing possible selves that he "becomes for himself a mirage" (11, p. 55).

In his search for a possible "best" self the "man did not become aware of himself, aware that the self he is, is a perfectly definite something, and so is the necessary (11,
He has fallen into the trap of seeing himself reflected in others without recognizing his own reflection.

Eventually, this experimenter becomes as unreal as the mirages he has chased, but this does not cause him to discontinue his search. Instead of decreasing his pace, this person tries to abolish his despair by ever increasing his pursuit of ghost selves.

**The determinist.**—This person has forgotten that the self is a "synthesis of possibility and necessity." For him, everything is necessity. His only concerns are the concrete, finite, trivial things in life for he feels that nothing can really be changed. Kierkegaard compares this person to the "king who died of hunger because all his food was transformed into gold" (11, p. 62).

This person feels that because everything is determined, there can be no real changes in his self, so he will concern himself with trivialities. Eventually the "parrot wisdom of trivial experience" suffocates the man's self, because the self and "its survival is analogous to breathing (respiration), which is an in- and an e-spiration."

The self of the determinist cannot breathe, for it is impossible to breathe necessity alone, which taken pure and simple suffocates the human self (11, p. 62).

**The weakling.**—This person is thwarted in his early choices as he "stumbles perhaps upon one difficulty or
another in the composition of the self" (11, p. 86). He does not know that his self need not be threatened by mistakes or difficulty, and his mistakes frighten him and make him lose faith in himself. His despair is a result of passivity rather than activity.

He has disassociated himself from his self to some extent, but he still tries to maintain some contact with the self because something tells him that it might be of some use to him sometime.

This person does not have the strength to be himself, but he also lacks the strength to embrace another self. This casual relationship with the self cannot be tolerated and the person finds himself in a "twilight zone" of existence.

The immature adult.--In a recent review of Kierkegaard's writings, Price has developed this category of the person in despair from many different descriptions by Kierkegaard of persons in despair.

Because of his immaturity, this person has not developed a self. He has little care in life for he seeks only agreeable things, but because of this he is controlled by these things. Sooner or later, however, some unfortunate experience upsets him and he is plunged into despair. Eventually, he will find more agreeable situations and he will begin,
but only where he left off, in the same vulnerable position (12, p. 56).

**Common characteristics.**—All these examples portray persons with basically the same problem, which is a misunderstanding of the development of the self. In each case there was evidenced a disequilibrium within the self, which thwarted its growth and development. Either there was an over-concern for the abstract and lack of concern for the trivial, or vice versa.

The pathetic element common to all these examples was that in an attempt to avert despair, each person merely involved himself more and more in his current project. This project was, in reality, the reason for his despair.

Despite the seemingly undesirable nature of despair, it does have some positive aspects. The individual may find it a profitable experience if it is followed by the choice to become. Kierkegaard has even suggested that there is "something edifying" about despair (4, p. 287). If the individual can accept that it was a necessary step in the process of becoming and can avoid a repeat performance he will have gained much from despair.

**What Must I Know in Order to Change?**

Man can know many things, according to Kierkegaard, but some of the most important knowledge pertains to an
understanding of what is truth for the person. Such knowledge of the truth is learned, rather than inherent in the infant; but the process of learning is difficult.

Kierkegaard has gone a step farther and has suggested that not only is communication difficult, but in most instances it is impossible to communicate anything directly to another person. The manner of communication is the key to the process of learning or communicating. In the description of the communicative process, Kierkegaard has employed the roles of "teacher" and "learner." As will be noted, however, these roles are quite different from those usually associated with the teaching-learning process.

**Requisite Condition**

Regardless of the type of communication utilized, all communication is dependent upon the presence of the "requisite condition; if this is lacking, no teacher can do anything" (6, p. 10). This requisite condition is either a desire for truth, or a desire for a different level of existence.

The presence of the requisite condition does not insure that truth or change will follow necessarily. The condition does indicate, however, that the learner is ready to consider his present state of existence, given the proper environment.
Starting Point for Any Form of Communication

Assuming that the learner has the requisite condition, there must be a starting point for the process of communication. This starting point is not one defined by the teacher, but rather one defined by the learner. This starting point is the frame of reference of the learner, for if any attempt is made to assist the learner in moving to a new level of existence "one must first of all take pains to find HIM where he is and begin there." According to Kierkegaard, "this is the secret of the art of helping others" (10, p. 27). Until the teacher finds the frame of reference of the learner, he cannot understand what the learner understands and will be unable to help him. The superior understanding of the teacher will be of no advantage unless he first understands what the learner understands. "... if you can find exactly the place where the other is and begin there, you may perhaps have the luck to lead him to the place where you are" (10, p. 29).

Forms of Communication

Indirect communication.—If the teacher desires to communicate anything, according to Kierkegaard, it would be necessary to use an indirect form (3, p. 216). This is the only approach which will be helpful to the learner in re-evaluating his existence. An illusion can never be destroyed directly. For this reason the approach has been
called indirect communication. In this form of communication the teacher does not direct the learner, but rather leads him in finding his own direction.

The teacher in utilizing indirect communication does not utilize such activities as lecturing, condemning, or denouncing; instead the teacher "in the right sense is to be a learner" (10, p. 30). Instruction can begin only as the teacher can understand the learner and place himself in the learner's position.

This may require the teacher to become "the amazed listener who sits and hears what the other finds the more delight in telling" (10, p. 29). In this manner the learner need not become angry at the teacher for forcing him to change, and because of the freedom felt by the learner he need not defend nor retreat from his present position. He has been emancipated by the teacher (3, p. 70). As the learner instructs the teacher as to his present frame of reference he will, according to Kierkegaard, re-evaluate his moving. This evaluation must be initiated by the learner. If initiated otherwise, the learner may become angry and defensive and build a wall of resistance. The evaluation must occur in an atmosphere of freedom and must be initiated by the learner (6, p. 8).

Direct communication.—Direct communication would consist in the teacher's attempt to impart truths to the learner
by lecturing or some other form in which the learner is the
listener rather than the instructor. In this form of com-
munication, the teacher makes no attempt to find the learner
where he is. He assumes that the learner has the requisite
condition and can absorb truths as they are presented to him.

The following are presuppositions of the direct method
of communication:

Direct communication presupposes certainty; but
certainty is impossible for anyone in process of
becoming, and the semblance of certainty constitutes
for such an individual a deception (3, p. 68).

... direct communication presupposes that the
receiver's ability to receive is undisturbed. ... But ... such is not the case; an illusion stands in
the way (10, p. 40).

From these presuppositions, it would seem that the
process of direct communication would have some limitations
in bringing about change. Kierkegaard has suggested further
that when anyone uses direct communication "he proves his
stupidity" (3, p. 73).

By direct communication is not meant all direct state-
ments or questions by the teacher. The purpose of these
statements or questions is the criteria for evaluating
directness or communication. Questions, for example, are
acceptable forms of indirect communication if it is assumed
that the learner has within himself the answers to these
questions. If, on the other hand, questions are asked, the
answer to which must be sought in objective knowledge, this
is direct communication and is limited in its effectiveness. The principle of such indirect questioning "is that the one who is asked must have the Truth in himself, and be able to acquire it by himself" (6, p. 8).

The value of the method of communication used is determined by the results which are obtained, this being indicative of intrinsic value or meaning. "Some one condemns and denounces . . . and makes a great noise--all this has no intrinsic value" (10, p. 26). An example of this is provided in the following:

Suppose that someone wished to communicate the following conviction: Truth is inwardness . . . suppose he announced it on all possible occasions, and succeeded in moving not only those who perspire easily, but also the hard boiled temperaments. . . . Then he would have contradicted himself. . . . The matter of prime importance was . . . in each individual coming to understand it by himself (3, p. 71).

The desirable results are obtainable only through indirect communication, according to Kierkegaard.

**Tasks of the Teacher**

The tasks of the teacher in the indirect form of communication would vary considerably from those of the teacher in a direct form of communication. The direct teacher is concerned with being understood, whereas the indirect teacher is concerned with understanding the learner.

**Understanding.**--"In order to help another effectively I must understand what he understands," according to
Kierkegaard. Unless the teacher understands what the learner understands, then all the teacher's understanding will be of little value to the learner (10, p. 27).

If, however, I am disposed to plume myself on my greater understanding, it is because I am vain and proud, so that at bottom, instead of benefitting him, I want to be admired (10, p. 28).

This understanding must be a thing experienced by the teacher, but not displayed openly. Any attempts to display this understanding verbally indicates a possible obstruction to the process of communication.

The teacher understands the learner by trying to put himself in the learner's place so that he can "understand what he understands and in the way he understands it" (10, p. 30). This is actually where instruction begins, according to Kierkegaard, when the teacher will allow himself to "learn from the learner." Furthermore, as he understands the learner he can assist the learner in understanding himself.

Humility.--Only when the teacher humbles himself figuratively to the level of the learner can he understand what the learner understands.

But all effort to help begins with self-humiliation: the helper must first humble himself under him he would help, and therewith must understand that to help does not mean to be a sovereign but to be a servant, that to help does not mean to be ambitious but to be patient, that to help means to endure for
the time being the imputation that one is in the wrong and does not understand what the other understands (10, p. 28).

In order to be the teacher in an indirect form of communication, the teacher must be perceived by the learner as a learner. This requires a teacher with a strong self who is not overanxious about maintaining his role as an expert. If this teacher is concerned about the judgment which the learner might make on his knowledge, he will likely become defensive and make irrational statements. Kierkegaard has provided an example of such a teacher:

Suppose for example he thought it best for his pupils' sake to say of something he understood quite well that he did not understand. Good gracious! This he could not venture to do for fear that pupils might really believe that he did not understand it . . . he is not fit to be a teacher (10, p. 34).

When the teacher will allow himself to be perceived as a learner, then he can help the learner. If, for example, the teacher can lead the angry person to believe that it is the teacher who needs the instruction, then the angry person will be glad to discover in the teacher, "a complaisant and attentive listener," and he can be led to see his error (10, p. 28).

By allowing the learner to instruct the teacher, the teacher is free to help the learner interpret his own feelings, which will be much more receptive to the learner than a lecture of some sort. The effect of a lecture upon the learner would likely produce a feeling of being coerced
within the learner, which might force him into his land of fantasy where the teacher would not be welcome (10, p. 28).

If the teacher will attempt to find the learner exactly where he is and begin there in humility, then the teacher has an opportunity to lead the learner to understand what the teacher understands, with the assumption that this is what the learner needs to know (10, p. 29).

**Deception.**—The initial approach of the teacher wherein he seemingly adopts the role of the learner is that of deception, according to Kierkegaard, and is indirect communication. Although this deception may seem somewhat unethical, Kierkegaard felt that this was the only means to "bring into truth one who is in an illusion" (10, p. 40).

When a teacher uses direct communication, he "presupposes that the receiver's ability to receive is undisturbed" (10, p. 40). The presence of an illusion within the learner, however, makes this supposition incorrect, for the learner will perceive what he wishes to perceive.

By deceiving Kierkegaard means "that one does not begin directly with the matter one wants to communicate, but begins by accepting the other man's illusion" (10, p. 40). The teacher uses this deception to get to the important issues and to lead the learner to the truth.

**Reflection.**—Indirect communication is "characterized by reflection," according to Kierkegaard, and so is the
teacher (10, p. 43). As the teacher reflects, he "stands behind the other men, helping him negatively" (10, p. 43). This is interpreted to imply that the teacher assists by causing the learner to seek direction through himself, rather than by actively pointing the direction. This direction can be found only through inwardness, which is the result of reflection (10, p. 43). The indirectness of this approach may seem somewhat limited, but it is the only method for encouraging a change in the learner's level of existence, according to Kierkegaard.

Introspection.—Kierkegaard would have allowed the use of direct questioning as a part of indirect communication, except with one qualification—that it evoke introspection on the part of the learner. The following quotation has established the premise upon which such questioning must be conducted:

... the underlying principle of all questioning is that the one who is asked must have the truth in himself, and be able to acquire it by himself (6, p. 8).

If the learner has within himself the source of his own truth, then he need only have reason to examine himself, in order to find this truth. Such a reason is provided through encouraging the learner to "come to his senses" and "take notice." The learner cannot be compelled to "accept an opinion, a conviction, a belief," but he can be compelled to "take notice" (10, p. 36).
Introspection, then, occurs when the learner is compelled to take notice of himself and his existence and seeks the direction he needs from within himself. He can profit from the examples set by others, however, if these help him to find his own direction.

Acceptance.---The teacher has established the fact in his own thinking that he must find the learner where he is in order to assist him. Thus, he must have realized that regardless of where the learner is, this is the acceptable spatiotemporal position for him at the present. This does not suggest, however, that the teacher must be in agreement with the position of the learner.

Furthermore, since the teacher has realized that he cannot compel the learner to accept even an opinion, then he must have accepted the fact that the learner's ability to think for himself must be quite adequate and appropriate for his becoming. The teacher who uses direct communication has not indicated this acceptance of the learner and his spatiotemporal position; rather he has indicated the exact opposite. Instead of accepting the learner's position, he is requiring the learner to accept the position of the teacher, which, according to Kierkegaard, is sheer folly (10, p. 36).
Non-evaluation.—Quite similar to the concept of acceptance is that of non-evaluation, although Kierkegaard seems to have developed both concepts independently. The primary difference appears to be in the mode of expression, acceptance being expressed covertly and non-evaluation being expressed overtly.

The teacher would display acceptance in his mode of communication; the teacher would display a non-evaluative approach as he refrained from condemning or denouncing the position of the learner.

The reason for the emphasis on a non-evaluative approach can be found in Kierkegaard's emphasis that if the learner is confronted directly and his position is overtly devaluated by the teacher, subsequent hostility or withdrawal will accompany the devaluation. This hostility or withdrawal will only strengthen the learner's illusion. He will not be in a frame of mind to learn. "A teacher may determine whether the pupil makes progress or not, but he cannot judge him" (6, p. 13).

Patience.—If the teacher is to assist the learner, he cannot be overambitious or impatient (10, p. 34). If the teacher becomes impatient, "he will rush headlong . . . and accomplish nothing" (10, p. 25).

The teacher must "take pains" to find the learner's frame of reference if he is to be of assistance. This
effort requires "patience" (10, p. 28). It is possible that being patient with the learner, the teacher "may sometimes fail to reach the goal." On the other hand, if the teacher proceeds in too much haste, the learner may be pressed to move too fast so that he forgets himself and attends only to the task of acquiring knowledge (6, p. 11).

**Self-Understanding: The Goal of Indirect Communication**

The purpose of the teacher in indirect communication is to provide the learner with an occasion to understand himself (6, p. 17). To attempt more than this would require a direct approach, but this would accomplish even less than the indirect approach.

Self-understanding is a result of the learner's inward search for meaning and direction. If his search results in external knowledge, he will never begin to understand himself (3, p. 131).

Although the learner can never completely understand himself, he, nevertheless, must find some degree of self-understanding before he can explore his possibility. Furthermore, it is only through self-understanding that the learner can find solutions to his problems. As the learner finds self-understanding, he can begin to understand the nature of his problem and then perhaps he can overcome it (3, p. 59).
Results of Communication

The teacher, or communicator, has no way of knowing the effect of the communication upon the learner, "but at least he is compelled to take notice." The learner may be furious about this notice, according to Kierkegaard, but when he begins to take notice, "he is on the point of expressing a judgment" (10, p. 37).

A person cannot be compelled to accept an opinion or a belief, but he can be compelled to take notice. Furthermore, once the person takes notice, he is then ready to consider another opinion or belief.

Regardless of the process which takes place, the important product is that the learner must discover his truths or his errors by himself, since his truth or error is discovered only when it is discovered by the learner. "Even if the whole world knew of it before," says Kierkegaard, a truth or error does not exist for the person until he has discovered it himself (6, p. 8). The purpose of the teacher is to provide the learner with an occasion to understand himself (6, p. 17).

If it has appeared that Kierkegaard has implied that the indirect method is easy to use because it is reflection rather than analysis, this is a misunderstanding. The "development of this method may require the labour of years,
alert attention every hour of the day, daily practice on the scales," says Kierkegaard (10, p. 38).

**Truth**

Truth, for Kierkegaard, was one of the most vital ingredients in the mature self. In addition to being this ingredient, truth is the ultimate goal of the self, since only through truth can the person become free.

**Truth as freedom.**—Until a person determines what is truth for him, he is bound by the truths of others, which may or may not have any meaning to him. Kierkegaard uses truth to mean truth that has meaning to a person, not universal truths.

As a person seeks and accepts truths which have meaning to him, he is then free to seek additional truths. The truth which is important for a person is the truth which makes him free.

A person does not passively accept truths; instead "truth exists for the particular individual only as he himself produces it in action" (8, p. 125). To preach truths and expect another to absorb these is sheer folly, according to Kierkegaard.

When a person actively finds and accepts his truths, he frees himself to become himself. He does not become an imitation.
**Truth as subjectivity.**—For Kierkegaard, truth was not of an objective, universal nature, but rather of a subjective, inner nature. "Truth consists precisely in that conception of life which is expressed by the individual," according to Kierkegaard, and because each individual is unique, no objective truth will be adequate for all individuals (10, p. 117). This is expressed also by Kierkegaard in the following:

> Only the truth which edifies is truth for you. This is an essential predicate relating to the truth as inwardness; its decisive characterization as edifying for you, i.e. for the subject, constitutes its essential difference from all objective knowledge, in that the subjectivity itself becomes the mark of truth (5, p. 226).

Kierkegaard has not suggested that objective knowledge be done away with, because there is a necessity for objectivity in the world of things. He has suggested, however, that "an objective truth is . . . extraneous to the movement of existence" (5, p. 279). Because the truth has no meaning for a person, it has little effect upon his existence or becoming. Truth cannot just be known; it must be experienced.

In order to determine if a person has accepted any truth, he should be observed for "subjective change." If no change occurs in the person, the truth could be classified as merely objective knowledge.
Truth as inwardness.—The reason, as expressed by Kierkegaard, for the diminished effect of external truths upon a person, is that truth must come from within in an active, seeking process. Little real change occurs in a person who is forcefully persuaded to accept an external truth, for "the first determination of the truth is inwardness" (3, p. 218).

Unless the person produces truth within himself, he will not live by it. If, on the other hand, a person finds the truth for himself, he will then become a seeker after additional truths, which help to define his state of existence.

An external or objective approach to acquiring truths is highly inadequate, according to Kierkegaard, for the underlying principle of truth is that a person "be able to acquire it by himself" (6, p. 8). Inward truth is not something which can be passed easily from one person to another, as is objective knowledge. The teacher of truths can only provide an occasion for the learner to develop his own truths.

Truth as change.—As has been suggested, when a person accepts a truth there will be a subjective change within him, which is described as follows:

In so far as the learner was in Error and now receives the Truth and with it the condition for understanding it, a change takes place within him.
The acceptance of a truth is not just putting on a change of clothes, for it is somewhat demanding of a person. As he accepts a truth, he accepts a new state of existence which is different and requires some adjustment. This is a part of the process of becoming.

Truth as approximation.--The truth sought by the becoming individual cannot be classified as a definite, sustaining body of knowledge. Because of the changing, becoming nature of the individual, only his existence can be classified as a definite entity. "Thus the truth becomes an approximation whose beginning cannot be posited absolutely, precisely because the conclusion is lacking," says Kierkegaard (3, p. 169).

Inwardness

The frame of reference of the becoming person must be one of inwardness, according to Kierkegaard; otherwise the self is in disequilibrium and will not develop properly. Little learning of benefit to the self will occur until the person looks inward to determine his state of existence, for "only when the individual turns to his inner self, and hence
only in the inwardness of self-activity, does he have his attention aroused . . ." (3, p. 218).

No amount of information will be of any concern to a person until he turns inward to find his direction. The information, or direction, which is of necessity can only be found within the person.

As the person turns inward and seeks direction there, he is then in a position to understand himself and to recognize the importance of seeking inwardness for direction in the process of becoming. The person with inwardness realizes that his task is not to assimilate more knowledge about reality or about himself, but his task is rather to become himself.

**Inwardness as subjectivity.**—In developing his concept of inwardness, Kierkegaard has again indicated the importance of subjectivity and the unimportance of objectivity in the process of becoming. This is emphasized by Kierkegaard in the following:

The task of becoming subjective, then, may be presumed to be the highest task, and one that is proposed to every human being; just as . . . the highest reward . . . exists only for those who are subjective . . . the task of becoming subjective furnishes a human being with enough to do to suffice him for his entire life (3, p. 146).

While the objective thought is indifferent to the thinking subject and his existence, the subjective thinker is as an existing individual essentially interested in his own thinking, existing as he does in his thought. His thinking has . . . the reflection of
inwardness . . . by virtue of which it belongs to the thinking subject and to no one else. While objective thought translates everything into results . . . subjective thought puts everything into process and omits results; partly because as an existing individual he is constantly in the process of becoming . . . (3, p. 67).

Inwardness, according to Kierkegaard, is not only a means of finding the truth for each individual. When the individual obtains a perspective of inwardness he has already found truth for himself.

Existence

When a person turns inward to seek direction, he then can gain some indication of the nature and level of his existence. A person does not define his existence completely, however, regardless of the means which he employs. The process of defining existence is similar to the process of becoming: it is never completed.

The reason for the continual process is that the person is limited by his senses as to the extent and accuracy of his knowledge, which is only approximate knowledge. Because of this approximation, the role of reason is somewhat impaired.

There is very little that the existing person can know with certainty, according to Kierkegaard. "The only reality to which an existing individual may have a relation which is more than cognitive is his own reality, the fact that he exists; and this reality constitutes his absolute interest"
(3, p. 280). Thus, the only thing a person can know with assurance is that he exists. Even this is less concrete than it may seem, says Kierkegaard, for a person can never completely define his existence because he can never completely understand himself, or become completely transparent.

Existence as articulation.—Since Kierkegaard lends so much emphasis to subjectivity and so little to objectivity, he might have been suspected of encouraging nothing but thinking. Thinking without articulation with the self produces again a disequilibrium and an obstruction in the process of becoming. "The thinker," says Kierkegaard, "who can forget in all his thinking also to think that he is an existing individual, will never explain life" (3, p. 85). A person must be a thinker, but he must also be aware of his existence, since both are involved in the process of becoming (3, p. 274). "To exist and to know are two very different things," according to Kierkegaard (3, p. 264).

Existence as continuation.—Apparently, one of the reasons for Kierkegaard's opposition to abstract thinking was that it was considered an accomplishment in which a finality is implied. The process of existing, however, is not an act to be completed, but rather a continual process. Any finished product falls short of the goal, for "to be
finished with life before life has finished with one, is precisely not to have finished the task" (3, p. 147).

Existence as contemporary.—A historical approach to understanding existence is also inadequate, according to Kierkegaard, unless the individual is able to relate this historical knowledge to his present reality.

... It is a glorious thing to be able to explain the past, the whole of human history; but if the ability to understand the past is to be the summit of attainment for a living individual ... this is like travelling in Denmark with the help of a small map of Europe, on which Denmark shows no larger than a steel pin-point (3, p. 275).

The positiveness of historical knowledge is illusory, since it is approximation-knowledge ... this positive knowledge fails to express the situation of the knowing subject in existence. ... In historical knowledge, the subject learns a great deal about the world, but nothing about himself (3, p. 75).

The only certainty which a person can gain from historical knowledge is that related to his existence, "and this is not something historical" (3, p. 75).

Existence is, according to Kierkegaard, an illusive realm not determinable solely by reason, pure thought, imagination, history, or any combination of these. Existence is a recurring, temporary, becoming phenomena which represents the articulation of everything the individual is, has been, or strives to become, with his own contemporary reality.
What Must I Do in Order to Change?

Since only the individual possesses the capacity to decide for himself as to what he should do, Kierkegaard has emphatically suggested that the individual must "be himself." To be oneself is a matter of choice, according to Kierkegaard, wherein the individual considers the popular question considered by Hamlet, "To be or not to be--that is the question" (9, p. 100).

Choice

The individual, in seeking to understand himself, searches continually for a happy moment or a position which is at least temporarily comfortable. He experiments, but his experimentation leads him away from the crux of the problem, which is himself. Eventually, the individual despair over his treadmill type of existence and finds himself faced with a choice--to continue his annoying state of existence, or to pursue something more in keeping with his basic nature.

If the individual makes the choice to continue his day-to-day existence, making a variety of meaningless choices, he has made an "aesthetic" choice, according to Kierkegaard. In this case, the treadmill continues, a pathetic condition for the individual may gain the whole world and lose himself in the process (4, p. 142).
The other choice, and the one which Kierkegaard encourages, is the choice in which the individual chooses himself so that he may become himself. He does not choose to become another being, but rather chooses to become himself. This choice comes only at the height of despair.

**Choice as identity.**—When the individual chooses himself he obtains his identity, as Kierkegaard has indicated in the following:

The individual thus becomes conscious of himself as this definite individual, with these talents, these dispositions, these instincts, these passions, influenced by these definite surroundings, as this definite product of a definite environment. But being conscious of himself in this way, he assumes responsibility for all this . . . he concludes himself as a unity, and yet at the same instant he is at the beginning . . . in the choice he makes himself elastic, transforming all the outwardness into inwardness. He has his place in the world, with freedom he chooses his place. . . . He is a definite individual, in the choice he makes himself a definite individual, for he chooses himself (4, p. 210).

**Choice as an equalizer.**—The ability to, or necessity for, making the choice is not restricted to a particular personality type, according to Kierkegaard. There is quite a similarity between the "rich" and "poor" personality once the choice is made, as suggested by Kierkegaard in the following:

. . . even the richest personality is nothing before he has chosen himself, and on the other hand even what one might call the poorest personality is everything when he has chosen himself; for the greatest
thing is not to be this or that but to be oneself, and this everyone can be if he wills it (4, p. 150).

There is a quality of equality between the personalities of different individuals who have chosen themselves, even though their personalities might be quite different. They are both experiencing something of the process of becoming.

**Result of choice postponed.**--The results of a postponed choice are almost as undesirable as that of no choice at all. There is no time for thought experiments, for "the longer he postpones the choice the easier it is . . . to alter its character" (4, p. 138).

There is a constant inner drift of personality so that if the choice is not made appropriately, it becomes more difficult as it is postponed. Kierkegaard has compared this inner drift to the ship which continues to make headway while the captain is deciding which way to turn. Eventually, the ship, or the personality, becomes lost due to lack of choice (4, p. 138).

The reason for the increased difficulty in choosing, once the choice is delayed, is that although the choice may not be made the personality has chosen unconsciously. Because an unconscious choice has been made, "there is something which must be done over again . . . and this is often very difficult" (4, p. 139). It is very important, according
to Kierkegaard, "to choose and to choose in time" (4, p. 139).

Result of choice.—Although the individual becomes quite uncomfortable if the choice is postponed, he does not become content and free from all despair if the choice is made in time. For in choosing, the individual must isolate himself in that he must assume responsibility for his direction.

. . . it requires courage for a man to choose himself; for at the very time he isolates himself. . . . This alarms him, and yet so it must be, for when the passion of freedom is aroused in him (and it is aroused by choice . . .) he chooses himself and fights for the possession of this object . . . (4, p. 181).

Part of the apprehension about the choice comes from the fact that this requires a new level of existence which will be new and different. Because it is different, it may be temporarily uncomfortable, which is often a source of anxiety or apprehension.

There is no finality in making the choice, for the individual chooses to become and he senses freedom. Once the individual senses this freedom, according to Kierkegaard, there is no stopping it, for "the self is jealous of itself and will by no means allow it to remain undetermined what belongs to it and what does not" (4, p. 187).

This process of becoming requires continual choices, but these are less difficult than the first choice. The
individual must forever be content "to arrive at a decision and to renew it" (3, p. 277).

As the individual chooses, he gains confidence in his ability to choose, and this is of value to him in future choices. Kierkegaard has called this a "solemnity, a quiet dignity, which is never entirely lost" (4, p. 149). Even if the individual makes mistakes in his choosing, he retains his courage, "for he never relinquishes the sovereignty over himself" (4, p. 211).

Although external manifestations of change might be apparent, these will be the symptoms rather than the cause. The real act of choice is not external; it is the internal decision in which the individual chooses to become himself.

In order to lend even more emphasis to the importance of the initial choice, Kierkegaard has called this decision a "leap of faith" (3, p. 94).


Faith

Choice, says Kierkegaard, "is the last stage prior to faith, so that one who has not made this movement has not faith" (5, p. 66). The individual, in making the choice, acquires faith.

Faith as passion.--The movement to faith is not the result of casual consideration, but rather is accompanied by "passion to be oneself. If one lacks this passion, "he will
never get time to make the movement, he will constantly be running errands in life . . ." (5, p. 59).

Intellectual intuition is not sufficient to produce movement. "Faith does not result simply from scientific inquiry," for then knowledge would be confused with faith (3, p. 30).

Faith as tolerance of ambiguity.—One of the reasons for the necessity of passion in connection with movement is that the individual must be able to accept an apparent ambiguity which knowledge could not tolerate. Faith is a "contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual's inwardness and the objective uncertainty" (3, p. 182). It is the task of faith to "discover the improbable, the paradox; and then hold it fast with the passion of inwardness" (3, p. 209).

It is only through faith that the individual is able to accept ambiguities and absurdities, and this acceptance is necessary in the process of becoming where certainty is a rare commodity. The more the individual develops faith, the more he is able to withstand the "risk" of uncertainty. Faith occurs then as the individual becomes less dependent upon objective certainties and allows himself to take the risk of living with uncertainties. "Without risk there is no faith," says Kierkegaard, "and the greater the risk, the greater the faith" (5, p. 188).
The search for faith is quite demanding upon the individual, but Kierkegaard has provided the reassurance that the end is well worth the means. By faith the individual acquires everything, says Kierkegaard, for "he who has faith like a grain of mustard can remove mountains" (5, p. 70).

The Individual

The individual becomes himself only by making the "absolute venture," which is the choice of himself. "In making the absolute venture he becomes another individual," says Kierkegaard; but this other individual is himself, his true self (3, p. 379).

The individual as intrinsic.--Kierkegaard's individual is not a non-conformist, nor a rebel, nor any other of the characteristics which could be externally recognizable. This individual "is the category of the spirit" rather than something related to society or politics. "Earthly reward, power, honour," according to Kierkegaard, "have no connection with the right use of this category" (10, p. 132).

External behavior would merely be a manifestation of whatever enhanced the individual's becoming his true self. Each act would have the single purpose of assisting the individual in his becoming.

The individual as everyman.--The individual is not necessarily one of special distinction, for everyman can
be an individual. Everyman has this potential, according to Kierkegaard, "everyman can be that one" (10, p. 111).

**The individual as an individual.**—Kierkegaard was strongly opposed to the effects of associates, or society, for these might encourage an individual to relinquish, rather than to develop, his individuality. Any group which exercises control over an individual "weakens his sense of responsibility" (10, p. 112). In an attempt to emphasise the possible harmful effects of a group with which an individual might be identified, Kierkegaard has called the crowd "untruth."

The individual must seek truth in himself, rather than in others. He must also remember that truth for others is not necessarily truth for him.

Kierkegaard has not suggested that the individual isolate himself, but rather that he search his inner self for his direction. He must respect his fellow man, but he must also recognise that each individual must stand alone (3, p. 287).

**The individual as the ordinary.**—Each individual must arrange his life so that he takes into consideration his knowledge of himself, his capabilities, his faults, and his limitations (3, p. 503). He must live in a manner which is
advantageous to himself and his existence. This should not be alarming to society, according to Kierkegaard, because

The truly extraordinary man is the truly ordinary man. The more of the universal-human an individual is able to realize in his life, the more extraordinary he is. The less of the universal he is able to take up in his life, the more imperfect he is (3, p. 274).

Price has summarized Kierkegaard's individual as follows:

A man's highest task therefore is to shape himself so that he represents humanity in his own way, and to live out his life untrammelled by an external authority, seizing everything with zest and earnestness, taking up all experience and combining it uniquely with himself (12, p. 152).

Although the individual is existing in the present, he is not limited to his present existence. "The healthy individual lives at once both in hope and in recollection, and only thereby does his life acquire true and substantial continuity" (4, p. 119).

How Will I Know If My Becoming Is Toward Self-Fulfillment?

Kierkegaard has described the condition of the existing individual as being one of constant involvement in the process of becoming. This process is not one wherein man wanders about aimlessly and without a particular direction, constantly wondering about his state of existence, and grasping for straws. A specific and detailed road map has been provided by Kierkegaard for man's journey during the process of becoming.
There are three "spheres of existence: the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious" (3, p. 448). These are not distinct, separate stages in which the individual remains for a specific period of time, but they may be more accurately described as levels of development. The interests and purposes of the individual could be used to determine his level of development.

The Aesthetic Individual

Kierkegaard has described the interests of the aesthetic individual as being those of "immediacy" (7, p. 430). This individual cannot see beyond his day-to-day form of existence. He may be an average, somewhat naive, unreflective person who lives merely to enjoy life.

The character of Don Juan, Mozart's protege, is used by Kierkegaard as an example of the aesthetic individual. Don Juan lives only for his happy moments to which he becomes a prisoner. He does a minimum of reflecting, makes no decisions of a serious nature, considers self-examination of no importance, and hovers between the idea and the reality of existence (4, p. 155).

He is without form or substance, according to Kierkegaard; and though he is continually being formed by his environment, he is never finished. As soon as one direction is indicated, something causes him to move in another. Self-assessment and self-responsibility are
foreign to his repertoire of experiences, as is the act of maturing.

Eventually, Don Juan faces a crisis, however, assuming that there is enough ability to recognize a crisis. This crisis is not a life or death struggle; it is one of boredom wherein the individual becomes tired of the monotony of his moment-to-moment existence. He wants to become more than what he is immediately (4, p. 150).

He may attempt to avert this boredom by becoming more selective in his pleasures, his friends, or his surroundings, but this only leads to more boredom, for even these choices are immediate and of no real consequence (4, p. 141).

Bitter frustration ultimately results, according to Kierkegaard, the subsequent result of which is despair.

Price has summarized the despair of Kierkegaard's aesthetic individual as,

Despair over himself, because he no longer believes in himself. . . . Despair over his human nature, because he no longer believes that any sort of self is possible for him. . . . Despair over life, because all his tomorrows will be the same as today (12, p. 169).

The only solution for the aesthetic individual's problem is to choose himself. In doing so, he chooses to become himself, to actualize his potential.

The Ethical Individual

The choice to become himself has allowed the individual to enter a new level of existence, called the ethical stage,
in which the interests of the individual are those of "requirement" (7, p. 430).

This level of existence has been called one of transition in which the individual moves away from his immature existence and toward a more human quality. The individual is not a new individual, however, for "the ethical will not change the individual into another man but makes him himself" (4, p. 217). The new self which emerges is merely the old self which is being transformed into the ideal self, which in reality is the individual's true self.

The ethical individual has not torn himself away from his past. He merely is able to integrate his past into his present and into his hope for the future.

In his new existence, the ethical individual must make more choices, some of which will be mistakes. This does not cause alarm, however, for he has the courage to try again, realizing that he is the only one who can adequately direct his future.

Because of the ethical individual's new orientation toward his existence, as a result of his increased inwardness, he becomes more transparent to himself. He becomes more self-understanding and because of this he gains more courage to become himself. He also is able to accept the responsibility for his direction.
The movement of the ethical individual does not cause him to become a tyrant or odd-ball. On the contrary, he becomes more like his fellow beings who are in the process of becoming also; he becomes an ordinary man.

Since the original choice was an act of faith, this is a quality which must be possessed by the ethical individual. As he becomes more confident in himself, his faith increases. His increasing faith, accompanied by an increase in freedom, will not allow the ethical individual to be content with this level of existence, but presses him to achieve an even higher level of existence.

The Religious Stage

The religious stage is represented by the individual at his most authentic level of existence. Kierkegaard has called this stage that of "fulfillment."

The individual is now a whole man, rather than a distorted personality. He is more transparent, more self-understanding, more self-directive, and more responsible. His self is one of consistency rather than irregularity. His movement is the result of faith.

This is supposedly the final stage of the journey of the becoming individual; he has reached the highest level of existence. He is no longer fragile, but rather concrete. He depends upon himself rather than circumstances outside himself.
The individual does not feel that he is perfect, but he is now able to accept his limitations and work within these. He no longer desires to become someone or something else; he is content to be himself rather than a typical self.

The religious individual has articulated the experiences of his past into his present, and he is now free to be himself. Now he is what he was intended to become; he is human.

Even the religious individual has not reached the end of the road in his becoming, however, for he will never completely understand himself. He will never be constant. He will continue to seek understanding, although he now realizes that he will never complete this task. The understanding he does possess, however, is sufficient incentive for him to continue his process of becoming as long as he lives.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPMENT OF THEORY

Counseling theory has been considered applicable to a wide range of personality types and behavioral patterns. These are generally considered to be within the "normal" range, however, and thus would not be of such nature as to require psychotherapy or psychoanalysis.

The limitation of the theoretical framework in the present study to normal* individuals is considered appropriate in relation to Kierkegaard's description of the process of becoming. This process requires the client to assume and maintain responsibility for his direction from the beginning awareness of the need for change to the climactic self-fulfillment. The acceptance of such responsibility would seem to be limited to those individuals who are able to maintain some contact with reality. This contact is necessary in order for the change to be meaningful and appropriate. Such a person is able to react to his environment in a manner at least minimally satisfying to himself and others. He is capable of assuming responsibility for

*The term "normal," according to Bordin, "does not refer to someone who is free of emotional conflicts, but rather a person who reaches the degree of integration typical in the society" (1, p. 5).
himself and his direction, and he has within himself the capacity for solving his own conflicts if provided with the proper environment. The conflicts which he does have are not so important as to incapacitate him. A person who is detached or withdrawn from reality would have difficulty in accomplishing the goals which appear to have been established by Kierkegaard.

Theories of counseling are often considered to be primarily theories of behavior rather than theories of personality. Any theory developed from the works of Kierkegaard, however, must consider both behavior and personality theory.

The emphasis on behavioral theory is derived from Kierkegaard's concern with the individual and his reaction to his environment. This emphasis is closely related to the emphasis of behavioral theory which, according to Hadley, must "consider the total life of a person" (3, p. 41).

The emphasis on personality theory is derived from Kierkegaard's concern with the development of the "self," which would place such a theory in the category of a self-theory such as that developed by such a contemporary theorist as Rogers. The emphasis on the individual, rather than upon society as a whole, would also seem to be similar to the idiographic approach to understanding personality as described by Allport.
The theoretical approach of the self-theorists, as presented by Pepinsky in the following, shows a similarity to the approach suggested by Kierkegaard:

First, the urge to growth is postulated as a basic driving force in the human organism. As he develops awareness of himself, this becomes his concept of himself. In this process of development, the individual may deny to awareness perceptions which conflict with his self-concept as organized. Particularly, if these denied perceptions are a threat to the self concept, the perceptions may become biased and distorted so as to become acceptable. Counseling, therefore, involves permitting the client to verbalize without punishment or evaluation of any kind, so that he can feel free to admit the denied perceptions into his awareness. The client learns . . . to see himself differently. With reduction of threat to self, and a changing, more encompassing concept of self, the client comes also to alter his previously distorted attitudes. He comes gradually to accept the new self-concept and to function more spontaneously and rationally in his environment (4, p. 34).

The self theorists, as was true of Kierkegaard, have emphasized process and synthesis rather than technique. It will not, therefore, be the purpose of this paper to provide a multitude of counseling techniques which might be applicable in various situations. The purpose will be, however, to provide the counselor with a frame of reference which might be helpful in understanding the behavior of clients. According to Pepinsky, "theoretical approaches, which have the function of organizing and accounting for the behavior of clients, can serve as useful guides to counselor activities with clients" (4, p. 19).
In the effort to articulate the development of concepts with the development of theory, the concepts developed in the previous chapter will be underlined as they appear initially in the various theoretical frameworks in the present chapter. It is recommended that each concept be reviewed periodically in order to understand the application to the various theoretical frameworks.

The Counseling Relationship

The success attributed to the counseling process is predicated upon the establishment of a counseling relationship between client and counselor. The quality of the results of counseling are usually considered to be in proportion to the quality of the relationship.

The counseling relationship has been considered by Brammer and Shostrom to be the "heart of the therapeutic process":

The relationship is important in counseling ... because it constitutes the principal medium for eliciting, recognizing, and handling significant feelings and ideas which are aimed at changing client behavior. Thus, the quality of the relationship determines not only the nature of the personal exchanges but whether counseling will continue at all.

We are becoming more and more convinced that the relationship in ... counseling is a curative agent in its own right (2, p. 144).

Although Kierkagaard gave no indication of the physical aspects of a counseling relationship, numerous suggestions
as to the intellectual and emotional nature of such a relationship from his writings can be obtained.

The Purpose of the Relationship

The purpose of the counseling relationship, according to the concepts developed by Kierkegaard, would be to provide a personal interaction wherein the counselor would have an occasion to lead the client to discover meaning, truth, and direction for himself. The ultimate purpose of the relationship would be to facilitate the client's process of becoming.

Such goals would not be the result of a haphazard relationship, in which responsibility and direction are nebulous. Both counselor and client must understand their roles and accept responsibility for these. The process of self-exploration, for example, cannot be forced upon the client by the counselor; it must be the result of choice. The client must be free to choose, of his own volition, to find direction from within himself, rather than from others.

Development of the Relationship

The process of communication is one of the most important aspects of the counseling relationship. It is through communication that the relationship is established and directed throughout. Without an adequate method of communication, the counseling relationship would be paralyzed.
The method of communication which would be recommended for assisting the client in process of becoming would be that of indirect communication. As the attributes of indirect communication are considered, the liabilities of direct communication will also be considered so that its inappropriateness in the counseling relationship will be apparent.

**Indirect communication**—Kierkegaard has suggested that the only method of communicating anything of real importance is that of indirect communication. In this approach the counselor does not direct the client, but rather leads the client in finding his own direction. For this reason, the approach is called indirect communication.

Indirect communication presupposes uncertainty rather than certainty, and subjectivity rather than objectivity. For this reason, any direct presentation of facts or universal truths would have little effect upon the client, for he must discover these facts or truths to be valid for himself. Furthermore, indirect communication would evoke less defensiveness and hostility than direct communication. It allows the illusion to be handled gently in a non-threatening manner, so that the client need not defend it or become angry because of the counselor's intrusion upon his privacy.

The indirect approach requires that the counselor refrain from lecturing about, condemning, denouncing, and
openly evaluating the position of the client. Such an approach would be illogical since it is likely that the counselor does not know state of the client’s existence. It would also likely be obstructive in that it would make the angry client even angrier and less approachable, and it might force a deluded client into the realm of fantasy.

Instead of playing the role of the authority, the counselor must adopt the role of the "amazed listener" in order to find the client where he is and to understand what the client understands. When the client recognizes his freedom to discuss himself, he will be more likely to provide the counselor with the necessary information for understanding his frame of reference. Furthermore, when the client perceives the counselor to be a "complaisant and attentive listener," he may find enjoyment and reassurance in the discovery that someone will listen to him.

Instead of assuming that the client has problems similar to other people and reacting to him in a stereotyped manner, the counselor must approach each client as an individual and in a manner appropriate to him. This appropriateness is determined by the frame of reference of the client and his understandings. The secret of helping the client is to be able to understand what he understands. As the counselor begins to understand the frame of reference of
the client, he then is in a position to lead the client to a change in behavior.

This approach was called a deception by Kierkegaard. In it the counselor pretends to know very little and allows the client to do the instructing. Such a deception is not unethical, however, since during the process of instruction the client will have an opportunity to openly evaluate his position. Whether or not this evaluation leads to an overt decision or change, it may be significant for the client in that he has an opportunity to evaluate his situation. By helping the client evaluate, or re-evaluate, his situation, his movement from self-awareness to self-understanding may be encouraged. The important thing is that the client is free to seek meaning and direction for himself.

Direct communication.--The counselor attempts to impart truths directly to the client, as a teacher might impart facts to a learner, in the method of direct communication. Such direct communication presupposes certainty, according to Kierkegaard, but certainty is unattainable for anyone in process of becoming, and the individual deceives himself when he seeks certainty. The client who feels the need for everything to be factual and concrete does not truly understand the process of becoming and will possibly unknowingly place limitations on his behavior because of the need for certainty. Furthermore, before the client can reach
self-fulfillment, he must develop faith in himself and in his becoming. Faith is built upon uncertainty rather than certainty, according to Kierkegaard. The only certainty for the client is his own existence.

Direct communication also presupposes that the client's ability to understand is not obstructed by some misconceptions or biases. A client with feelings of inadequacy or inferiority might enjoy the counselor's reassurance that the client's peers perceived him as an adequate person. This reassurance would not relieve the feeling of despair, however, which might have its roots at the unconscious level because of a frame of reference learned early in life. No quantity of facts or principles will be of assistance in destroying an illusion if the client has come to believe in the illusion. The counselor who approaches a client's misconception of himself by direct analysis and recommendation merely acts as a reminder to the client of his misconception; such an approach does not compel the client to seek the answer through inwardness.

Kierkegaard would even allow direct questioning as a form of indirect communication. The support for direct questioning, however, would be limited to the counselor who would ask questions realizing that the client had the capacity to find the answer within himself. A form of
questioning which required the client to seek answers outside himself would be of little ultimate value.

In utilizing direct communication, the counselor must assume that he has found the client where he is, which, however, is seldom the case initially. If the position of the client is not understood, the counselor would be giving directions for a new frame of reference without knowing the client's present position. This approach would be similar to giving directions to a particular location without knowing the present location.

**Characteristics of the Counseling Relationship**

**Individuality.**—Each counseling relationship is characterized by individuality in that each client is a different individual requiring a different approach. This is not disorganization, but is flexibility on the part of the counselor. Probably no two counseling relationships are identical by virtue of the fact that no two clients would respond identically to the counselor even though his approaches were identical.

The necessity for this individuality was implied in the discussion on communication in which it was suggested that the counselor must adapt himself to the situation of the client. This required a new adaptation for every new client, since by virtue of their unique backgrounds no two clients will occupy the same situation. To respond identically to
two different clients would be to presume certainty of the situation of the client, which requires more perception than is possible.

Another reason for the necessity of individuality in each relationship, even with the same client, is that the client is never exactly the same in the present relationship as he might have been a week before in another relationship. The reason for this can be found in the fact that as the client begins to notice his behavior and evaluate it he begins to make some decisions which require change. This, of course, is predicated upon the necessary condition for counseling which is capacity and the desire to inquire about oneself. Without this condition, according to Kierkegaard, the counselor can do nothing. If this condition is present, however, the client will undergo change from one relationship to another which will require an individual approach each time in keeping with the changes which have occurred in the thinking of the client.

Acceptance.—This is an implied and necessary feature of the counseling relationship, particularly on the part of the counselor. If a counselor is to attempt to find the client where he is, he must have accepted this position as being appropriate for the client. Any attempt to coerce the client into a different position would indicate lack of acceptance of the present position of the client, which
might preclude the possibility of establishing the relationship. It does not indicate agreement with his position, however. The characteristic of acceptance is a quality required in the counselor as well as in the relationship.

**Genuineness.**—The counseling relationship, although possibly a form of conversation, differs from ordinary conversation in that it is an attempt to find meaning rather than an attempt to broadcast objective facts.

The everyday conversation is usually quite superficial, according to Kierkegaard, because it is concerned with objective facts rather than subjective meaning. This accounts for the lack of involvement between two conversationalists who are more concerned with their individual contributions than in what the other is contributing. Each is not concerned with understanding what the other understands, and thus the relationship has no real genuineness about it. It is superficial.

It is quite difficult even for people who have meaning in their existence to truly understand each other. Although each may have meaning for himself, this may not have meaning to another who has also established meaning for himself. Meaning is relative to each individual and it can be understood only when the frame of reference of the individual is known.
Non-dependent interaction.--The responsibility for the counseling relationship must be a shared endeavor. If the counselor assumes the responsibility for the relationship overtly, his method will be direct rather than indirect. On the other hand, if the client feels too much of the responsibility he may sense that the counselor is disinterested and does not understand his passion for change.

The indirect communication requires that the client assume much of the responsibility, for he must assist the counselor's attempt to understand the frame of reference of the client. Without this assistance from the client, indirect communication will be greatly impaired.

The client must also assume responsibility for the decision to change and for the direction of change in his behavior. Unless the client assumes this responsibility, his possibilities for change are unlikely. The avoidance of responsibility is a possible indication that the client does not possess the condition for change. His current state of discomfort is more comfortable than the discomfort some new and different state would produce.

Freedom.--In order for the counseling relationship to serve its purpose adequately, there must be a feeling of freedom on the part of both client and counselor. The counselor must feel free to enter into a close personal relationship, free to assist the client as he feels necessary, free
to allow himself to step out of the role of an authority and be directed to some extent by the client, and free to accept the meanings of the client as being his true perceptions. This freedom comes from much self-understanding and self-acceptance on the part of the counselor.

The client must feel free to allow himself to be understood, to make decisions, to understand himself and accept what he finds as his true self, to explore his feelings, and to extend his freedom through the acceptance of responsibility. His becoming is predicated upon freedom.

Equilibrium.—In addition to the comfortable sharing of responsibility which provides for a sort of balance within the counseling relationship, there is another area wherein balance, or equilibrium, is important. This is concerned with the scope of feelings considered in the relationship, and with the reaction of the client to these feelings.

In order for the personality to develop in a healthy fashion, according to Kierkegaard, there must be an equilibrium between the infinite and the finite, or between the abstract and the concrete. To be overly concerned with the abstract or philosophical is to neglect reality. On the other hand, to be overly concerned with the trivial is to limit the client's possibility of becoming.

The client must experience an equilibrium of these abstract and concrete aspects of his existence, in order to
grow properly in the counseling relationship. The counselor can help to control this equilibrium only if he understands what the client understands; only if he finds the client in his situation and proceeds from there. A counselor who centers his and the client's attention upon the symptoms expressed by the client is likely to ignore the cause of these symptoms. Then a state of disequilibrium exists.

**Contemporary.**—The counseling relationship is not merely a study of history, but it is a study of the client as he is at this moment. Unless the counselor can find this spatiotemporal position, he cannot be of help to the client.

Although it is true that the events of the client's early life have shaped his self and have directed the development of his personality, unless the counselor understands the thoughts and feelings of the client as he exists now as a person, his assistance will be limited. The history of a person is important only as it affects his present thoughts and actions.

Kierkegaard has stated that this is the reason for the frequent difficulty in understanding the actions of some historical figure. Because his frame of reference cannot be accurately understood, therefore his reaction to others and to his environment cannot be completely understood. For this reason, Kierkegaard would have discouraged the client devoting himself completely to a method of problem solving
employed by another person, simply because appropriateness is relative to each person. The solutions employed by Don Juan, for example, would hardly be appropriate to any other person.

Thus, the counselor must assist the client in finding an approach to his problem which is appropriate now in that it is in keeping with his present frame of reference. An inappropriate approach might be outside his frame of reference and produce more problems because of his difficulty in perceiving how the chosen approach relates to his situation.

The Counseling Relationship as a Process

The counseling relationship as defined from the concepts of Kierkegaard would seem to be one of process. He has described the stages of growth as being a process of change from the objective to the subjective, from the inhuman to the human, and in a variety of other forms. According to Kierkegaard, the existing individual is always in the process of becoming and this process is never finished. The stages which precede it could be generally described by self-awareness, self-understanding, and self-acceptance. Since these stages will be considered in detail in relation to the client, these will not be examined at this time.

Kierkegaard has also described a number of conditions which can be applied to the counseling relationship as a
process. These conditions are incorporated into the following stages.

**Requisite condition.**—Unless the client possesses the requisite condition, according to Kierkegaard, he is beyond the help of another person. This requisite condition is the recognition of the need for the truth on the part of the client. This might also be described as the recognition of the need for help.

No other human being can be of help to the client unless the client recognizes his need. Any attempt on the part of the counselor to make the client aware of this need would only reinforce the illusion which the client has, according to Kierkegaard.

If the client does recognize his need to find his own truth, or to solve his own problem, then the counselor can be of service to him. This awareness of a need for change can be identified by the counselor through the presence of despair in the client.

**Establishing the relationship.**—The relationship begins, according to Kierkegaard, as the counselor accepts the client in his present state and attempts to understand that state. The counselor accepts the client’s illusion as valid, and in doing so, allows the client the freedom to understand himself. As the client recognizes this acceptance
and realizes that he need not defend his position, he will then feel free to describe his position as he sees it. Through this description, the counselor can determine where the client is and adjust himself to the spatiotemporal position of the client.

**Understanding the problem.**—As the counselor is able to understand what the client understands he is in a position to understand the nature of the problem, which can be clarified as the relationship progresses.

Kierkegaard has provided detailed descriptions of a number of different people with problems in order to improve the counselor's understanding of the types of problems which confront normal people. The descriptions would, no doubt, enable the counselor to operate with some effectiveness even without the usual battery of psychometric devices. These descriptions do not provide a basis upon which the counselor makes a diagnosis. Instead the descriptions provide a basis upon which to understand the client's frame of reference.

All of the problems described by Kierkegaard have a common element—disequilibrium. The client has not divided his attention equally among the various aspects of his existence. He has either concentrated on immediate necessities and ignored his potential, or he has completely ignored reality and tangled himself in a net of abstract
knowledge. In neither case is there a chance for self-understanding and growth until the illusion is removed.

**Exploration.**—As the counselor begins to understand the client's frame of reference, he can assist the client's self-understanding. He assists by helping him to realize that the only adequate solution to the problem is that which the client finds in self-exploration. The task of the counselor is to assist the client in developing an inward, rather than outward, frame of reference; and in doing so, the client establishes a basis for improvement.

Through an attitude of inwardness, the client is able to understand the nature of his problem and begins to understand that he must accept the responsibility for his improvement. This is a central point in the counseling process.

As stated by Kierkegaard, this exploration of inward feelings and meanings is not always a delightful task. Neither is it always a successful endeavor. When the client begins to take notice of his inward feelings, he may become embittered or hostile toward the counselor. In his fury, however, he must take notice of himself, which also requires him to judge himself and his actions. Even if the counseling relationship progresses no further, it has been of value because it has required the client to recognize certain things about himself and has initiated self-understanding.
Movement.--If the client retreats from his self-exploration, he may find the counseling relationship somewhat undesirable. If, on the other hand, his initial awareness and understanding is seen as a necessary challenge, then he can be assisted in changing his existence to a higher stage, more in keeping with his human nature.

Kierkegaard has stated that as the individual begins to take notice, his despair increases. If the client finds this despair too uncomfortable, he can be helped to find a more comfortable existence. He must accomplish this by recognizing his responsibility for self-direction and by proceeding in the direction which seems appropriate. The counselor can be of assistance in helping the client understand and accept himself as he progresses in his movement.

Termination.--Once the freedom to change is sensed by the client, however, the client feels compelled to continue his search for meaning even without the assistance of the counselor. Although this might seem to imply a termination in the counseling relationship, it does not imply a termination of the process of becoming. The process of becoming, according to Kierkegaard, is enough to occupy the client for the remainder of his existence, for the more he grows the more he will want to grow for he becomes more obsessed with his possibility.
The Client

Kierkegaard has devoted much of his thought to his concern for the individual and his process of becoming. It would, therefore, seem that many of his concepts would be applicable to the client who is also an individual in process of becoming.

The application of the concepts to the client will be considered in connection with the questions presented in the previous chapter: Who am I? Am I content with my present state of existence? How will I know if I need to change? What must I know in order to change? What must I do in order to change? How will I know when my becoming is toward self-fulfillment? Since these questions would be of concern only to the individual in the process of becoming, it must be assumed that the client is in possession of the requisite condition. He has recognised the necessity for change on his part, and he is actively seeking direction for this change.

Who Am I?

One of the prerequisites for change is the establishment of identity on the part of the client. Until the client knows who he is, or what he is, his movement will quite possibly be in all directions at once. He must be able to define his existence at the present time in order to know what it is that he is to move from.
I am an individual.--One of the first stages in the quest for identity begins as the client recognizes that he is an individual. He must recognize that he possesses certain features which make him different from other people. He may have a body structure and intelligence quotient similar to his associates, but he is different in that he possesses a particular frame of reference which is not like that of any of his associates. This makes him an individual.

Because of his individual frame of reference, the client must recognize that the events which have meaning in his life may or may not have meaning to others because they perceive these events differently. Similarly, the events which have meaning to others may hold little meaning for him.

He must recognize that he is an individual because of what he is, rather than what he does. His individuality is not determined by the organization to which he belongs nor by his social class standing. Furthermore, any attempt to conform or not to conform will have little effect upon his individuality.

I am freedom.--As the client understands his individuality, he must recognize that he alone can produce any change in his frame of reference. Furthermore, he alone has the freedom to make the change, or to continue his present existence.
Since he alone has the freedom to change, he must realize that he alone has the responsibility for such change. And since change results from a decision to change, only he has the responsibility for this decision. To attempt to allow others to make this decision for him is a denial of his individuality.

This freedom is not the freedom for the client to direct others or to control the universe. It is a freedom to control and direct himself. Since the client is in the process of becoming, he must realize that this freedom is also freedom to become, which is his ultimate goal.

The client must also realize that this freedom has originated within himself, rather than being a decree of society. Furthermore, in order to continue in this freedom, he must continue to utilize it. To relinquish this freedom is to allow others to assume responsibility for his existence. This he cannot do if he is to continue his process of becoming.

I am synthesis.--The client must realize that his individuality is a result of a combination of factors. He has a body and a mind, but these are not dichotomous. There must be a combination or synthesis of mind and body, and the particular synthesis which the client has adopted is the factor which makes for his individuality.
The only complete synthesis in which there is a unification of mind and body is one in which there is an equal significance attached to each. In this instance the immediate needs do not take continued precedence over the potential possessed by the client; similarly, the client's aspirations do not require him to neglect himself during his present process of becoming. Regardless of his immediate problems, the client would be able to plan ahead. This planning, however, would not require him to ignore his present existence.

The client must be led to understand that the individual who experiences the complete synthesis is characterized by an acceptance of limitations and a recognition of potential. He plans in such a way as to maximize his potential, yet his planning is not distorted by delusions of greatness beyond his potential.

I am self.--The client must realize that as a result of early experiences he developed a pattern of behavior which is his self. This self was not inherited; rather, it evolved as the client reacted to his environment. The development of the self has provided the client with a frame of reference which allows him to determine his existence in a manner in keeping with his possibilities and limitations.

The client must be led to understand that the self first came into being as he became aware of himself as an individual and decided to exercise his individuality. The
self then developed as the client became more aware of himself as an individual, and began the process of introspection or self-reflection in order to determine his possibilities and limitations. As introspection continued, the client came to accept his self and its development as a necessary activity. This self-acceptance was not automatic, but was, rather, an act of choice in which the client exercised his freedom. As the client chose himself, he was able to effect equilibrium between the concrete and abstract qualities of his existence. He was able to articulate knowledge with his own reality.

Another aspect of importance to the client is his realization that his choice of himself was not an act of finality, but rather an act of commencement. In choosing himself, he chose to become himself—a process which will continue throughout his lifetime. The self will continue to change and develop as the client’s self-understanding increases. The client should be led to understand that this is an optimistic process, however, for as it progresses the client’s real self becomes more like his ideal self, and the longer this process continues the more the client will be able to experience self-fulfillment. Self-fulfillment should also be presented as a process, rather than as a completed act or product.
Am I Satisfied with My Existence?

In order for the client to answer this question, he must be led to evaluate his existence. This must be an evaluation in terms of how he feels about his existence, rather than how others feel about his existence. Although others might have expressed their feeling that the client's existence was quite adequate, the client must not have accepted the adequacy of his existence if he feels that there is room for improvement.

Am I apprehensive or complacent?—The answer to this question would provide some enlightenment as to the appropriateness of satisfaction to the client's present state of existence. If the client feels complacent about his existence, he should not be satisfied with it, for becoming is a process never completed. The complacent client would be in an inappropriate role as a client for he would not be in possession of the requisite condition: a real desire for help.

On the other hand, if the client has experienced apprehension concerning his existence, this existence is more appropriate in relation to his process of becoming. Such apprehension would indicate a realization by the client of the necessity for making future choices which may require even greater change.
The apprehensive client must be led to understand that much of his apprehension is a result of his realization that he has the freedom and responsibility for changing himself and his existence, and that this combination of freedom and responsibility tend to produce his feeling of dread. This apprehension is something of a paradox in that it is produced by both a desire to change and a desire to remain in the security of the present existence. The anticipation of the necessity of making a choice adds to the apprehension which a client might have, particularly when he recognizes that many such choices will be necessary in order to even approach his possibility.

Am I regretful or disappointed?—Although the presence of dread in the client would be a sufficient index with which to evaluate his existence, the presence of melancholy would be even more adequate as a criteria for evaluation. Dread is an indication of the anticipation of choice, whereas melancholy is an indication of the regret that the choice has been postponed or that the choice made was inappropriate.

The client must be led to understand that the presence of melancholy is a reliable indication of the dissatisfaction with the present state of existence. Furthermore, to continue in this unsatisfactory state of existence will not make it more satisfactory; it will only serve to increase
the dissatisfaction. The only way to relieve melancholy is to decide to change the level of existence, to make the choice to become.

It would be appropriate at this point for the client to understand that the choice of a different level of existence does not completely erase melancholy. Such an accomplishment is impossible because the client will never be able to completely understand himself and will always wonder if his choice was appropriate.

**How Will I Know When a Change Is Necessary?**

When the client has experienced either dread or melancholy, there is sufficient indication that he is dissatisfied with his present state of existence. These alone, however, may not provide the client with sufficient motivation for change.

The criteria for determining the necessity for change is the presence of despair. The client should be led to understand that when he experiences the frustration of not being the individual whom he has the possibility to become, he is then at the point of choice and change. When this occurs the person's awareness has increased, and he begins to doubt the genuineness of his personality. Doubt to a becoming person is intolerable.

The client should understand that despair results from a disequilibrium of the self in which too much emphasis is
given either to the future or the present, to aspirations or limitations. Because of the overemphasis in one area the other area is neglected and the personality suffers. It should be emphasized that this process is occurring in normal people who are striving to become themselves.

**Examples of Clients in Despair**

In an effort to assist the client in his attempt to understand the reasons for despair, the following examples of individuals in despair might provide the client with some locus for evaluating his despair:

1. The **scholar** who has forgotten his own self in his attempt to acquire knowledge and reasoning power.
2. The **imitator** who has become like others because he lacks courage to be like himself.
3. The **experimenter** whose search for the "best" self has led him away from his own self.
4. The **determinist** who has ignored his possibility and has become a slave to trivialities.
5. The **weakling** who cannot withstand the threat of making mistakes and thus adopts passivity as a way of life.
6. The **immature adult** who seeks only the pleasant things in life and thus becomes controlled by these.

As these examples are presented to the client, two things might be brought to his attention: first, in each of
the examples the individual has attempted to avert despair by involving himself more and more with the very cause of his despair—activities which divert attention from the self; second, despair need not be paralyzing to the becoming process. Despair could instead be considered an edifying experience when the individual is able to resolve the cause of the despair.

What Must I Know in Order to Change?

Although knowledge alone does not insure change, it is capable of providing motivation for change. The type of knowledge which would produce change is not objective knowledge, but rather subjective self-knowledge, or subjectivity. Through self-knowledge the client can determine some understanding of truth and of his own existence.

Apparently, one of the most difficult things to communicate to the client is that truth, or meaning, cannot be communicated to him. He must seek it himself. Furthermore, truth for others is not necessarily truth for the client. He must decide what is truth for himself. Only the client possesses this ability.

The client must understand that the source of truth lies within his own frame of reference, and therefore the search for truth must be one of inwardness. Since the search for truth is an inward search, the only being with the freedom to conduct this search is the client himself.
When the search is progressing successfully and the result is an increasing subjectivity on the part of the client, the results of this search will be apparent in other ways. The client will experience a change from being directed to being the director. Furthermore, as he begins to accept the truth which he finds through inwardness he begins to define his level of existence. As his present existence is defined he can compare this existence to the existence which he is seeking, and in doing so can obtain an indication of the appropriate direction for his process of becoming.

The client should understand that his search for truth will never be finished. It will be a continuous search, the results of which will only be an approximation of certainty, never certainty itself. Similarly, the client's existence will never be completely defined; instead it will be a continuation—a continual articulation between objectivity and subjectivity. The lack of finality in determining truth and existence is due to the fact that the client is ever in process of becoming, always in transition. Nothing can become completed if he is to become his possibility.

Despite the lack of certainty which exists in the client's knowing, he must recognize that this is a necessary condition. He must not, however, adopt the frame of reference which allows him to be concerned only with what he is
to become, for this would encourage him to be concerned only with the future and to neglect his present reality. His existence is not in the future, but now. To ignore the contemporary in preference for the future would be to attempt to become while in a state of disequilibrium, which is an impossibility. The self must develop in equilibrium, synthesizing past and future into the present, or it is paralyzed.

What Must I Do in Order to Change?

The client must understand that no change occurs without choice. He must decide that a change is necessary, and that it must occur now. Otherwise there is no change. Only the client has the ability to make this choice; it must be a result of his decision. Furthermore, unless the client is able to make this choice, he is not in possession of the requisite condition and cannot be assisted greatly by the counselor.

The choice must evolve as the client establishes his identity, attempts to define truth, understands his present existence. A choice prior to this position would merely be a shot in the dark. Until the client has some understanding of who he is and what he must become, his choices may be inappropriate and only confound his despair. This is true because in the choice, the client actually chooses to become himself. If the client chooses to become like another
person, his change will be of a superficial nature, for he is not in the process of becoming.

When the time is ripe for choice, it must be made; otherwise, melancholy and despair ensue in that order. Furthermore, if the choice is postponed, it becomes more and more difficult to make, for changes are taking place in the personality and these must be undone. The client cannot remain motionless as he contemplates choice.

The client’s continued becoming is the result of choice through which he gains confidence for other such choices. Another way of saying this is that the client develops faith in himself and in his ability to choose. Such faith is not resignation; it is a passion, a challenge which must be met. It must be a passion, rather than an intellectual decision, because it must allow the client to accept a tolerance of ambiguity based on the realization that although his process of becoming may seem illogical at times, still it is the only direction appropriate for him at the moment. The ambiguity is further established as the client realizes that the more his process of becoming progresses the less certain he will be of the outcome. Thus, the development of faith in himself is a necessary aspect of the process of becoming. It is only through faith that the client can become the individual he is destined to become.
The client needs some understanding of this individual in order that he may have some direction and have some means of evaluating his becoming. He must understand that when he becomes this individual, he will be this because of his intrinsic nature, rather than his extrinsic worth. Outwardly he may be this or that, but inwardly he is an ordinary individual who has accepted his possibilities and limitations and has become what everyman has the potential to become—himsclf. He is an individual because he has become an individual and has an inward sense of appreciation for himself. The evaluation of himself by himself has taken precedence over the evaluation by others.

How Will I Know if My Becoming Is Toward Self-Fulfillment?

The natural goal sought by the client in distress is that of something concrete, something objective, something in the form of a formula or yardstick which can be grasped in an effort to alleviate some of the discomfort of not knowing. The client must understand that such tangible gains would only serve to distract from the ultimate goal and would thereby serve as an obstruction rather than as an asset.

There are available for the client, however, subjective descriptions of the individual in the various stages of existence. These descriptions could serve as a criterion
for the client's evaluation of his process of becoming, which consists of three different levels of existence—the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious.

A description of the client in the aesthetic stage. The client in the aesthetic stage could be characterized by immaturity. The aesthetic individual makes his choices on the basis of pleasure or pain, for this is his only means of determining whether something is desirable or undesirable. His existence has no real meaning. It is a sequence of isolated, non-related moments which pass without significance.

It would never occur to the aesthetic client that he could plan beyond his daily existence, or that anything has value unless it is tangible and pleasurable. Nothing is of serious concern to him unless it deprives him of pleasure. If asked to examine himself, he would be concerned with external features rather than internal values.

If luck is with the aesthetic client, he will become bored with his existence. It will occur to him that there must be something beyond his immediate existence and that he was meant to be more than just an animate object.

As he begins to realize that he has possibility he also recognizes that he must change his level of existence, and because of this he has apprehension or dread. If for some reason he is not motivated sufficiently to pursue a higher level of existence, his apprehension changes to regret, or
melancholy. As the aesthetic client attempts to retreat from this threatening situation, he may begin to despair over his predicament. Once despair is present, the client must make a decision—to continue a life without real meaning, or to choose a higher level of existence. If the choice is made to become, the aesthetic client now becomes an ethical client.

A description of the client in the ethical stage. The client exists at the ethical stage because of his choice, and he can remain at this level only by exercising his freedom of choice. The ethical client begins to know for the first time what it means to be an individual who possesses the responsibility for his own self-direction. He begins to recognize more of his possibility and begins to be less concerned about his problem or limitations, which seem ultimately insignificant. Furthermore, he begins to realize that his problems have been of necessity to him because they have caused him to seek inwardness as a solution. Through inwardness he has become what he is.

As his recognition of possibility increases, so does his faith in himself increase. He realizes that in order to become the individual in all his possibility to experience genuineness, he must seek still something higher than his present existence.
A description of the client in the religious stage.--
The religious client has reached a stage of becoming in
which his immediate problems become less and less signifi-
cant. The reason for this condition is that the client has
become much more self-understanding; he is more transparent.

The client recognizes that because of his ability to
solve his problems and direct himself, his existence is
characterized by a higher degree of self-fulfillment. He
can now accept himself and his previous problems and allow
them to result in articulation with his possibility, or
future plans, so that his frame of reference is more char-
acteristic of a person in process of becoming.

One of the most important realizations possessed by the
religious client is that although his present existence is
considerably more fulfilling than previous levels, he is not
now, nor will he ever become a finished product. The only
possible means of continuing his self-fulfillment is to con-
tinue his process of becoming. If he is truly religious in
his existence, he realizes that this process will require a
lifetime of conscientious, yet gratifying, effort.

The Counselor

To assist the client in his process of becoming, the
counselor must have a basic understanding of the following
areas: the nature of man, why he experiences difficulties
in terms of his behavior, how he must approach the solution
of these difficulties, and how he can assist the client in these solutions. Since all but the latter of these areas have been explored in relation to the client, the attention now will be given to the counselor as a person in his relationship with the client.

The Responsibility of the Counselor

The purpose of the counselor in his relationship with the client is that of assisting the client in his process of becoming. This assistance is somewhat different than the traditional procedure, however, where assistance is thought of in terms of overt activities.

The assistance provided by the counselor would consist primarily of providing the client an occasion to understand himself. This, then, is the responsibility of the counselor.

The occasion for self-understanding would require, first of all, an environment wherein the client would experience a freedom for self-exploration. In such an environment the attention must be focused on the client and his present existence, since it is from this existence that the client must obtain his self-understanding.

Second, the occasion for self-understanding must evolve as a result of a communicative process which would allow the client to examine, rather than defend, his existence. The utilization of indirect communication would then be an integral part of the environment for self-understanding.
The ultimate purpose of the occasion would be to encourage the client to examine himself inwardly, and through this examination to find understanding and direction which would lead to the solution of his difficulty. Although the counselor has the responsibility for providing such an occasion, he can only encourage its realization. Any attempt by the counselor to actively bring about such an occasion would be a violation of his responsibility in the counseling relationship.

The Techniques of the Counselor

Since the method of communication is indirect, the counselor must use discretion in his selection of techniques. He must refrain from direct approaches such as lecturing, evaluating, advising, etc., for these may serve the purpose of complicating the difficulties of the client. An attempt to evaluate the position of the client, for example, might cause the client to resent this evaluation and subsequently to defend his position. Such a defense would divert the client's attention to the difficulty itself, rather than to its solution.

The primary approach or technique to be utilized by the counselor is that of reflection. Reflection would consist of more than merely echoing the responses of the client. It would consist of a dialogue wherein the counselor would assist the client, in any manner which he deemed appropriate,
In finding the truth. Through reflection the counselor offers covert assistance which requires that the client assume responsibility for resolving his difficulty. The client would not feel alone in his search for a solution for he would be accompanied by the counselor. The responsibility for the direction of the search would be retained by the client, however.

In reflection the counselor does not provide answers, but helps the client find his own answers. This is accomplished by using every available occasion to encourage the client to resolve his difficulties through an inward search, rather than through a "logical" solution recommended by others.

Reflection need not encourage complete passivity on the part of the counselor, for even direct questioning is permissible under certain conditions. The conditions are that any questioning must be of such a nature as to encourage the client to seek answers or solutions within himself. Any technique which encourages the client to seek answers outside himself would not be acceptable in indirect communication.

Some Characteristics of the Counselor

Becoming.--The establishing of a counseling relationship would be assumed to be predicated upon the counselor's own existence as a person in the process of becoming. This
assumption is based upon Kierkegaard's insistence that only an individual in the process of becoming could adequately understand another individual in the same process. Since it was suggested that even two people in the process of becoming would have some difficulty in their communication because of their individuality, it would seem probable that two non-becoming individuals would encounter considerable difficulty in any genuine understanding. Therefore, in order to understand something of the nature of the process in which the client is engaged, it would have been necessary for the counselor to have experienced this process.

Through his own process of becoming, the counselor would have experienced self-understanding, self-acceptance, and self-fulfillment. Having experienced this as he himself progressed through the matter of despair and choice, the counselor would be more able to assist the client in his becoming. Also, his gratification with his own self-fulfillment would provide some initiative in assisting others in achieving the same fulfillment.

Humility.—The characteristic of humility would seem to be a necessary part of the counselor's personality, particularly in the development of the counseling relationship. According to Kierkegaard, all effort to help must begin with humility. If the counselor feels compelled to adopt the
role of a lecturer, he can never understand the client and discover his frame of reference.

Furthermore, a counselor who uses the counseling relationship as a means to impress the client with his superior knowledge or position does injustice to both himself and the client. A vain or proud counselor can have little hope in assisting a client, according to Kierkegaard, for he will find himself utilizing a direct method of communication from which will result very little of real importance to the client.

A vain or proud counselor would be directed also completely by the client and his reaction to the counselor. Such a counselor would continually be on guard lest he make a mistake and have to swallow his pride. Thus, he would be of little assistance to the client because of his own lack of self-understanding.

In order to express his humility to the client, the counselor must allow himself to occupy the position of the learner and allow the client to act as teacher. This is Kierkegaard's structure for an indirect communication process. As the counselor allows himself to occupy the position of the learner, he can then understand the frame of reference of the client as the client "teaches" it to him. This requires that the counselor be able to accept at least temporarily the fact that the client might think him
inadequate because he cannot give him advice or tell him which choice to make. Without such humility, according to Kierkegaard, indirect communication will never develop. Such humility would be possible only after the counselor has traveled far on his journey of becoming.

Acceptant.--Although self-acceptance is a necessary part of the counselor's process of becoming, his role as a counselor would require him to be able to accept others also. More specifically, he must be able to accept the client's frame of reference, even if it appears to be an illusion. It is through this acceptance that he will allow himself to understand the frame of reference of the client.

This does not infer agreement with the client's frame of reference, which might be of an antisocial nature. The counselor must accept the fact, however, that this frame of reference is appropriate for the client at this particular stage in the process of becoming. If the counselor feels a compulsion to change the client, he does not display acceptance and will likely jeopardize his opportunity to assist the client. If, on the other hand, the counselor can accept the client's frame of reference, he is then in a position to understand this frame of reference and can assist the client in understanding it also.
Overtly non-evaluative.--To display acceptance would require an overtly non-evaluative approach by the counselor. An overt evaluation might actually be a manifestation of non-acceptance and would only serve the purpose of reminding the client that he is experiencing some difficulty. Such a reminder may cause the client to feel compelled to defend his position, since the counselor appears to question it. The counselor, for example, who reminds the failing student that he should do better, may cause the student to rationalize his failure.

Furthermore, such a reminder may arouse hostility within the client, which will serve to more completely block any profitable communicative process. The client may feel threatened and retreat mentally or physically to a less threatening environment.

A counselor who openly evaluates the client's frame of reference presupposes that the client also has the ability to evaluate objectively, when in reality he is so bound up with his difficulties that he is incapable of such evaluation. The student, for example, who has been charged with misconduct may be so concerned with the events which led up to the act that he fails to understand the implication of his act. He may feel that the act was justified under the conditions and for the counselor to overtly evaluate his actions may cause him to find additional reasons for
justifying the act, thereby failing to consider the real motivation behind the act.

Perceptively deceptive.—If the counselor is to understand the frame of reference of the client, he must be perceptive enough to recognize that only through deception can he arrive at this understanding. Unless the client perceives the counselor to be an interested listener who does not now, but who wishes to be able to understand him, the counselor will have little success in really understanding the client. Thus, the counselor must deceive the client into believing that he cannot possibly learn to understand the client without his assistance.

This deception is not really a deception in an unethical sense, because it is true that without the client’s assistance the counselor can never truly understand him. The deception is rather an approach wherein the counselor allows the client to become involved in describing and understanding himself.

Patient.—The process of understanding the client’s frame of reference is a time-consuming process wherein an impetuous counselor would likely be inadequate. The counselor must be patient and allow the client time to explain his frame of reference as he sees it. This patience must continue as the counselor attempts to lead the client to
discover his own direction. To hasten the process would require a transition to direct mode of communication, which would paralyze the counseling process.

Self-confident.--The counselor must be able to endure humility, and must be confident enough to resist the temptation to become an expert or to prove his superior understanding. He must be able to endure temporarily the client's perception of his lack of understanding of the client's frame of reference. If he is concerned about the client's evaluation of his ability as a counselor, he will take advantage of every opportunity to prove his adequacy as a counselor. This would be to his own disadvantage, however, for it would require direct communication and would be obstructive to the counseling relationship.

The self-confidence of the counselor must also be displayed in his ability to be judged as a "hypocrite, a deceiver, a dunce." It must also be apparent in his ability to withstand the anger and hostility of the client as the client is compelled through indirect communication to evaluate himself. A counselor with little self-confidence would likely feel compelled to meet hostility with hostility, which might force the client to withdraw from the counseling relationship.
Dispassionate concern.—If the counselor is to allow himself to be accepting, patient, humble, there must be some reason for his involvement with the client. The probable reason for this might be the counselor’s desire to assist the client in his process of becoming from which he, the counselor, would also receive gratification.

The counselor must remember, however, that the client is not just a passive observer. He may be emotionally involved in one of a number of concerns, such as dread, melancholy, or despair. To become emotionally concerned with the client may cause the counselor to believe the illusion which the client is struggling with. For example, the counselor who becomes emotionally concerned with description of life as seen by the client who is an imitation, may not understand that it is the client who has caused his difficulty. Instead, he may attempt to assist the client in finding the reason for his difficulty within his environment.

Another reason for the necessity of dispassionate concern is that throughout the counseling process there is the possibility that the client will turn verbal hostility toward the counselor. The emotionally involved counselor might have no choice but to retaliate with hostile evaluations. This, of course, would paralyze indirect communication.
The Counselor in Retrospect

If the counselor is to assist the client through indirect communication, he must have some understanding of his role in this process. To attempt to provide anything other than an occasion for self-understanding may defeat the purpose of the relationship.

To be of assistance to the client in his process of becoming, the counselor must of necessity have experienced something of the same process himself. It would be necessary, for example, for the counselor to have experienced some degree of self-fulfillment in order to lead his client in the same direction.

Although the techniques of the counselor may be varied, these are primarily a matter of reflection, the result of which is an inward search by the client for meaning and direction. Any technique would be acceptable which required the client to seek self-understanding from within himself, rather than from his environment.

The characteristics of counselors may vary considerably because of the individuality of each counselor. There must be some commonality, however, since each counselor must possess a frame of reference which would be comfortable in the process of indirect communication.

Some of these characteristics would seem to be as follows: becoming, humility, acceptant, overtly non-evaluative,
perceptively deceptive, patient, self-confident, and dispassionate concern. Although these characteristics do not represent an inclusive list, these seem to be some of the more important ones suggested in Kierkegaard's writings. Many others could be inferred from the description of the communicator or teacher in the process of indirect communication.

Counseling as a Synthesis

The definition of counseling as established in this study, wherein the counselor attempts to assist the client in understanding and adjustment, contains certain assumptions which require consideration. These assumptions are as follows: first, that the client has recognized the need for assistance and has sought this of the counselor; second, that the counselor has been able to provide an environment wherein interpersonal interaction between the client and counselor is possible; and third, that this interpersonal interaction will be of benefit to the client in his understanding and adjustment.

Counseling, then, from a Kierkegaardian frame of reference, is a synthesis of the personalities of the client and counselor into a counseling relationship which will encourage becoming on the part of the client. The characteristics of such a relationship have been considered previously and will not be repeated here.
The synthesis occurs as a result of the following: first, the counselor, because of his own process of becoming, is capable of understanding the client and is able to communicate this to the client; second, the client is able to understand that the counselor can assist him in understanding himself and is willing to accept this assistance; and third, there is a feeling of commonality communicated between client and counselor which will allow them to enter into a relationship devoted to the process of the client's becoming. In this synthesis both client and counselor must combine their feelings, understandings, and purposes if the goal of becoming is to be reached.

In general, this is synthesis of the existence of both client and counselor, for the primary benefit of the client. More specifically, this would involve the following syntheses:

1. Synthesis of individuality
2. Synthesis of freedom
3. Synthesis of possibility and limitation
4. Synthesis of self, including reflection, awareness, acceptance, understanding
5. Synthesis of choice
6. Synthesis of dread, melancholy, and despair
7. Synthesis of truth
8. Synthesis of inwardness
9. Synthesis of faith

10. Synthesis of fulfillment.

The counselor would be able to assist the client in each of these syntheses because of his having experienced these in his own process of becoming.

The synthesis of existence could not be constructed; it must evolve from the communication between client and counselor. A preconceived notion as to the direction which the synthesis might take would be an obstruction to the development of the synthesis, since it would ignore the individuality of both client and counselor.

To suggest that such a synthesis would be characterized by harmony and serenity would be to misunderstand the nature and purpose of the relationship. The purpose of the relationship is change, and change is seldom an act of quiescence. Furthermore, the movement of the client from despair to becoming will be quite demanding of both client and counselor.

In operation, the synthesis would take on the appearance of a unified effort by counselor and client to arrive at one particular goal—the client in process of becoming. Such an appearance would indeed indicate the success of the synthesis for this process of becoming would be the ultimate goal of counseling.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

During the past two decades, the philosophy of Existentialism has become increasingly important in the United States. Many academic disciplines are showing the influence of this movement. Many writers have expressed optimism concerning the potential of existential thought for psychology and related fields, with recommendations for further research, exploration, and application.

Since counseling theory had been influenced by psychiatry and psychoanalysis, both of which had already experienced some effect of existentialism, it appeared that existentialism might hold promise for counseling theory also. Furthermore, since Kierkegaard has been called the "father of existentialism," it appeared that his writings would be most appropriate for analysis in terms of possibilities for counseling theory.

The purpose of this study was to explore the possible implications of the philosophy of Kierkegaard, as determined from selected writings, for counseling theory. The procedure followed was first to isolate certain key concepts central to his thought, and from these to derive major
implications for counseling theory, particularly in terms of the client, the counselor, and the counseling relationship.

Following a brief orientation of the philosophy of Existentialism, the selected writings of Kierkegaard were analyzed. It was shown that from these writings certain key concepts evolved which were applicable to counseling theory. These concepts were organized in relation to six question areas significant in the counseling process and were substantiated by remarks both from Kierkegaard and contemporary existential scholars.

Implications were developed from these concepts which were appropriate for counseling theory. These implications were directed toward the client, the counselor, and the counseling relationship. Although some concepts were found to be primarily applicable to one of the three areas, most were found to be appropriate to all three areas.

Following this application, it was shown that the implications to the various areas of counseling theory could be synthesized into one general theoretical approach. Furthermore, without such a synthesis the counseling process would be impaired.

Conclusions

The following general concepts were shown to be of importance in terms of implications for counseling theory.
Each of these concepts was considered to be of importance to the client, the counselor, and the counseling relationship.

1. **Identity.** Man is a self. The self comes into being as man becomes aware of himself in his choices early in life. As the self evolves, so does a pattern of behavior and a frame of reference.

Understanding of self-development is essential to self-understanding. An identity must be established before the client can be expected to assume responsibility for himself and his behavior. The counselor can only assist the client in this process. Identity must be established from within. External consensus is meaningless unless it can be synthesized into the client's existence.

2. **Individuality.** Man is an individual because of what he makes out of his existence, not because of what he has accomplished in terms of wealth or position. He is an individual because of his existence rather than his accomplishments.

If the client is to be assisted in his assumption of self-direction and self-responsibility, the counselor must encourage the recognition and development of individuality on the part of the client. Until the client recognizes his individuality and assumes the responsibility for developing it further, his future will be directed primarily by others and his process of becoming will be stifled. It is through
the awareness of himself as an individual that the client's process of becoming is initiated. Any attempt by the counselor to force the client to conform to the expectations of others would be to deny his individuality.

3. **Freedom.** Although man may be limited by his surroundings, he still possesses the most important freedom of all—the freedom to realize his potential, or to become. This freedom is not legislated; it is the possession of the man by virtue of his individuality. It is not granted from without; it must evolve from within.

The client is limited in his freedom to become only as he fails to exercise his freedom. The only real limitations on his existence are those placed by himself. He can become anything within his possibility if he but chooses to do so.

4. **Individual choice.** Man has the freedom and responsibility to choose the plan for his life. He may choose to become, or he may choose not to become. Either of these is a choice.

The client's existence is a matter of individual choice for even life itself has an alternative. The client must choose and in so doing he imparts self-direction. Each step in the process of becoming is predicated upon choice. A client who does not feel the freedom and necessity for choice cannot become. The counselor cannot force the client
to choose; he can only provide an environment wherein the client may understand the necessity of choice.

5. **Despair.** Man can realize his potential only through the process of becoming. When his potential is not being realized he may experience grave concern over his condition. This concern is despair which is the prerequisite for individual choice. This concern is not mere apprehension nor regret; it is an antagonizing realization that one is not what one could be.

The client must be experiencing despair, to some extent, if the counselor is to assist him in his process of becoming. This despair is the "requisite condition" upon which becoming is predicated. The counselor cannot force the client into despair. Despair is the result of an inward self-evaluation by the client; external evaluation by the counselor serves no useful purpose and may detract from the counseling process.

6. **Responsibility.** Man has freedom. Freedom requires responsibility. As man chooses to become, he also accepts the responsibility for this becoming. Man will be nothing more than what he does with himself.

The client who evades choice, evades responsibility. Without responsibility there is no becoming. Even to choose not to choose is to accept responsibility. In this case, however, the client must accept the responsibility for

7. Understanding. Man must experience self-understanding if he is to become. As he becomes, his self-understanding increases and thereby provides additional incentive for the continuation of the becoming process. Although he can never completely understand himself, the becoming person is never content with his present understanding.

The client is in need of understanding. This understanding must come from within, however. External knowledge is valueless unless it can be integrated into the client’s frame of reference. Part of the client’s problem may be due to the fact that he has become so concerned with obtaining objective understanding that he has ignored subjective or self-understanding. The counselor’s responsibility is to assist the client in his self-exploration in an effort to obtain greater self-understanding, and ultimately self-fulfillment.

8. Synthesis. Man is a combination of many things. He has possibilities and limitations. He has some qualities which are desirable and others which are undesirable. His process of becoming is predicated, however, upon his ability to synthesize all that he is into a pattern which he can understand and accept. His present existence, for example,
is a synthesis of past and future. Through this synthesis the self is able to maintain equilibrium which is necessary for self-development.

The client who cannot accept what he was, cannot reach self-fulfillment. The client who cannot accept his limitations will occupy himself with compensatory behavior and neglect his process of becoming. The client is free to become when he can accept an unfortunate past and recognize that his previous experiences may have contributed to his recognition of his need for self-fulfillment and as such these experiences are vital to his process of becoming.

The client who cannot synthesize his past and his expectations for the future into his present existence will not allow himself the freedom to become. The client who feels compelled to evade rather than face and accept his limitations has little hope for experiencing his possibility.

9. Faith. Man must make decisions, most of which are based on uncertainty rather than certainty. He must have faith in himself as an individual and in his ability to make decisions.

The client without this faith will be unable to confront the uncertainty which accompanies his existence. He will require certainty in his decisions. He will not allow himself to make decisions based on uncertainty, which in reality are the important decisions in his process of
becoming. The decisions based on certainty are decisions whose outcomes the client has already experienced in the movement to his present positions. These decisions can be of value to his process of becoming if the client has developed faith from these decisions; these can be obstructive, however, if the client has become accustomed to certainty. Only through faith is the client able to become. The counselor can only encourage the development of faith; he cannot impart it.

10. Existence. Man can be absolutely certain of few aspects of his existence. Even the truth to which he adheres lacks certainty because it changes as man changes in his process of becoming. The only certainty which exists for the becoming individual is his own existence.

As the client becomes aware of himself, he recognizes that he exists. He is more than just a living being; he is a being who is aware of his own particular existence which is unlike that of any other being. He is an individual. His existence is unlike that of any other individual. He alone can determine if his present existence is in keeping with his potential to become. The counselor cannot evaluate this existence; he can only assist the client in this evaluation. Such an evaluation is a result of inwardness. The responsibility for this evaluation rests with the client.
11. **Truth.** Man obtains truth only through his existence. Truth does not exist apart from him. Truth exists as man determines what has meaning for him in his process of becoming. Even this truth is only an approximation, for it is in process, as is man.

The client must find truth from his own existence. He alone understands his existence; he alone can decide what is appropriate or inappropriate, truth or untruth. The counselor can assist the client in relocating his locus of evaluation from the external world to within himself. Only as the client decides what is good or bad for himself will he accept meaning and value. Truth must come from inward exploration. The counselor who attempts to impart truth has not involved himself in the process of becoming, and thus he can be of little assistance to the client.

12. **Communication.** Man can be assisted in his search for meaning and truth if he can be understood and can be led as a result of this understanding. The only form of communication which attempts to find the individual where he is and to understand him there is indirect communication. Direct communication is ineffective because it assumes that the position of the individual is known when in reality it is not known.

The counselor must avoid allowing himself to be perceived as an expert or authority, for such a perception on
the part of the client would encourage him to absolve himself of the responsibility for choice and self-direction. Through indirect communication the client is understood as an individual, and his existence is understood as he understands it. Indirect communication presupposes nothing in the way of problem areas which the client might possess. It accepts as valid the client's description of himself and his difficulty. The direction taken by indirect communication is obtained from the client in the counseling relationship, not from any predetermined plan.

13. Becoming. Man is never in a final state of self-fulfillment. He is always in process of change. The more transparent he becomes, the more he is capable of becoming. Through the process of becoming, man reaches self-fulfillment which itself is a continual process rather than a product.

The client who seeks for a permanent utopia does not understand the process of becoming. Because of his freedom, the client can never allow himself to end his search for meaning and understanding. The more the client understands, the more he realizes there is to understand. The more he becomes, the more he realizes the necessity to become. As long as he lives he will be changing—becoming. He will never find a solution which is permanent nor a frame of reference which can remain stationary. He can never cease to become for, although the process may be uncomfortable, the
possibility is too compelling to ignore. Obviously, the
counselor who has not experienced the process of becoming
can not understand the client's becoming and can be of
little assistance to him. He must have experienced what the
client is experiencing in order to be of assistance to the
client.

It was concluded that a theoretical approach to the
counseling process emphasizing these concepts and the impli-
cations developed from these would hold promise for the
development of a new theory of counseling. The most impor-
tant contribution of such a theory would be in the area of
assisting the counselor in developing a frame of reference,
rather than in improving his counseling techniques. This
emphasis would seem to be expressed in the following state-
ment by Heidegger:

Granted that we cannot do anything with philosophy,
might not philosophy, if we concern ourselves with it,
do something with us (1, p. 12).

Suggestions for Further Study

The concepts presented in this study are not intended
to be inclusive of the domain of Kierkegaardian thought.
Only nine of the possible forty-three works of Kierkegaard
were considered, and many of these were given only partial
consideration. Further analysis of the writings considered
in this study and of the additional writings of Kierkegaard
would appear to be profitable for counseling theory.
The following areas are recommended for further consideration.

1. In many of his writings, such as The Concept of Dread, Kierkegaard has given extensive consideration to the concept of anxiety. Although this concept has been given extensive treatment by psychiatry and psychoanalysis, it would seem profitable to have this concept described in terms of the frame of reference of the counselor.

2. The stages of existence—the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious—describe the individual in his process of becoming. A more accurate description of the individual as he progresses from one stage to the next would seem to be of considerable assistance to the counselor as he considers the changes which are occurring within the client.

3. Additional examples, and elaboration on each, of individuals in despair, would appear to be of value to the counselor as he attempts to identify problem areas. The ability to identify individuals in a wide range of conditions of despair would assist the counselor in his relationship with the client.

4. The concept of indirect communication would appear to hold promise for the establishment and maintenance of the counseling relationship. The additional works of Kierkegaard might be explored in an effort to more clearly describe the process of indirect communication. When the process is more
clearly differentiated, a comparison of the results of indirect and direct communication might provide suggestions for counselor training.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Articles


Publications of Learned Organizations


Unpublished Materials


