An analysis of existential psychology

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AN ANALYSIS OF EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOLOGY

by

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PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to trace the thread of existential psychological thought from its first systematic statements in Denmark through its expansion in Europe to its influence in contemporary thought in the United States. This study begins with Søren Kierkegaard who cast existential expression into molds that have not broken to the present day. The study then primarily concerns Jean-Paul Sartre who expanded Kierkegaard's germinal concepts into a theoretical psychology. From Sartre the thread is followed to the United States in the writings of Erich Fromm, Rollo May, and Carl Rogers. Existential theoretical psychology develops a psychoanalytic approach, and some conclusions are drawn concerning the present state of existential psychoanalysis and the trend it will pursue in the future. Throughout the last two chapters it is explicitly and implicitly compared and contrasted with traditional Freudian psychoanalysis.

An attempt has been made to deal only with the psychological assertions and implications of existentialism, avoiding tempting opportunities to wander in bypaths of philosophical, theological, or literary thought. Existential thinkers have been active in these disciplines, but recognition of such work is made only to clarify or illus-
trate basic existential psychological theory.

A complete existential psychoanalytic theory is not delineated, simply because one has not as yet developed that is accepted by any great number of therapists. Sartre may well claim that a "full-blown" theory is impossible, for by the very nature of existentialism, it would always be changing or becoming. However, the course of existential therapy is charted and indications are made as to where this writer believes it to be headed.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOLOGY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Roots of Existential Psychology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Thought of Søren Kierkegaard</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Trail from Kierkegaard to Sartre</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOLOGY AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE THOUGHT OF JEAN-PAUL SARTRE</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Development of Sartre's Psychology</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sartre's Existential Psychoanalysis</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sartre's Concept of Literature as a Medium of Expressing His Psychological Theory</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE IMPACT OF EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOLOGY IN THE UNITED STATES</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erich Fromm</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rollo May</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl Rogers</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential Psychotherapy - Some Conclusions</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOLOGY

I. THE ROOTS OF EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOLOGY

The story is told (by Kierkegaard) of the absent-minded man so abstracted from his own life that he hardly knows he exists until, one fine morning, he wakes up to find himself dead. It is a story that has a special point today, since this civilization of ours has at last got its hands on weapons with which it could easily bring upon itself the fate of Kierkegaard's hero: we could wake up tomorrow morning dead - and without ever having touched the roots of our own existence.1

Kierkegaard's concern for the inner consciousness of man has placed him in the niche reserved for the "father of existential psychology." Although Kierkegaard did not consider himself a psychologist nor a philosopher, nor a theologian, his insights have given meat and flavor to following existential thinkers who have expanded his thinking into a loose-knit discipline.

Facets of existential thought can be found in the teachings and philosophy of many before Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). Socrates' dictum "know thyself" was adopted by Kierkegaard himself, who thought that he was destined to be the gadfly upon the complacent civilization of his time, as was the ancient Greek upon the culture of Athens.

Descartes' *cogito* was an existential expression. In the Christian church, from St. Paul through Augustine to Martin Luther, one can find glimmerings of existentialism. However multifarous are the intimations of existential thought in the great minds of history, it is to the genius of the Dane that we owe the first attempt at a comprehensive formulation of an existentialistic system, and it is logically with him that we begin a historical study of the roots of existential psychology. Essentially a religious thinker, he was in revolt in philosophy against the Hegelian system of absolute idealism then dominant in European thought. As a theologian within the context of the Lutheran State Church of Denmark, he also found himself rebelling against the formalism of the established religion.

The schools of existentialism in the various academic fields reflect the disordered and tragic character of the world. It is significant that the first full blush of existential thought was precipitated by the emotional crisis of a man ridden with guilt and shame (Kierkegaard), and after a lapse into relative insignificance, a revival was witnessed in the aftermath of two world wars. Doctrines that express the tragic sense of life and that dwell upon the subjects of death and nothingness, of guilt, dread and anguish are fitting material
to be seized upon in a dismal climactic era.

Also, as Kierkegaard rebelled against the absolutism of Hegel in his time, so have the modern existentialists, for the most part, rebelled against the absolutism of Marx. Where modern existential thought is not the direct product of rebellion against the soviet communistic manifestation of Marxian absolutism, then it is precipitated by it as a side effect.

Couched as it is in theological terminology, an argument could be advanced against the propriety of seizing upon Kierkegaard's thought as a basis for existential psychology. However, underneath the outward trappings of language, it appears that all existential thinkers deal mostly in the scientific realm that is governed by psychology.

It was with some justice that Nietzsche asked in the last chapter of Ecce Homo: "Who among philosophers before me has been a psychologist?" And as we read the Notes from Underground, we might well ask: what novelist before Dostoevsky deserves to be called a psychologist? And confronted with Kierkegaard's treatment of original sin in The Concept of Dread, we ask again: what theologian before Kierkegaard was a psychologist? And might not Jaspers ask: who among philosophers before me has been a psychiatrist and a doctor of medicine? . . . Sartre, finally, entitles an important chapter of his central philosophic work "Existential Psychoanalysis."

Existentialism in itself is difficult to under-

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stand, but when coupled with the phraseology and coloring of theology, it almost becomes impossible. An outstanding example is the religiously oriented thought of Kierkegaard.

II. THE THOUGHT OF SØREN KIERKEGAARD

More than a century ago the Western people were beginning to feel the effects of a surging "technological era," an age in which men were more and more coming to be equated with goods and commodities. A man came to be measured by his ability to produce, by his capacity to work, and hence, man became the equivalent of a machine. The majority of the people, scholars included, did not deprecate the tendency to de-humanize. Even religion accommodated itself to the bustling, surging movement in which the Kingdom of God would be built on earth.

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard was one of the few who detected the sinister undercurrent in the popular enthusiasm. He saw that in spite of all the professed progress being made in the name of God, basically the attempt to realize the "Kingdom" here and now was a very subtle assertion of man's final sovereignty over God. God was being slowly but steadily pushed out of the picture. All man needed to know was how to cooperate with nature intelligently.

Richard Niebuhr satirized this development incisively:

A God without wrath brought men without sin
into a kingdom without judgment through the min-
istrations of a Christ without a cross.3

The orthodox conception that man and God were
qualitatively different was forgotten. Aiding in the
breakdown of this traditional concept was the philosophy
of Hegel whose system embraced all earthly and heavenly
knowledge. In this system the whole world could be
gained; but for Kierkegaard, man lost his soul.

In this new age, man was the prime architect
of his own destiny. He bartered with the profundities
of life as he would for cabbages, without regard to God.
Man spoke about death as if he would never die, and
learnedly discussed immortality without a hint of under-
standing that such a belief conditions life here and now,
transforming one's way of existence. Kierkegaard lamented
that Christianity was not desired for the personal experience
it provided, but rather as a study in history. Even God
had to be explained, His existence being asserted by
logical proofs rather than by worship. Kierkegaard
stated that reflective thought, at best, can only discover
the idea of God. Logical argument can make it probable
that a God exists, but that is all. All the "proofs"
offered to ascertain the existence of God are but objective

3Richard Niebuhr, The kingdom of God in America,
Kierkegaard asserted that one cannot find a smooth pathway leading from the proofs for God into a vital faith in Him. God is qualitatively different from men and cannot be reached through an unbroken chain of logical deductions. God can only be reached by an act of faith, a leap. The leap of faith is a passionate decision to believe in spite of the objective uncertainties. If a man were able to prove God, then he would not have to have faith that God is. But precisely because he cannot know this, he must believe, or else suspend decision. Believing in God is not submitting intellectual assent to a logical proposition, but it is confiding one's life to Him.

Thus it is by no logical construction that we can reach God. The gap between ourselves and Him must be spanned by a leap of faith, and not to make this jump results in a deepening anxiety. Man's knowledge of guilt in the presence of moral, spiritual and physical striving breeds anxiety. The power of sin (or death) is always present threatening to overpower man, and the ensuing anxiety is a psychological state. Existence itself is a state of tension, anxious suspense, in which the individual only gains a relative degree of security by "choosing" or being himself, accepting himself, in the

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face of objective reality.

Kierkegaard's analysis of dread sheds more light on his concept of anxiety. Dread is a "sympathetic antipathy" of fascinating distress. It is a "dizziness" of freedom which seizes the human spirit gazing down into its own possibility and grasping at finiteness to sustain itself. Yet because the person is finite, he will be disappointed in his efforts to realize his possibilities. We all live as if we were never going to die. But because of this brute fact, man falls into internal and external conflict, which forces him to choose between contradictory values. Whatever he will choose will leave other needs unmet, for he is a creature in conflict who has infinite possibilities to desire but only finite capacity for their realization. His very possibilities thus become his dread and his despair, the cause of his anxiety.

But out of the choices and contradictions facing man emerges his recognition of his freedom; human life is a series of forked-road situations, in which choices are inescapable. If a person is stubborn and refuses to go either way, that too is a choice. A mentally healthy person is keenly conscious of facing countless alternatives and deliberately asserts his individuality in choosing among them. Kierkegaard states, "The more consciousness,

the more self." The more self or self-awareness a person possesses, the greater is his state of mental wholeness or wellbeing. Becoming a "well-balanced person" means having a heightened awareness of "I-ness", and yet, for this dimension of awareness man must pay a price. Out of the very contradictions that provide his freedom come the distresses of conflict. Life can never be simple or easy for a conscious person. He must always contend with the competing demands of a complex world and the clashing desires of an inner life that is afraid of the outer world and yet wants to conquer it. But through such experiences every person must pass in the process of his self-realization.

Kierkegaard states that if a man does not choose to risk a leap of faith, there appear three alternatives to faith: the aesthetic level, the ethical level, and the religious level. One level leads into another as a man progresses in self-awareness. The aesthetic stage may have a brilliance, "eat, drink, and be merry," but it is wholly illusory. It conceals despair and wages an unsuccessful fight against anxiety. One may attempt an ethical existence, bracing himself against the meaninglessness of life and carving out for himself a personal integrity. But despair cannot be overcome in this humanistic fashion.

In the religious stage man becomes conscious of the demands of divine law. It is here that we are awakened to God's truth and we find our whole passion aroused to desire to possess it. We come to acknowledge that God and His truth cannot be proved, and yet we must venture everything for its sake. This involves a risk, but not to risk in a leap of faith is to end up in despair, from which we have been striving to escape all along.

The leap of faith does not transport us into heavenly bliss, but awakens us to our real task in life, to relate ourselves to God's truth in such a way that it involves the reconstruction of our entire mode of existence. It gives our life definite direction and all finite satisfactions are voluntarily relegated to the status of what may have to be renounced in favor of the eternal blessedness. We must maintain an absolute relationship to absolute ends and a relative relationship to relative ends. But this task is not easy, for we discover that we are absolutely committed to relative ends. One must first "clean house" and dethrone the relativities, giving up many immediate goods in order to secure the absolute good. One must renounce himself, which he never fully accomplishes, and this results in continual inward suffering. 7

Hence, when one finally does take the leap of faith, he must backtrack and die to immediacy, renounce

7Ibid., pp. 347-468.
himself. One discovers that all the while he was fleeing despair that he was ethically responsible, and thus guilt impinges upon him. Once the task is his, the full responsibility is his. This consciousness of guilt is one's first deep plunge into existence. One realizes that he does not fail occasionally, but constantly.

... the consciousness of guilt is the decisive expression for the relationship to an eternal happiness. He who has no relation to this never gets to the point of conceiving himself as totally or essentially guilty. It is when a man apprehends his guilt that he is authentic (to use a later existential term) or whole.

The consciousness of guilt is transformed into a consciousness of sin as the individual, according to Kierkegaard, discovers that he is always in the wrong before God. Sin is ultimately a product of the will, a decision of man not to understand that he needs help from outside of himself.

Christianity begins ... by declaring that there must be a revelation from God in order to instruct man as to what sin is, that sin does not consist in the fact that man has not understood what is right, but in the fact that he will not understand it, and in the fact that he will not do it. For Kierkegaard, the consciousness of sin is the prime

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require for becoming a Christian. To become a Christian presupposes the consciousness of oneself as a sinner. If one desires to become a Christian because of its attractiveness, he is insane or misunderstands the real meaning of the faith. If any other portal is emphasized for entrance into Christianity except that of sin-consciousness, then Christianity is watered down and transformed into sentimentality. Only the sense of sin binds a man to Christianity.

From on high He hath drawn thee to Himself, but it was through the consciousness of sin. For He will not entice all to Himself, He will draw all to Himself. 10

Man is not born a sinner, in the sense of a curse placed upon him before birth, but by the mere fact of coming into existence he becomes a sinner. Original sin is guilt. Kierkegaard does not stress individual sins, but the continuity of sin. Particular sins are the fruit of the continuity of sin. The guilt of sin is considered much more terrible than the consequences of sin. Divine forgiveness is necessary for the removal of guilt, but the consequences of sin remain with the individual. Man is driven to a recognition that he cannot please God in himself and that he needs a Saviour. The very fact of a "God-man" or Saviour is paradoxical and an offense to man's reason, but any truth for Kierkegaard must be "suffered" or asserted in the face of risk in a concrete individual individual.

existence. Christ is the teacher who is as important as his teaching. He is truth in the sense that to be the truth is the only true explanation of what truth is. Truth is not knowledge but being. No man knows more of the truth than what he is of the truth. Thus truth is not what you believe, but how you believe it.

In an attempt to summarize Kierkegaard's psychological contributions from the foregoing "demi-theological, demi-psychological" discussion, his stress upon the state of man's anxiety must be noted.

Concerning his view of truth, Kierkegaard admits that there is a realm of objective truth as demonstrated in mathematics and logic, but this objective realm is not all there is. One cannot live solely from the objective realm alone. Subjective belief is also truth - a more important kind - since it is from belief that a person acts "when the chips are down." Only the individual knows what his subjective truth is. Kierkegaard employs "truth" in much the same way that "belief" is commonly employed.

It is with the above psychological concepts that the French existential psychologist, Jean Paul Sartre, builds a scaffolding upon which to lay his psychological system. This system will be examined in the next chapter.
III. THE TRAIL FROM KIERKEGAARD TO SARTRE

Profoundly influenced by the thought of the Dane was a German philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1889- ), who recast the expressions of Kierkegaard's thought, lifted them out of their demi-theological setting, and created with them the existential philosophic basis for the twentieth century. Another German deeply affected by Kierkegaard was Karl Jaspers (1883- ), who has stated that one who has really experienced the thought of Kierkegaard can never again be content with other systems of philosophy more traditional. These two men are immediate sources for Sartre, but:

Sartre's attitude toward psychology differs strikingly from Heidegger's and Jaspers'. He has no fear of being taken for a man who writes psychology, and he does not consider it sub-philosophical to base discussions of despair, decision, dread, and self-deception on experience.12

11 Barrett, Irrational Man, p. 11.
12 Kaufmann, Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre, p. 41.
CHAPTER TWO

EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOLOGY AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE THOUGHT OF JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SARTRE'S PSYCHOLOGY

"I could have been a great actor," wrote Flaubert somewhere. Why did he not try to be one? In a word, we have understood nothing; we have seen a succession of accidental happenings, of desires springing forth fully armed, one from the other, with no possibility for us to grasp their genesis. The transitions, the becomings, the transformations, have been carefully veiled from us, and we have been limited to putting order into the succession by involving empirically established but literally unintelligible sequences (the need to act preceding in the adolescent the need to write). Yet this is called psychology!

Thus does Jean-Paul Sartre attack what he claims is the traditional academic discipline of psychology. He feels that traditional psychologists have so categorized, dissected, and generalized, that they have lost sight of what the actual subject of inquiry is — man. The purpose of his existential psychology is to replace man at the center of study, to apprehend man in his uniqueness and understand what makes him different from everyone else. True, in such a study, one has to discover what men hold in common as far as psychological ideas are concerned, but this is done only to enable us to understand how each

man holds these categories, dissections and generalizations in a unique fashion in himself.

Fundamental in Sartre's concept of psychology is that there are two kinds of "being" in the world: Being-In-Itself which characterizes sub-human life; and Being-for-Itself which is possessed only by man. Being-In-Itself experiences no self-responsibility and no things that are of this nature can change their status or situation in the world. Sartre says that all we can say of Being-In-Itself is that it is. Being-For-Itself, on the other hand, is potential. In Sartre's terms it is "nothingness", for man's nature is never "to-be", but always "to-be-about-to-be." The life of man is a continual projecting toward a future not yet realized. Man is not what he is, for at every moment he must remake himself by a free choice.

Freedom is existence . . . The upsurge of freedom is immediate and concrete and is not to be distinguished from its choice; that is, from the person himself.\footnote{Ibid., p. 70.}

With a twist of terminology we discern Sartre's first borrowing from Kierkegaard - a man's essential characteristic, psychologically, which sets him apart from all other creatures and creation, is that he is free and has the power of choice. And it is only in his freedom that he is a MAN.

An individual always finds himself in Kierke-
Sartre's situation or in Sartre's "facticity", existing in an actual historical time and place under definite environmental circumstances. Even though bound by his facticity, and even though facticity delimits choices, man is still free in that he has alternatives to choose from. If an individual should refuse to choose, that is a choice in itself. The individual is always able to transcend the world; necessarily he is a part of it due to his facticity, but he is different from it due to his power to project himself into the future by choice.

Sartre asserts that the basic cause for man's mental ills is that he yearns to possess the security of the rest of the world that does not change - that cannot project - but this is impossible. Ideally, he would like to have the security of a thing (something in the objective world that is sub-human) while still possessing his freedom. But this would be having your cake and eating it at the same time. Man does not desire complete security, for this would mean death (man never possesses a fixed personality for this reason until he is dead, it is only then that we can meaningfully generalize about his personality). This yearning for security while still possessing freedom creates within man a fear of freedom and anguish (Kierkegaard's anxiety). Sartre posits three stages or levels that a man might live in anguish; the psychological, the meta-
physical, and the ethical - reminiscent and akin to the Dane's three stages; the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious stage. (See page six.)

Whereas in Kierkegaard's third stage a man must risk a leap of faith to find God, the end result of Sartre's last stage is that man must risk a leap to find himself. When he does this his life becomes "authentic." He exercises his freedom in full knowledge of his earth-boundness. He is now mentally mature, not trusting in a supreme being to complete his "selfness", but relying only on himself. Through Heidegger into Sartre, the leap of Kierkegaard has been thrust back upon itself and through it man discovers man, not God. Sartre states that man tries to be God when he wants to have the full security of things and yet still possess freedom, but this is a contradiction of terms, it is an impossibility:

Every human reality is a passion in that it projects losing itself so as to establish being and by the same stroke to constitute the In-itself which escapes contingency by being its own foundation, the Ens causa sui, which religions call God. Thus the passion of man is the reverse of that of Christ, for man loses himself as man in order that God may be born. But the idea of God is contradictory and we lose ourselves in vain. Man is a useless passion.\textsuperscript{15}

Because man is forced back upon himself and must risk

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., pp. 198-199.
himself completely in his potential or "nothingness."

Sartre's man is the sheer antithesis of the Christian God, who creates the world out of nothingness: he creates nothingness out of the world. Kierkegaard acknowledges Christ as being the Paradox, a contradictory personage to be sure, but possible because he was God. Sartre states that paradoxes cannot exist.

Man's psychological complex is to be understood as the result of two fundamental conditions; first, man has a longing to become more than he can be and the burden of self-responsibility is sometimes too much for him, and second, man has no ready-made purpose or plan outside himself in which he and his choices can find meaning - he is entirely "on his own." Man is the maker of his own values - if there is any absolute value, it is freedom. Psychological well-being consists of an individual living consistently with the values he has chosen as his own and accepting the responsibility of his own actions. Anyone not accepting this way of living is in "bad faith", he is guilty of refusing to exist as a human being and of pretending that he is a thing. A man such as this blames others or his environment for making him what he is instead of recognizing that he has made himself what he is. He.

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refuses to take responsibility for the self which by his
own choices he is creating. Instead, he acts as if he
and the values he lives by were as completely established
and unchangeable as the physical structure of a rock.
Throughout this discussion one can sense the shadow of
Kierkegaard in the background. For both these men the
truth of life is not knowledge nor ethics nor metaphysics;
truth is being. Truth is not what you believe, but how
you believe it. No man knows more of the truth than what
he is of the truth.

... the free realization of human truth is
everywhere in all desires. It is never appre-
hended except through desires - as we can appre-
end space only through bodies which shape it for
us, though space is a specific reality and not a
concept.17

The individual in "bad faith" is prone to accept
the dictum that human nature is stabilized, that human
nature cannot be changed. He is likely to esteem what-
ever the authority of the day calls useful or helpful
without asking himself what it is useful for and for
whom it is useful. He treats words as if they were
realities and never looks behind them. He is likely to
be slow to advocate social reform of any kind because he
feels certain economic and social forces which have al-
ways been operative will continue so and negate any
effort for betterment. He is highly prone to be in
favor of the "status quo", especially as this condition

favors his immediate personal comfort. He appears to be absolutely committed to relative ends, and only relatively committed to absolute ends.

The essence of man lies for Sartre, not in the Oedipus complex (as with Freud), nor in the inferiority complex (as with Adler). Rather, it is found in the freedom of man in which he chooses himself and so makes himself what he is. Sartre denies the existence of an unconscious mind, for wherever the mind manifests itself, it is conscious. A human personality is not to be understood in terms of some hypothetical unconscious at work behind the scenes pulling all the wires that manipulate the puppet of the conscious. A man is his life, he is nothing more nor less than the totality of the choices which make up his life. In therapy, the psychiatrist endeavors to look back into the patient's life to discern the structure of his acts, and all psychoses and neuroses ultimately stem from the individual's refusing to choose to be himself. The burden of his risk, of depending only on himself, is too great. He desires to avoid such responsibility by wanting to be a thing, and this arouses intolerable guilt within him, driving him into neurotic or psychotic states.

Sartre displays a radical individualism in his discussion on the relationship of an individual to an
"Other." To the other person, who looks at the individual from the outside, the individual appears as an object. The inner freedom of man escapes the other person, and his tendency is always to convert the individual into the object he sees. The gaze of the "Other" penetrates to the depths of existence and "congeals" it. It is this that turns love, particularly sexual love, into a perpetual tension. The lover wishes to possess the beloved, but the freedom of the beloved cannot be possessed. Hence, the lover tries to reduce the beloved to an object for the sake of possessing it. Two personality deviations, sadism and masochism, are employed by the lover to accomplish this. In sadism the lover reduces the "Other" by brute force into a thing. In masochism the lover offers himself as an object in an attempt to trap the beloved and undermine the freedom of his intended.

Sartre has used much from his Danish forebear, and we can see Kierkegaard's concepts of anxiety, guilt, dread, freedom, individual responsibility, and truth gleaming underneath an atheistic guise. Sartre has emphasized Kierkegaard's exposition of consciousness being individuality, and he has built a more complex psychological system upon the framework of these ideas.
II. SARTRE'S EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOANALYSIS

Although Sartre has formulated his psychological system as a protest, in part, against that of Freud, he finds many points of agreement with the traditional psychoanalytic approach. Many Freudian insights are retained intact, while others are lifted out of their Freudian context and placed into a Sartrean setting. Sartre and Freud are together in their opposition to the Behaviorists insofar as the latter try to explain any human reaction solely by the immediate stimulus. Whatever occurs in the individual's situation must be related to the individual's basic outlook on life. However, where Freud would find the explanation for behavior in an unresolved Oedipus complex, Sartre will seek it in the individual's fundamental choice of his way of being (the way in which he chooses to relate himself to the world).

Empirical psychoanalysis and existential psychoanalysis both search within an existing situation for a fundamental attitude which cannot be expressed by simple, logical definitions because it is prior to all logic, and which require reconstruction according to the laws of specific synthesis. Empirical psychoanalysis seeks to determine the complex, the very name of which indicates the polyvalence of all the meanings which are referred back to it. Existential psychology seeks to determine the original choice. . . . It is this which decides the attitude of the person when confronted with logic and principles; therefore there can be no possibility of questioning it in conformance to logic. It brings together in a prelogical synthesis the totality of the existent, and as such it is the center of reference for an infinity of polyvalent meanings.18

18 Ibid., pp. 75-76.
Both schools of psychoanalysis strive to comprehend the individual in the light of his total history. The analyst's subject is not an isolated interior personality, but a person living in the world. His total situation must be taken into account if the cause of the individual's disturbance is to be found. However, Freud posits two principles to be used in examining the individual's history that Sartre finds he has to reject. There is first Freud's claim that the libido may remain fixed or arrested at any of the three stages which precede full genital sexuality. The individual may remain at the oral, anal, or phallic level as the result of intense emotional involvement with one or both parents. All subsequent relations with other people will be determined by this original Oedipal conflict. Bound up with this view is the concept of "répétition compulsion", by which Freud means that a person is compelled by his instinctual tendencies to continue in the patterns which he has early established and to repeat throughout his life the experiences of his early childhood. This view involves a strict determinism, which, for Sartre, is in opposition to his concept of man's freedom. There is a decisive experience in infancy or childhood that sets the course for the individual's subsequent development, but it is an event in which the child is brought to an awareness of himself as an individual in a particular relation to the world around him. Such an experience is only incidentally if at all connected with
sexual growth of the Oedipal situation, but it serves to forcefully make the individual aware of his uniqueness as a person. Furthermore, traditional psychoanalysis asserts that once the direction of the libidinal drives is firmly established in the id, it is practically impossible for an individual to escape the repetition compulsion without the aid of analytic therapy. For Sartre, the individual's consciousness is never completely the prisoner of his habits or illusions and may by its own impulse break with the patterns which it has itself established.

Sartre does not accept Freud's concept of the unconscious, which many times becomes a device wherein unexplicable elements in the behavioral scheme are conveniently dropped. Instead, Sartre differentiates between two levels of awareness.

We are not dealing with an unsolved riddle as the Freudians believe; all is there, luminous, reflection is in full possession of it, apprehends all. But this "mystery in broad daylight" is due to the fact that this possession is deprived of the means which would ordinarily permit analysis and conceptualization.¹⁹

¹⁹Ibid., p. 78.
of the significance of freedom and choice in an experience). The task of the existential psychoanalyst is not to bring up from the unconscious to the full light of consciousness fixations that have occurred in the subject's life history. Rather, his job is to help the subject see the connection between choices he has made in the light of the primary choice the individual made that colors his relationship with the world. The primary choice Sartre calls the "original choice of Being", and this is what he posits in place of Freud's libido.

In answer to the proponents of Freudian psychoanalysis who point out that man is never really completely free, Sartre replies that to be free does not imply that one can do whatever one wants to do. Things in the world and the behavior of others offer resistance to freedom, but they do not prevent it. A freedom without material or logical limitations would be infinite; and since man himself is finite, it would no longer be a human freedom. If freedom is to be meaningful at all, it must be a freedom to choose, and choice demands alternative possibilities which limit each other. The resistance of the world is the stuff out of which freedom forms its projects.

In the light of Sartre's concept of freedom, it is not difficult to see that he objects to Freud's universalization of symbols. Pincushions do not always stand for
breasts and faeces represent gold in the dreams or symbolic acts of a subject. If each person is unique and free, then the symbolic significance of various objects for him will be determined in the light of his basic choice. There is no set meaning for the symbolic significance of any object that will apply generally to every subject. It is the task of the analyst to discover the symbolic meaning of objects to the subject, as each subject being a unique individual, will assign symbolic meanings peculiar to his own orientation to the world.

In the context of Sartre's existential approach, an important question is whether he purports to systematically begin with the normal individual and apply his data later to the abnormal subject, or is his approach primarily one toward abnormality with an application of his system secondarily toward normal subject. Sartre's theory of consciousness seems to apply more easily to a normal person and a neurotic than it would to a psychotic subject. In answer to this query, Sartre asserts that to the degree that a man is conscious, he organizes his environment as a situation. Within this situation and in terms of it he freely chooses his actions. The subject deliberately chooses to live in a world constructed in accordance with his own requirements, and in the case of the psychotic who is unable to change the environment, the subject chooses to change himself in relation to it. The
distinction between consciousness and knowledge holds for the psychotic as for other people; the difference is that the nonreflection which results in self-deception is so thoroughgoing that it is nearly impossible for the psychotic to get back to the reality he has previously rejected.

The principles of Sartre's existential psychanalytic approach are stated as follows: (1) The "touchstone" is that man is a totality and not a collection. Consequently he expresses himself as a whole in even his most insignificant and his most superficial behavior. There is not a taste, a mannerism, or a human act which is not revealing. (2) The goal of psychoanalysis is to decipher the empirical behavior patterns of man; to bring out in the open the meaning of each one of them. (3) Its point of departure is experience; its pillar of support is the fundamental comprehension which man has of himself in relationship to the world. (4) Its method is comparative. Since each example of human conduct symbolizes in its own manner the fundamental choice which must be brought to light, and since at the same time each one disguises this choice under its occasional character and its historical opportunity, only the comparison of these acts of behavior can effect the emergence of the unique meaning which they all express in a different way.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 71-73.
Sartre adds that the criterion of success for psychoanalysis will be the number of facts which its hypothesis permits it to explain and to unify as well as the self-evident intuition of the irreducibility of the end attained. To this criterion will be added in all cases where it is possible, the decisive testimony of the subject. Existential psychoanalysis:

... is a method destined to bring to light, in a strictly objective form, the subjective choice by which each living person makes himself a person; that is, makes known to himself what he is. Since what the method seeks is a choice of being at the same time as a being, it must reduce particular behaviour patterns to fundamental relations - not of sexuality or of will to power, but of being - which are expressed in this behavior. ... The behavior studied by this psychoanalysis will include not only dreams, failures, obsessions, and neuroses, but also and especially the thoughts of waking life, successfully adjusted acts, style, etc.  

Although Sartre does not go into detail as to how a psychoanalyst would conduct therapeutic sessions with a subject, a general outline of therapeutic procedure may be deduced from his theory. First the analyst must accept the subject's description of the world, as he projects it, as the actual world of the subject. Because of the principle of subjective truth, the analyst has no right to assume that his perception of the world is more true than that of the subject. However, it is in the subject's organization of his perceived world that the analyst attempts to discover the significance of the relation and

21Ibid., 87-89.
meaning which will lead to the individual's choice of Being.

In relation to the analyst, the subject often reacts toward him with the same feelings that the subject manifested toward his parent or parents. Traditional psychoanalytic theory termed this transference and posited that the subject transfers the emotions he originally directed toward a father or a mother, or both, to the analyst. Sartre states that emotions are inseparable from the objects to which they are attached, and they are not transferable. What must be looked for in the subject is not some half-forgotten episode in the past but a clue to his present orientation, so that the analyst can discover why he chooses to relate himself to all people through hostility rather than friendliness, or why he chooses separation rather than communication.

Although the past, as the subject relates it to the analyst, does not "jibe" with a factual account of the past as it actually happened, this is not of major importance. What is significant is how the past appears to the subject now, (this concept is akin to the value placed upon the world as it appears to the subject now, despite evident distortion from the perspective of the analyst). The task of the analyst is not to free the subject from the psychotraumata of the past, but to liberate him from the meaning of these psychotraumata as they even now exist for him. The past, as lived, is not a series of finished events; it depends upon the present, for we are continually remaking
the past as we decide afresh the meaning it will have in our present situation.

Sartre's treatment of the therapeutic process is incomplete and it seems that he is not zealously interested in expanding it further. He appears to feel that this will be the task of another existential thinker who will make of it his chief work, for Sartre states:

This psychoanalysis has not yet found its Freud. At most we can find the foreshadowing of it in certain particularly successful biographies. . . . But it matters little to us whether it now exists; the important thing is that it is possible.

Other existential psychologists have employed the insights of Sartre and developed techniques of therapeutic treatment, but as yet no Freud for existential psychoanalysis has developed. A recent commentary on existential psychology confirms this situation.

The process of existential psychotherapy remains somewhat ill-defined. The central aspect of the process appears to be the patient's recognition and experiencing of his own existence. The patient is oriented toward fulfillment of his existence. As regards technique, there is little that is specific. The belief is that a flexible approach is necessary to understand the person-in-his-world. Technique is varied from patient to patient and from one phase of treatment to another: "What will best reveal the existence of this particular patient at this moment in history?"

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22 Ibid., p. 89.
III. SARTRE'S CONCEPT OF LITERATURE AS A MEDIUM OF EXPRESSING HIS PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY

Perhaps Jean-Paul Sartre is more known in America for his literary endeavors than he is for his psychology. In this respect it is relevant to investigate his concept of literature, for he deems it a valuable device for awakening man to authenticity. The pragmatic value of literature is that it describes and thus alters action. No society can remain the same after being described to itself - after seeing itself. It is the same on an individual plane. The function of the writer is to describe society to itself and thus give to it a self-consciousness. The abuses of society should be the forte of any author who takes his task seriously, for described abuses change society much more effectively than described virtues. Virtues, for all practical purposes, are what society chooses to do.

Sartre feels that the vices described need not all be social vices, for these are reflected in all personal deflections. In describing all vice, language should be unelaborate, simple, and straight to the point. The language should be "invisible" and inornate, so that the reader comprehends quickly what is being said. Authors should always write to their contemporaries, for in
writing to the future there is no audience. It is the present problems that are the only legitimate concern of writers. All writing should appeal to the freedom of the individual reader, not overwhelming the reader, but letting him choose freely in his own life in the light given him by the work of literature. Novels should not be written as if both author and reader were divine beings who know what is going to happen, but both should enter into the story as characters. Stories should not be told in retrospect, for again an audience is lost. Contemporary problems dealt with in an immediate fashion serve to awake the reader to the unknowableness of his past and future, and arouse within him the awareness of his own potential — his freedom. The ultimate goal of all literature is to inculcate within society and the individual the responsibility of freedom.

Sartre is a philosopher in the French tradition which, more often than not, has produced men who stand at the borderline of philosophy and literature; Montaigne, Pascal, Voltaire, Rousseau, and even Bergson come to mind in this connection. As in most of these cases, it would be beside the point to speculate how much space he will receive in future histories of philosophy. Undoubtedly, he will be remembered, not least for his unprecedented versatility: he is much more interesting than most of his contemporaries whether he writes short stories or novels, essays or philosophy, or plays, or literary criticism.24

24 Kaufmann, Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre, p. 41.
CHAPTER III

THE IMPACT OF EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOLOGY IN THE UNITED STATES

I. ERICH FROMM

Erich Fromm is usually considered a Neo-Freudian and has accepted this label in his writings and lectures. However, an interesting reference is made to Sartre in a footnote in Man for Himself, which was published in 1947, four years after Being and Nothingness.

I have used this term existential without reference to the terminology of existentialism. During the revision of the manuscript I became acquainted with Jean-Paul Sartre's Flies and his Is Existentialism a Humanism? I do not feel that any changes or additions are warranted. Although there are certain points in common, I cannot judge the degree of agreement since I have had as yet no access to Sartre's main philosophical opus.25

Fromm makes no further mention of Sartre in his later writings, but in The Sane Society published in 1955, he parallels Sartre's terminology and thought to a striking degree.26 Both Fromm and Sartre are concerned with that area of thought where philosophy and psychology are inextricably interwoven.

Fromm's concept of man's alienation from nature and the characteristics of his freedom which are very sar-


tream were in the developmental stage before Fromm's obvious contact with Sartre. In Escape From Freedom, published in 1941, Fromm states that the individual is not solely the product of his biology or of culture, but is fashioned by a dynamic interaction between the two. As the individual matures biologically and culturally, he discovers that he is able to influence and change culture by his relationship to it. The individual discovers that he needs society in order to fulfill himself, to realize his potentiality. Isolation from others is one of the most powerful fears of mankind. This grows out of his experience as a child. The possibility of being left alone is necessarily, for Fromm, the most serious threat to a child's whole existence due to the factual inability of the human child to take care of himself. As man grows older he grasps that he cannot live without some sort of relatedness with others. Another factor which makes relatedness necessary is that man can conceive of himself as an individual entity, different from nature and other people. Because of this "gift", man can feel his insignificance and smallness in comparison with the world and all others who are not "he." Without a relatedness to the world, he would be overwhelmed with his insignificance.

He would not be able to relate himself to any system which would give meaning and direction to his life, he would be filled with doubt, and this
doubt would eventually paralyze his ability to act - that is, to live. 27

Fromm states that the social history of man started with his emerging from a state of oneness with the natural world to an awareness of himself as a separate entity from the surrounding nature and other men. The growing process by which man emerges from his original ties with nature Fromm calls "individuation." Before the child embarks upon this process, he enjoys primary ties with his mother that make for a feeling of security and at-oneness. Once he starts on the way to individuation, however, his task becomes to find security in other ways than those which were characteristic of his preindividualistic existence. As the child grows, an "I-thou" relation is set up between the self and others. The child realizes he is an individual and he develops a taste for freedom and independence. The process of individuation involves a growth of self-strength, but it also involves a growing aloneness. To the degree that the child emerges from his world in independence, he becomes aware of being alone - of being a separate entity from all others. This sense of separation overwhelms the sense of individuality and creates a feeling of powerlessness and anxiety.

As long as one was an integral part of that world, unaware of the possibilities and responsibilities of individual action, one did not need to be afraid of.

it. When one has become an individual, one stands alone and faces the world in all its perilous and overpowering aspects.28

From this earlier work of Fromm the parallels to Sartre are evident. For Fromm, man's "emerging from a state of oneness with the natural world" may well be Sartre's "upsurge of consciousness." The concept of individuation is identical with the concept of the choice of Being. Man's longing for the security of preindividualistic existence and security in Fromm's thought appears to be a recasting of terminology for Sartre's man who wants to be a thing-in-itself. But man realizes he can only realize his potentiality to the greatest extent if he exercises his freedom. For both Fromm and Sartre, to live is to act, to choose.

In his later book Man for Himself, Fromm relates the tension or anguish that man feels due to his insecurity to a lack which he feels within himself.

He is driven to overcome this inner split, tormented by a craving for "absoluteness," for another kind of harmony which can lift the curse by which he was separated from nature, from his fellow men, and from himself.29

Fromm goes on to discuss categories especially dear to existentialists. There is the fact that man's life is inalterably permeated with the idea that he must die, and yet this thought is not compatible with or intelligible to the exp-

28 Ibid., p. 29.
29 Erich Fromm, Man for Himself, p. 41.
erience of living. There is the discrepancy between man's infinite potentialities and the finitude which boxes him into an infinitesimal compass.

Fromm adds to the above paradoxes what he terms "historical dichotomies," which are not contradictions in the human situation, but are those contradictions which are man-made in history and are potentially solvable. Man's great sin, in this respect, is to confuse these historical contradictions, such as slavery, with the basic existential contradictions found in the freedom of man.

Many of Fromm's concepts have no "one-for-one" equivalent in the thought of Sartre, but the general ideas in back of them are certainly recognizable as existentialistic. Fromm appears to be in much more of an optimistic frame than the existentialistic school in general. Perhaps he could be termed the "popularizer" of existentialism by presenting it in less controversial and brutal fashion, avoiding much of the resistance and hostile criticism invoked by Sartre. Fromm uses familiar concepts such as faith and belief in the love of God, but he makes clear in his presentation of such concepts that he is using them in a different way than commonly accepted. The way in which he uses them is compatible with existentialism.
II. ROLLO MAY

If Erich Fromm is usually called a Neo-Freudian, then in many respects Rollo May can be called a Neo-Frommian. He takes Fromm's concepts of alienation, freedom, individuation, and anguish and invests them with a psychology of personality. Fromm is primarily concerned with psychoanalytic problems in terms of social dynamics, whereas May takes his ideas and applies them to individual dynamics.

May asserts that his psychological system applies primarily to the normal subject, and that his therapeutic process pertains to a pathology of normality. Abnormal pathology is an extreme toward the end of the pathological spectrum and can be treated within the same context of principles as are applied to normal pathology. 30

May states that the two dominant characteristics of man's psychological make-up today are loneliness and anxiety, or anguish. Loneliness is the resultant feeling accompanying a sense of alienation possessed by the individual. Man perceives that he is very different than the rest of the world of nature, and his sense of personal identity distinguishes him from the rest of living or nonliving things. But nature is indifferent toward man's personal identity. Unless man affirms his identity despite the

impersonality of nature, he suffers loneliness. When man loses courage in the face of nature from whom he knows he came, and he does not be himself, then severe loneliness becomes his painful lot. Man may try to escape loneliness by losing himself in a cause or in a crowd, but this is inauthentic living; Sartre's "bad faith."

Social acceptance, "being liked," has so much power because it holds the feelings of loneliness at bay. A person is surrounded with comfortable warmth; he is merged in the group. . . . He temporarily loses his loneliness, but it is at the price of giving up his existence as an identity in his own right. 31

Anxiety is a more pervasive characteristic than loneliness. It is a human being's basic reaction to a danger to his existence, or to some value he identifies with his existence. The threat of death is the most common symbol for anxiety. May contends that although anxiety always has a component of "uneasiness" and is usually associated with fear, dread, or guilt, yet it can be used constructively. Anxiety is a symptom of man's freedom, and as such, can be used to spur man into asserting his self-hood and individuality. It can be used creatively by being transformed into a dynamic that empowers man in fields of beneficial endeavor. It is in his discussion of anxiety that May explains his concept of the unconscious which is akin to that of Fromm. It is at this point that

31 Ibid., p. 33.
both men differ with Sartre, for they hold to a Freudian view of the unconscious.

Most neurotic anxiety comes from . . . unconscious psychological conflicts. The person feels threatened, but it is as though by a ghost; he does not know where the enemy is, or how to fight it or flee from it. These unconscious conflicts usually get started in some previous situation of threat which the person did not feel strong enough to face . . .

Everyone has experienced the fact that only a small portion of his mental content is conscious at any given moment. . . . Certainly our minds reach infinitely deeper than any momentary area of consciousness — how deep we cannot determine, for unconscious means "unknown." We can only postulate the unconscious and observe how it manifests itself functionally.\(^{(33)}\)

However, May states that the more self-awareness a person has, the more alive he is; and the more consciousness he possesses, the more self he has.

It is in his concept of freedom that May's closeness to Sartre can be most clearly discerned, and yet here is where he takes special pains to point out his disagreement with the French psychologist. May says that freedom cannot be conceived as merely rebellion nor planlessness (a laissez-faire attitude), but freedom is man's capacity to take a hand in his own development. May rejects Freud's biological determinism, but accepts man's freedom as a power of choice that works within the context of his facticity. Freedom is manifested in the individual's choosing himself.

\(^{(32)}\)Ibid., p. 43.

in each moment, i.e., living in the realization that he is making himself by his choices and accepting full responsibility for those choices. Through a misunderstanding of Sartre's position on freedom, May criticizes him for contending that freedom lacks the element of responsibility. May seems to have gathered this from reading Sartre's works of fiction rather than from having read his psychological writings.

The absurd results which can occur when the structure is not adequately emphasized are seen in some of the writings of the leader of French existentialism, Jean Paul Sartre. The chief character in Sartre's novel Age of Reason, apparently being portrayed as acting in freedom, actually moves along in whim and indecision, his actions motivated by the nightly recurrence of sexual desire, by his mistress' expectations of him and by other accidental external happenings. . . . We agree with the fundamental Sartrian precept that the individual has no recourse from the necessity of making final decisions for himself, and that his existence as a person hangs or falls in these choices; and to make them in the last analysis in freedom and isolation may require literally as well as figuratively an agony of anxiety and inward struggle. But the fact that human beings can choose with some freedom, and that they will at times die for this freedom (both very strange things, quite contrary to any simple doctrine of self-preservation) implies some profound things about human nature and human existence. . . . The emptiness of the Sartrian viewpoint arises from the failure to analyze those very presuppositions in the freedom which he is avowedly dedicated to.34

As was discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, Sartre

in *Existential Psychoanalysis* does stress the importance of man's responsibility for each choice he makes. Sartre is interested in the ethical implications of man's freedom and has stated his intention of writing an existential volume on ethics.

For May, when one has consciously chosen to live as himself, two things occur: first, his responsibility for himself takes on new meaning, and second, discipline from the outside is changed into self-discipline. With this new insight into responsibility, man accepts his life not as something with which he has been saddled, but as something he has chosen himself. In choosing himself, he becomes aware that he has chosen personal freedom and responsibility for himself in the same breath. He also now accepts discipline not because it is commanded, but because he has chosen with greater freedom what he wants to do with his own life, and discipline is necessary for the sake of the values he wishes to achieve.

What May terms "the pregnant moment" is an expression in most concise fashion of the existential view of time which both Kierkegaard and Sartre heartily endorse.

The first thing necessary for a constructive dealing with time is to learn to live in the reality of the present moment. For psychologically speaking, this present moment is all we have. The past and future have meaning because they are part of the present: a past event has existence now because you are thinking of it at this present moment, or because it influences you so that you, as a living being in the present, are that much different. The future has reality because one can bring it into
his mind in the present. Past was the present at one time, and the future will be the present at some coming moment. To try to live in the "when" of the future or the "then" of the past always involves an artificiality, a separating one's self from reality; for in actuality one exists in the present.\textsuperscript{35}

To live in the present requires a high degree of self-awareness or consciousness for May. For Sartre this would be the possession of knowledge, whereas the individual who does not summon the past and future into the present is nonreflective.

III. CARL ROGERS

In a recent book, Rollo May suggests that the thought of Carl Rogers may, in a number of significant ways, be regarded as an independent American version of existential psychotherapy.\textsuperscript{36} There are many ideas expressed in the works of Rogers that are parallel to European existential theoretical concepts, and Rollo May may have struck upon a very fruitful avenue of investigation in ascertaining the course that existential psychotherapy may take in the United States. This will be discussed further in the next section; here the parallels between the psychological system of existential theory and that of Rogers will be compared.

Carl Rogers puts forth principles he feels may be

\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., p. 265.

the basis for a theory of personality derived from observations received in his technique of non-directive counseling in his book, *Client-Centered Therapy*. The first proposition he advances is that every individual exists in a continually changing world of experience of which he is the center. This world consists of all that is experienced consciously or unconsciously by the individual, with very little coming into the conscious awareness from the totality of experience. Rogers states that experience must be symbolized in the individual's thinking processes before it can be considered as having entered conscious awareness. Although he accepts the unconscious, it is in a highly qualified form from that of traditional Freudianism. There are no clear-cut categories of the unconscious such as the id or the libido, and extreme care must be maintained in assuming what experience is invested in it.

The more we try to infer what is present in the phenomenal field but not conscious (as in interpreting projective techniques), the more complex grow the inferences until the interpretation of the client's projections may become merely an illustration of the clinician's projections.

In discussing how experiences are denied by the individual because they conflict with his self-structure, Rogers says that if the experience is threatening it is repressed or thrust into the unconscious. He cites as evidence of this

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38Ibid., p. 495.
the data compiled in experiments with the recognition of threatening and non-threatening words flashed by a tachistoscope apparatus. Even though a word is not perceived correctly by a subject, galvanic skin responses betray the fact that the individual has discriminated between a threatening or non-threatening stimulus. The individual is able to make a stimulus discrimination below that required for conscious recognition, and should the stimulus be threatening to the self-structure, it is kept below recognition level.

This type of finding appears to support our clinical and theoretical hypothesis that the individual may deny experiences to awareness without ever having been conscious of them. There is at least a process of "subversion," a discriminating evaluative physiological organismic response to experience, which may precede the conscious perception of such experience. This supplies a possible basic description of the way in which accurate symbolization and awareness of experiences threatening to the self may be prevented.39

Rogers goes on to state that it is important to recognize that all experiences, impulses, and sensations are available to consciousness, even though not present in consciousness. It is the therapist's function to bring such experiences, impulses and sensations up to the individual's conscious awareness. Although Rogers' concepts on the relationships and roles of consciousness and unconsciousness do not fit perfectly into a Sartrean interpretation, there is a strong hint that unconsciousness in most of its

39 Ibid., p. 515.
aspects would be nonreflection for Sartre, and consciousness would be knowledge.

The existential spectre of subjective truth looms up in Rogers' assertion that the private world of the individual is the only one that can be known, in any genuine or complete sense, to the individual himself. Rogers states in his personality theory that the organism reacts to the field as it is experienced and perceived. This perceptual field is, for the individual, "reality." The perceptual field is affected by all the individual's emotional coloring and interpretation of threatening or non-threatening situations, but nevertheless, it is truth for him.

Rogers proposes that the individual's one basic tendency is to actualize himself. There is a directional force in all of organic life, and in man this force is exhibited in man's ability to choose and act in accordance with his decisions. This tendency of man is indicative of his freedom, and Rogers states:

As I study, as deeply as I am able, the recorded clinical cases which have been so revealing of personal dynamics, I find what seems to me to be a very significant thing. I find that the urge for a greater degree of independence, the desire for a self-determined integration, the tendency to strive, even through much pain, toward a socialized maturity, is as strong as - no, is stronger than - the desire for comfortable dependence, the need to rely upon external authority for assurance. . . . Clinically I find it to be true that though an individual may remain
dependent because he has always been so, or may drift into dependence without realizing what he is doing, or may temporarily wish to be dependent because his situation appears desperate, I have yet to find the individual who, when he examines his situation deeply, and feels that he perceives it clearly, deliberately chooses dependence, deliberately chooses to have the integrated direction of himself undertaken by another. When all the elements are clearly perceived, the balance seems invariably in the direction of the painful but ultimately rewarding path of self-actualization or growth.  

The determinism of Freud is overthrown as it pertains to the individual's selfhood, and Rogers states in terms akin to those of May's "pregnant moment" that all effective elements of motivation exist in the present. Behavior is not "caused" by something which occurred in the past, but by present tensions and needs. The past serves to modify the meaning which will be perceived in present experience, but it does not control the choice of man as he exerts his freedom now. There is no behavior except to meet a present need.

The more conscious awareness there is of experience, the more one is himself, proposes Rogers. Psychological maladjustment exists when the individual denies to awareness significant experiences and fails to organize them into his self-structure. When this happens, the person refuses "to be himself", and in Sartrean terms the situation of "bad faith" exists. Extreme repression tends to lead the individual into a world of his own making that alienates

\[40\] Ibid., p. 490.
him from the factual world. Herein is the genesis of neuroses and psychoses. In other words, this is the same contention expressed by Sartre, if the unconscious is interpreted as the nonreflective.

In Gestalt fashion, Rogers speaks of the individual ordering his experiences into an integrated system of self. The process by which he orders and arranges his experiences depends upon some prior orientation to the world. Again, the initial orientation upon which the ordering is based, is a concept similar to Sartre's original choice of Being.

IV. EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOTHERAPY - SOME CONCLUSIONS

As in almost every school of thought, there are widely varying opinions and emphases in existential psychology. Perhaps this appears to be more the case in existentialism because of its stress on the irrational in man. However, there are basic tenets that are upheld by the theorists generally classified as existential, and these can be stated as follows: (1) The beginning of psychology is in the immediate certitude that "I" exist. (2) Human existence is not the same sort of being as that of an existence of a non-human thing. A human being is free, and radically different from other beings. A human has potentialities. But human nature is split, for it has physical limitations and a spirit that is free. Thus, man is paradoxical. (3) In life, one essential as-
pect that man finds is his freedom, and another is his situation. Although he finds himself bound in his situation, the outer world does not determine what values he employs in it. Human freedom includes making values and cognition. (4) Each existential psychologist employs terms corresponding to Sartre's "authenticity" or "inauthenticity." It is in the extreme situations of an individual's life that he has the greatest opportunity to be authentic.

In Chapter Two some clinical insights were gleaned from Sartre's writings on existential psychoanalysis. However, Sartre is a theoretical and not a clinical psychologist. He has not given a clinical procedure in therapy, nor does he seem disposed at present to develop one. He does not possess the data from clinical interviews necessary to infer or hypothesize, rather he is content to present biographical studies of unique men and draw psychoanalytical conclusions from a study of their lives. It has been left to other existential thinkers to formulate a clinical procedure.

Existential psychotherapy is concerned with what makes man an emerging human being. It sees neurosis and maladjustment as behaviors which destroy man's capacity to fulfill his own being. Anxiety occurs when the self is threatened within the individual. There is always the "anxiety of living" within man, but it is when this anxiety
grows and becomes intolerable to an integral view of self that the individual becomes "not himself" eventuating in a neurosis or psychosis.

In therapy, the remembrance of the past is determined by what the individual has chosen to become. Truth for the individual is the way in which he has structured the world for himself; and it exists only as he produces it in action, lives it. The therapist must endeavor to understand the person in his world and receives the patient's verbalizations seriously. The therapist refuses to examine pathological expressions with the intent of seeing whether they are bizarre, illogical, or otherwise absurd. He attempts to understand the particular world of experience to which these verbalizations point and how this world is formed and how it falls apart. With an understanding of the patient's world, the therapist can hypothesize the patient's basic orientation to the world; or to put it into Sartrean terms, can define his original Choice of Being. The aim of the therapy is to help the patient perceive the relationships between his ideas (the way his world is constructed by him) and the choices he has made. It is to help the individual experience himself and his existence as real by giving him insight into the relationships of his own choices that have led him to his present situation. In the achievement of insight, the patient is able to accept full responsibility for his own
actions and hence by further action modify the situation to relieve anxiety. He sees the picture clearly, which in itself relieves tension, and is able to take decisive action which he was not able to take while in a state of intense anxiety.

The relationship between the patient and the therapist is stressed in a different manner than it is in traditional psychoanalysis. Transference is seen in a new context as an event occurring in a real relationship between two people, a relationship built up by the acceptance of the therapist of the patient just-as-the-patient-is. The therapist reacts toward the patient as toward a real person and not just a role. The psychoanalyst is not an expert to the patient, who will straighten out any emotional or mental difficulties. Rather, he lives with the patient in the patient's experiences, developing a communication that breaks through the alienation of the subject. In the clinical situation both the patient and therapist appear as individuals who are trying to realize their potentialities. The existential psychotherapist does not have a full-blown deterministic scale (Freud's schemata) whereby he can ferret out of the individual through his verbalizations those complexes that lie buried, hidden in the unconscious. His task is to bring from nonreflection those choices that have worked toward the patient's present situation, and when they are clearly in the patient's knowledge relate them to the here and now.
As suggested by Rollo May, the therapeutic techniques delineated by Carl Rogers afford a description of how existential psychotherapy may well operate in a clinical situation. It is tending toward a client-centered approach, and now is in the state where Rogers calls it "person-centered." Roger's concept of insight strongly parallels that of the existential school.

For the present it may be adequate to say that the term implies the perception of new meaning in the individual's own experience. To see new relationships of cause and effect, to gain new understanding of the meaning which behavior symptoms have had, to understand the patterning of one's behavior - such learnings constitute insight.

In the process of therapy, Rogers states that insight comes gradually as the individual develops sufficient psychological strength to endure new perceptions. To the existentialist, these new perceptions would be the awareness of the relation between past choices and the present situation. The parallel between these two concepts is strengthened when Rogers asserts that insight involves a reorganization of the perceptual field. It consists in seeing new relationships and is the integration of accumulated experience. It signifies a reorientation of the self.

For Rogers, the process of insight cannot be hurried, but

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must be approached gradually through the person-to-person relationship of counselor to counselee.

Why is it that we cannot save time by telling the client these relationships, instead of waiting for him to arrive at this new perception himself? Experience indicates, as has been pointed out, that this intellectual approach is futile; but why is it futile? The usual answer is that emotional as well as intellectual acceptance is needed. Precisely what this means from a psychological point of view is not as yet entirely clear.43

At first, as the counseling advances, the patient depends upon the counselor for direction and guidance. But as the counseling progresses, the patient assumes more and more responsibility for making decisions and drawing conclusions. When insight is gained, the patient is able to take full responsibility for himself as a person.

Genuine insight, says Rogers, involves the positive choice of more satisfying goals. As this choice makes for a greater capacity of self-responsibility, it is identical with Sartre's Choice of Being. However, Rogers asserts that there is a basic tendency within humanity, evolutionary in character, that strives for self-actualization. This tendency can be counted upon to stimulate the individual to grow toward maturity, to make the right choices. Rogers feels that this tendency is so strong that any individual who examines his situation deeply and feels he perceives it clearly will almost always choose to

43Ibid., p. 206.
exert self-responsibility (note quotation on page 47). Self-actualization is a forward-moving tendency of the human organism that enables the individual to move through struggle and pain toward higher integration of the self. It is not a smooth operation, but it is a continuous one, for Rogers. Sartre would not agree that the individual has this aid from within, but would assert that man's tendency is to avert or dodge self-actualization. The basic difference between the views of Rogers and Sartre upon self-actualization is one of direction: Rogers states that it is a tendency operating almost invariably within the individual toward realizing the self in its freedom, regarding freedom as a challenge and opportunity; while Sartre states that the individual, for the most part, exhibits a tendency to avoid realizing the self in its freedom, regarding freedom as a threat to personal security.

It appears to the writer that existential psychoanalysis and non-directive counseling, although not completely parallel in theoretical structure or application, do share many basic assumptions concerning man and his situation-in-the-world. One cannot call Rogers an existentialist by any stretch of the imagination, but his conclusions arrived at through clinical study, are compatible to those postulated by existential psychoanalysis.
The writer feels that much fruitful work will be done in the United States by psychotherapists who will utilize Roger's techniques in an existential setting.

Gordon W. Allport, somewhat of an interested spectator on the scene of existential psychology, suggests that the two strands of thought grew simultaneously both in Europe and in the United States. In Europe it was the result of tragic cultural experience; in America it was the result of taking man himself more seriously in his psychological context.

Broadly speaking, the existentialist view of man developed in Europe is more pessimistic than the corresponding American view - a fact that calls our attention to sociocultural influences upon theories of personality. When life is a hard struggle for existence, and when, as in war torn Europe, there appears to be "no exit" (Sartre), then personalities do in fact grow tense and develop a heavier sense of duty than of hope. In America, on the contrary, where the search for a rich, full life suffers fewer impediments, we expect to find a more open, gregarious, trusting type of personality. This expectation is reflected in the prevailing optimism of American psychotherapy which includes not only neo-psychoanalytic conceptions of a "productive personality" but also "client-centered therapy" and such flourishing new movements as "pastoral counseling" and "guidance."

Allport then quotes Paul Tillich, an existential theologian-psychologist, who writes:

The typical American, after he has lost the foundations of his existence, works for new foundations. . . . The courage to be as a part in the progress of the group to which one belongs, of his nation, of all mankind, is expressed in all specifically American philosophies: pragmatism, process philosophy, the ethics of growth, progressive edu-

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cution, crusading democracy.\textsuperscript{45}

Allport comments that Tillich may as well have included American forms of psychotherapy as well.

Rollo May indicates that the pessimistic pronouncements of existential psychology are but the diagnosis of man's condition, but this does not argue for a bleak prognosis.

For the positive side is that we have no choice but to move ahead. We are like people part way through psychoanalysis whose defenses and illusions are broken through, and their only choice is to push on to something better.\textsuperscript{46}

This writer contends that the prognosis involving man's fulfillment in a satisfying manner will be optimistically realized in the adaptation of client-centered therapy to existential psychoanalysis.


\textsuperscript{46}Rollo May, \textit{Men's Search for Himself}, p. 78.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS


B. PERIODICALS


APPENDIX
Two ideas that recur throughout the course of this thesis are phenomenological in character: 1) that truth for the individual is "as he sees it" or believes he sees it, and; 2) that man chooses to see things in certain and specific ways. It is not by mere chance that this similarity of thought occurs in existentialism and phenomenology.

Kierkegaard's conception of the nature of truth is essentially Socratic. Existentialist truth is a passionate inner commitment to something which is objectively and theoretically uncertain, and is the highest truth attainable by an existing individual. Kierkegaard was well aware that truth, according to his definition, is equivalent to faith. Choice, for him, was a decision between two ways of life. It had to be made in every experience of life; and whether one chose to be himself or chose to be inauthentic colored every event of existence. Kierkegaard formulated these concepts before phenomenology, as it is known today, was systematized into a psychological school. It seems that he derived these concepts in part from DesCartes, and in part from his interpretation of the Christian Scriptures. It is interesting to note what happens to these ideas as
phenomenology develops and existential thinkers are exposed to both it and Kierkegaard.

The most immediate source of the central insights of phenomenology is to be found in the psychology of Franz Brentano (1838-1917), who postulated that a truly empirical psychology will concern itself not with the origin of the contents of consciousness, but with the analysis and description of mental acts whereby the mind envisages objects. Thoughts of the mind are always of something. They are intentional, referring to something beyond the mind. A student of Brentano, Alexius Meinong (1853-1921), expanded this theory and asserted that all objects of thought, ideas and relationships as well as perceived objects of the so-called "actual world", were intentional.

The true founder of modern phenomenology was Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). He defined the science of phenomenology as the description of subjective processes and made it coextensive in subject matter with psychology. Phenomenology differs from psychology in that the latter seeks to explain phenomena in causal and genetic terms, whereas the former merely analyzes and describes phenomena as they are presented. In phenomenology, the scientist is not justified in going beyond consciousness in assigning any ontological basis to objects. What is, is conscious. Intentionality is an intrinsic trait of the subjective
processes of consciousness whereby they refer to objects. F. H. Heinemann, in considering these tenets of phenomenology, states:

_{Prima facie_ they seem to have nothing to do with Kierkegaard's thesis that truth is subjectivity. If, however, one goes deeper into the matter, one finds that Husserl says: "Truth is evidently the correlate of the perfect rationality of the original belief, of the certainty of belief." In other words, truth is based on right belief, or on subjectivity. This is not an antithesis to, but a correlate to Kierkegaard's thesis, based on a completely different interpretation of subjectivity which stresses its rational character."

Martin Heidigger was a student of Husserl as well as an existential thinker. Jean-Paul Sartre is deeply indebted to Heidigger, being exposed to Kierkegaard through him and Karl Jaspers; but Sartre also adapted much of Husserl's thought as recast by Heidigger, and traveled to Germany just before Husserl's death to attend a series of lectures delivered by the phenomenologist. Sartre has taken the phenomenological concept of truth and accepted it in "Kierkegaardian" fashion. But even more, he has adapted Husserl's idea of the legitimate scope of phenomenology and expanded it to say that if anything exists for man in any way, it must exist in his consciousness. Sartre has also welded the intentional trait of consciousness to Kierkegaard's concept of choice.

In Sartre's psychoanalysis, the way in which men deliberately

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choose to see things (the intention they give to objects and ideas) is symptomatic and indicative of their basic choice of Being.

Erich Fromm and Rollo May, in their acceptance of some of Sartre's ideas, have somewhat incorporated phenomenological views into their thought. Although Carl Rogers, in his writings, does not explicitly acknowledge the contribution of phenomenology to his thinking, there is a strong similarity between his concept of the "perceptual field" and phenomenological ideas.

To the present writer it seems unnecessary to posit or try to explain any concept of "true" reality. For purposes of understanding psychological phenomena, reality is, for the individual, his perceptions. . . . For psychological purposes, reality is basically the private world of individual perceptions . . .

Truth, for the individual, is essentially subjective. Rogers goes on to discuss how perceptions of the same object differ for separate individuals, illustrating by a story in which two men are driving at night on a western road. An object looms up in the middle of the road ahead, and one man reacts with fright, seeing a large boulder. The other, a native of the country, sees a tumbleweed and reacts with nonchalance.

Again, Rogers discusses how separate people react to a political speech with no foreknowledge about the candidate speaking. He states that one individual will perceive him as a trickster and false prophet, while another will see him as a leader of the people and a person of

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49 Carl Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*, p. 485.
high aims and purposes. Rogers states that the individual perceives things as he wants to perceive them. Although he does not use the term "intentionality", there is a striking similarity between this concept of phenomenology and Roger's explanation of the difference between the perceptions of individuals pertaining to an identical object.