



# Peter F. Schmid

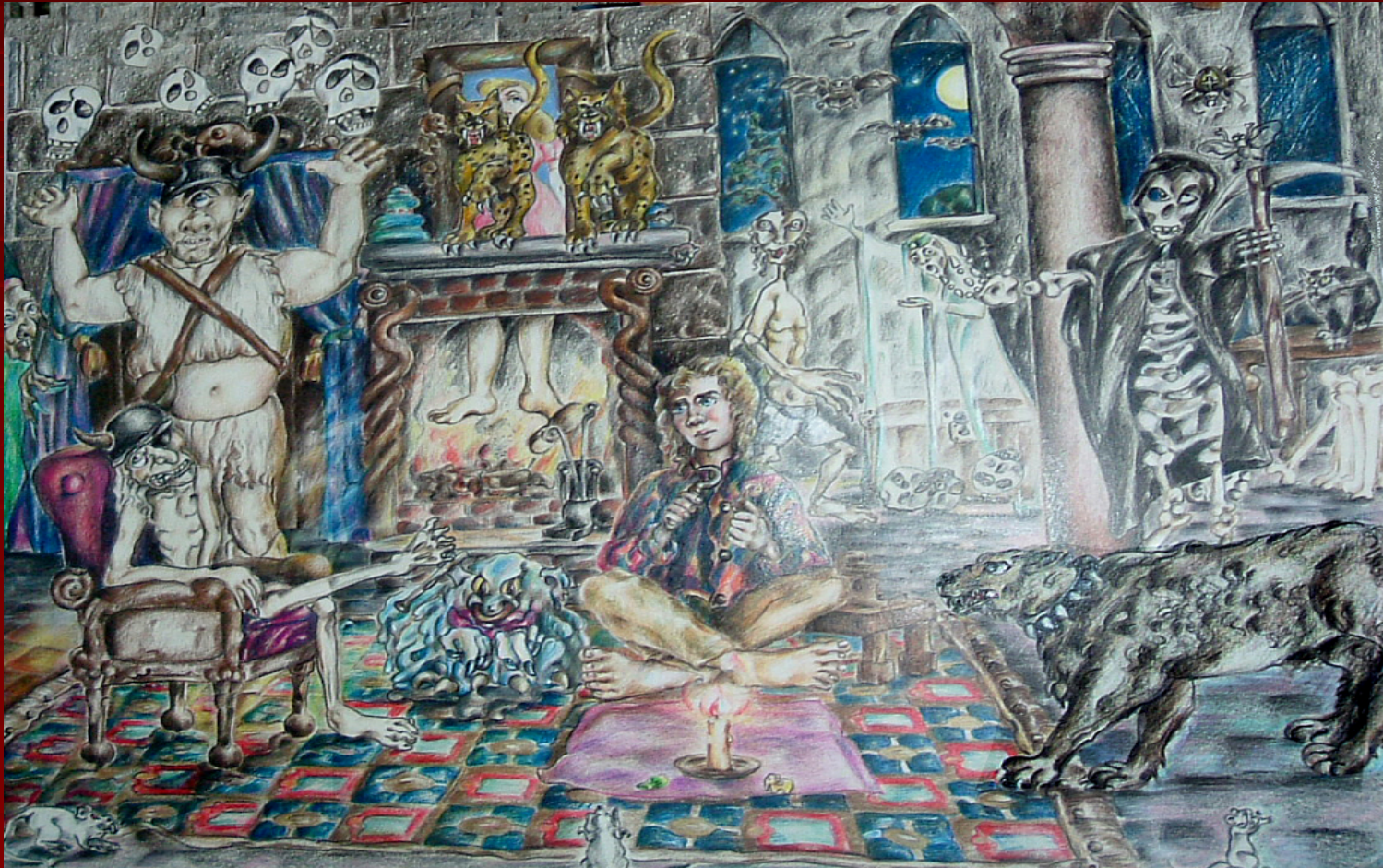
Sigmund Freud University, Vienna • IPS/APG Austria

*On the art of being anxious  
in the right way*

Person-centered, existential  
and dialogical perspectives

for personal use only (c) Peter F. Schmid 2012

# The youth who went forth to learn what fear was



# The youth who went forth to learn what fear was



„I've finally learned to shudder.“

for personal use only (c) pfs 2012

# Overview

- 1 Etymology
- 2 Religions and philosophies
- 3 Psychotherapies
- 4 Person-centered approaches
- 5 Person and anxiety

# 1

# ETYMOLOGY

# Etymology

anxious \* *Lat.* anxius „solicitous, uneasy, troubled in mind“

anguish (*Fr.* angoisse, *Germ.* Angst\*)

\* *Lat.* angustus („tight, narrow“), *Gr.* αγγειν („strangle“)

*Cf.* angina pectoris, angor nocturnus ....

*Cf.* anger (!)

- *Indo-Germanic* „NG“ „crush, distress, in dire straits“
- :: „GN“ („know, can“; „gneißen, können“)

# Semantics

- **Anxiety, angst**  
apparently objectless  
(→ „groundless“)
- **Fear**  
∞ *Germ.* Furcht, Gefahr (danger)  
*directed towards ...*

# Phenomenology

Latent timidity ... open panic\*,  
intensive agitation ... numbness and paralysis



www.theol.com for personal use only (c) pfs 2012

\*Pan



# 2

# RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

# Religion & Theology

- **Religions of revelation**

Anxiety = expression of a meaningless life

→ to be conquered by redemption and resurrection.

*„Be not afraid!“ (Mt 28:10)*

- **Far-Eastern Religions**

Overcome anxiety by becoming resigned to one's fate and to be free of attachments.

# Antique Philosophy

- **Stoicism, Epicurism**

Feelings of anxiety are trivial and artificial  
→ take them calmly.

# Existential philosophy

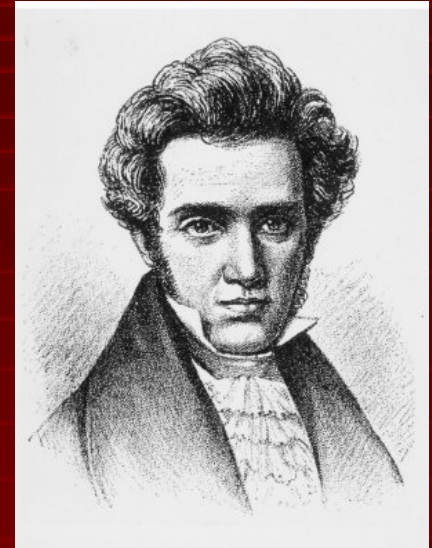
## Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

Experience of nothingness  
is bound to anxiety as tremor or shock.

A deep seated spiritual condition of  
insecurity, in the constant fear of failing.

„Anxiety is the dizziness of freedom.“

Anxiety points to the potentiality of freedom  
informs us of our choices, self-awareness &  
personal responsibility.



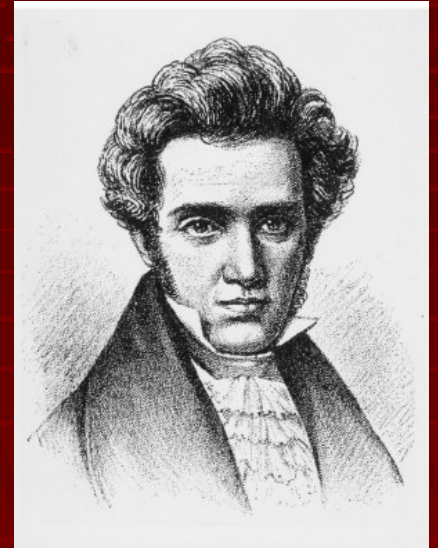
# Existential philosophy

## Kierkegaard (cont.)

Anxiety is the link between the possibility and the actuality. (!)

Anxiety is „bound freedom“.

Anxiety is an educator and uncoverer.



*cf.* Rogers: becoming aware of incongruence !

# Existential philosophy

## Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

„Angst ‚does not know‘ about what it is anxious“.

Anxiety is a basic condition of human existence.

Angst is linked to our awareness of the inevitability of death and therefore an essential precondition for authenticity.

„Angst brings Dasein before its being free for.“



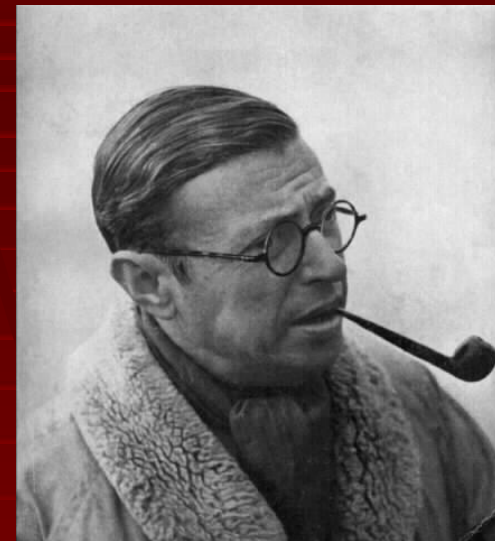
# Existential philosophy

**Jean Paul Sarte (1905-1980)**

*Angoisse* (anxiety)  
is interconnected with  
*délaissement* (desertedness).

Connected with  
desolation, uncertainty,  
the threat of being unmasked  
guilt and disgust.

Anxiety is a necessary experience to become free.



# Existential philosophy

**Karl Jaspers (1883-1969)**

Anxiety is the metaphysical  
fear of choice.





# Existential philosophy

**Paul Tillich**(1886-1965)

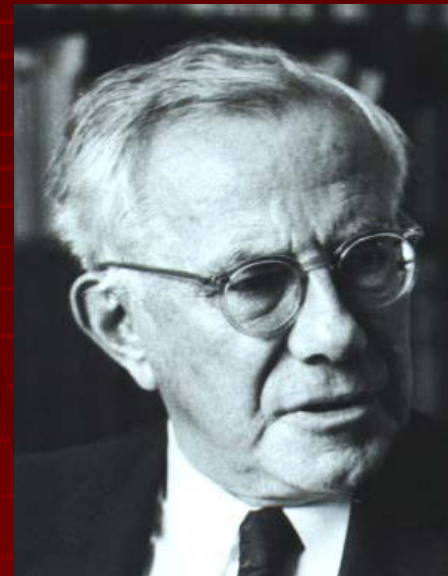
Neurotic versus existential anxiety:

Neurotic anxiety

is psychological evasion to  
shift away the attention from angst.

Existential anxiety

is the state in which a being  
is aware of its possible non-being.



# 3

# PSYCHOTHERAPY

# Anxiety in psychotherapy theories

- Behavior therapy: learned → unlearn
- CBT: assessments connected with fear -> re-orient
- Freud's 1st theory: Reaction to trauma
- Freud's 2nd theory: Fear of castration etc.
- Anna Freud: Defense mechanisms
- Adler: aiming at goals in order to protect from anxiety
- Rank: trauma of birth as symbol of existential anxiety
- Jung: anxiety as not being prepared for an exercise

# Anxiety in Existential Therapy theories

- **Daseinsanalysis:** anxiety as call for coping with imperfection
- **Logotherapy:** search for meaning to combat the trauma of non-being
- **Existential analysis:** fear of destruction and fear of fear (loss of inner hold)
- **Personal existential analysis:** inner estrangement
- **Existential therapy:** Death as the source of anxiety.

# 4

# PERSON-CENTERED APPROACHES

# Rogers

Anxiety as becoming aware of incongruence.

- „Anxiety is the state in which the incongruence between self-concept and the organismic experience comes to the edge of awareness.“
- „Such anxiety is constructive in the end.“

# Rogers

- “Anxiety is a state of tension occurring when an individual dimly perceives incongruence within her/himself. When a person has no awareness of incongruence, he or she is open to the possibility of anxiety and disorganisation, i.e. vulnerability. Incongruence need not be sharply perceived for it to create anxiety. In therapy anxiety is often experienced by clients as they become more aware of that part of their experience which is in contradiction to their self-concept.” (Rogers, 1957).

„Man hat nur Angst, wenn man mit sich selber nicht einig ist.“

„You only have anxiety, when you are not in agreement with yourself.“

*Hermann Hesse*



# Finke & Teusch

- Phobia and panic disorders:

= the conflict of uncertainty in the self-concept versus organismic striving for freedom and need for creativity

→ to offer hold, „decatastrophize“ and foster autonomy in therapy

# Summary of positions

- Anxiety is a result of **incongruence** that becomes dimly aware (Rogers).
- Anxiety is an **existential given** and a major force in life (Existential therapy).
- Therapy should not try to simply overcome anxiety but **understand** anxiety (PCA) **and even confront** with anxiety (ET).
- Anxiety **shows a way**, a direction where to go, „where the task ist“ and **offers a choice**.

# Critical review of these positions

- All these views are largely **individualistic**. Relationship does rarely occur.
- They deal with anxiety as a phenomenon ***within the client*** not between persons.
- PCA deals mainly with **anxiety as a reaction** (to awareness of incongruence), not with existential anxiety.
- The connection between angst/anxiety and **anger/aggression is not considered**.

# 5

# PERSON AND ANXIETY

# „Person“

Substantial notion	Relational notion
<p>»Persona est sub-stantia.«</p>	<p>»Persona est ek-sistentia.«</p>
<p>Person = Being from oneself and for oneself</p>	<p>Person = Being from others and for others</p>
<p><b>Autonomy</b> Sovereignty</p>	<p><b>Interrelatedness</b> Solidarity</p>

# Anxiety as fear of loss of personal identity

# Substantial: Anxiety as loss of autonomy

- The fear to be *physically* endangered; ultimately destroyed as an individual.
- The fear to be *psychologically* hurt, not seen, not respected as an individual; The fear of the loss of the status quo of the self; ultimately the loss of identity.

→ **A-nihil-ation (Ver-Nicht-ung)**

# Relational: Anxiety as loss of relationship

- The fear to lose the status quo of contact, connection, relationship, fear of reduction in status, depreciation, of linesomeness, forlornness, desolation.
- The fear to be ex-communi-cated; ultimately to lose the ability to relate and relationship at all.

→ **I-sol[e]-ation (Ver-Einzel-ung)**



# A personal & dialogic approach

- **substantial:**  
Anxiety as loss of autonomy.
- **relational:**  
Anxiety as loss of relationship.

# Person & Anxiety

Substantial notion	Relational notion
» Persona est sub-stantia.«	» Persona est ek-sistentia.«
Fear of loss of the self	Fear of loss of relationship
Annihilation	Isolation

# A personal & dialogic approach

- **The fear of death**  
as the ultimate annihilation  
and the ultimate isolation.

# Anxiety as chance

- A warning sign that the integrity of the person is endangered.
- A challenge to free oneself from narrowing („NG“!) conditions that let the person fall behind his or her possibilities.
- A call for authenticity  
→ Steps are necessary!

# Anxiety and aggression

- Ag-gredi \**Lat. gradus* „step“
- Aggression = to take a step, to approach sth. or sb.
- relational: reproach of not being seen and treated as person
- substantial: aggression towards oneself (inhibited wish to murder or suicide)

# Anxiety and aggression

- aNGer and aNGst have the same origin.
- Anxiety calls for aggression to take the necessary steps.
- Con-fron-tation (\**Lat.* frons = forehead)
  - to face a situation or a person
  - to overcome the status quo
- Pro-voc-ation: „come out!“
- „Where there is anxiety there is the task“ !

# The challenge of „personal anxiety“

- Anxiety is a chance to gain new hope.
- The pro-gressive (gradus/step!) element of anxiety is its call for change.
- The challenge is to „own“ one's anxiety.
- We do not only *have* anxiety, we *are* anxiety.
- We are „more“ than our anxiety.

# The challenge of „personal anxiety“

- Kierkegaard: „The more profoundly he is in anxiety the greater is the man.“
- Deurzen: „the start of our openness to the human condition“.
- Kierkegaard: „Freedom’s possibility announces itself in anxiety.“
- Anxiety calls for decision in the process of emancipation.



# Consequences for therapy

- Therapy is the place to be attentive to one's anxiety and to learn to understand it.
- Therapy is the place „to go into“, to „enter“ anxiety with less danger and fear.
- No need to force the client to confront themselves with anxiety in order to overcome resistances.

# Consequences for therapy

- *Being* in dialogue is „enough“: it is „being-with and being-counter“ at one and the same time. (Schmid & Mearns, 2006)
- The actualizing tendency „knows“ (GN!) the necessary steps and the client can (GN!) take them by him-/herself.
- „Persons in the world of tomorrow welcome the risk-taking way of being.“ (Rogers, 1980)

„Whoever has learned to be anxious in the right way has learned the ultimate.“

*Søren Kierkegaard*

## ***Related PowerPoint Slides***

***„On the art of being anxious  
in the right way“***

**Person-centered, dialogical and  
existential perspectives on anxiety.**



welcome to | willkommen auf  
bienvenue à | bienvenido a

**pca-online.net**

# The Person-Centered Website

by **Peter F. Schmid**



## THE PERSON-CENTERED APPROACH

### THE PCA

What is the PCA?  
Carl Rogers  
Resources  
Links

### BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Carl Rogers Bibliography Online  
(English & German)  
Rogers: Bibliographie  
francophone  
The PCE Online Bibliography  
Bibliography Gendlin  
Bibliography Peter F. Schmid

### EVENTS

PCE World Congress 2012  
Conferences

### INSTITUTIONS

WAPCEPC  
PCE World Association  
PCE Europe  
PCE Institutions & Associations  
Person-Centered Association  
in Austria (PCA)  
[www.personzentriert.at](http://www.personzentriert.at)

### JOURNALS

Journal PCEP  
Journal PERSON

### PAPERS

Papers P.F.Schmid download  
Links to other papers online



IPS/APG  
Institute for  
Person-Centered Studies Austria



AUSTRIA PROGRAM  
May 29 - June 6, 2013

**PSYCHO-  
THERAPY**

**PHILOSOPHY  
THEOLOGY**

**ART**



## PETER F. SCHMID

Psychotherapy  
Group Therapy  
Supervision  
Coaching  
Counseling  
Training  
Further Training

Biography  
Workshops & Lectures  
Publications  
English papers online  
Papers several languages  
Bibliography

### Bookshop

Archives  
Contact



Website Peter F. Schmid  
[www.pfs-online.at](http://www.pfs-online.at)

## PERSON-CENTERED WORKSHOPS

Personal development group & process reflection	monthly
Women are different – Men are different	29-30 9
"Shame on you!" - On shame & blaming	12-13 10
Depression: Love & hate reconciled?	9-10 11
Severe illness - dying - death	23-24 11
Trust and control	7-8 12 2013
Sexualities & sexual disorders	25-26 1
THE AUSTRIA PROGRAM 2013	29 5 - 5 6

*Register online*



Person-Centered Psychotherapy Science  
Sigmund Freud University, Vienna  
Carl Rogers Institute

### PFS: TOPICAL PUBLICATIONS

The person and evil  
Psychotherapy is political  
The Handbook of PCT  
(2nd edition 2012)

FAUST III. Vol. 1  
FAUST III. Vol. 2  
Life Management



APA  
Carl Rogers Award  
to Peter F. Schmid

PERSON & DIALOGUE  
Person-Centered Conference  
in Vienna



**BRETTTERHAUS**  
The Theater. The Publishing House.

**FAUST III**

LIFE MANAGEMENT  
ODER  
DIE ULTIMATIVE THERAPIE

for personal use only (c) pfs 2012

MENUS:

[Former intro page](#) [Deutsch](#)

[www.pca-online.net](http://www.pca-online.net) 18080

SEARCH:

Search

visits from 1 July 1998 • © 1998-2012 by Peter F. Schmid • V.69.4 • last update July 7, 2012 • Imprint • Email: [pfs@pfs-online.at](mailto:pfs@pfs-online.at)