The constructive (in the sense of construing) and developmental (but throughout the lifespan) framework, whose conceptual roots lie in the work of Piaget, outlines the holistic personality process of systems of making meaning, systems that organize human thought, feeling, and action. In this article Kegan discusses and then applies the model—to a worker in a CETA program and to a psychiatric ward patient—elicating the perspectives—on mental health and employability—it can open for practitioners.

ROBERT KEGAN

Making Meaning:
The Constructive-Developmental Approach to Persons and Practice

I will begin a bit autobiographically. It happens that last month I visited in three states outside Massachusetts where I live. In one I spoke with the current staff of a psychiatric ward where, for several years, colleagues and I have been doing research with hospitalized persons of all ages. We talked about what I think I am learning and we explored its implications for how they understand their patients and the practice of therapy. In another state I did one-year follow-up interviews with a group of CETA workers in a rural program trying to prepare previously unemployable persons for work roles indigenous to their native area. I was interested in understanding what happens with these persons psychologically while they are in the program, and in thinking about this with the staff. In the third state I was being consulted by a citizenship education project responsible for thousands of students in an industrial city. The staff wants to design and implement a district-wide program that might reverse trends toward increasing vandalism, truancy, and other socially disintegrative behavior. Most of the month, of course, I was not traveling and much of my time was spent, as it usually is, counseling undergraduates at a college counseling center.

These activities may seem a bit far-flung—not only geographically, but intellectually. They involve "therapy" and "prevention," persons regarded as "ill" (in need of "treatment") and persons regarded as "unemployable" (in need of "training"). The persons involved span social classes and include adolescents and adults. Yet actually all of these activities are informed by a common theoretical framework—a rather new one—which is the subject of this article. In fact, despite the impression my first paragraph may give, I am not principally a practitioner-psychologist but a researcher-theorist who finds himself in these diverse settings in large part to explore, develop, and test that theory.

CONSTRUCTIVE-DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMEWORK

What I call "constructive developmental" psychology—the study of the development of our construing or meaning-making activity—seems to offer practitioners a theoretical resource with considerable range and integrative capability. It is "developmental" apparently not in the old-fashioned sense of "applying to children," but of applying to the developing person throughout the lifespan. Constructive-developmental psychology seems neither to romanticize a conception of the person (by considering all phenomena "developmental" but never forcing itself to take account of seriously debilitating psychological disturbance) nor to psychopathologize everyday life (by basing its conception of personality on the study of such disturbance alone). What it does seem to do is serve as a basis for integrating two professional stances that have become intellectually marooned—the reaction to disturbance (the "clinical" role) and the anticipation of disturbance (the "preventive" role).

What is this new framework? It might be better to say first what it is not. Although one can detect differing emphases, or primary sources, among various constructive-developmental theorists (e.g., a more cognitivist leaning [Kohler, 1969; Selman, 1974]; a more psychoanalytic leaning [Fingarette, 1963; Loevinger, 1976]; a more existential-phenomenological leaning [Kegan, 1979; Perry, 1970]), the framework is neither fundamentally cognitivist (it is as interested in the emotions as in cognition and does not reduce the emotional to the cognitive); nor is it fundamentally psychoanalytic (it does not locate the source of adult phenomena in early childhood experience; it is not so exclusively oriented to intrapsychic representations; it goes beyond the conservative, homeostasis-seeking picture of human motivation to include an adaptive, effectance-oriented motive of equal dignity); nor is it fundamentally existential-phenomenological (it is interested in a descriptive, external-frame-of-reference on enduring regularities and distinctions between and within persons in their meaning-making). Although the most visible feature

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of the constructive-developmental framework is the idea of the “stage,” the framework is not fundamentally about stages, which, in the end, are only a way of marking developments in a process. And it is this process that is fundamental to the framework (Kegan, 1979), the process of the restless, creative activity of personality, which is first of all about the making of meaning.

PIAGETIAN INFLUENCES

The most influential forefather of the constructive-developmental framework is surely Jean Piaget (1952, 1954), and the framework is appropriately referred to as “neo-Piagetian.” Piaget’s research suggests a series of qualitatively different constructions of the physical world that children grow through as they develop. His work is now widely used as a road map to curricular goals concerning logical and intellectual development. But over the past 25 years the loosely related work of a number of researchers, when taken together, makes it clear that this developing “biologic” influences far more than the child’s construction of the physical world. Taken together, the work of Basseches (1978), Broughton (1975), Damon (1977), Fowler (1974), Gilligan (1978), Kegan (1979), Kohlberg (1969), Lasker (1978), Loevinger (1976), Parsons (in press), Perry (1970), Selman (1974) and others, suggests that the developmental processes Piaget got hold of are the very context for our lifelong construction of our emotional, personal, and social worlds as well. Indeed, what is “neo” about the constructive-developmental framework is that it moves from Piaget’s study of cognition to include the emotions; from his study of children and adolescents to include adulthood; from the study of stages of development to include the processes that bring the stages into being, defend them, and evolve from them; from Piaget’s descriptive, outside-the-person approach to include study of the internal experience of developing; and from a solely individual-focused study of development to include study of the social context and role in development.

BASIC TENETS

Taken individually, the various theorists will reflect these “neo” elaborations to differing extents, but among the most widely shared tenets of the framework are these.

1. Human being is meaning making. For the human, what evolving amounts to is the evolving of systems of meaning: the business of organisms is to organize, as Perry (1970) says. We organize mostly without realizing we are doing it, and mostly with little awareness as to the exact shape of our own reality-constituting. Our meanings are not so much something we have, as something we are. Therefore, researchers and practitioners do not learn about a person’s meaning-making system by asking the person to explain it, but by observing the way the system actually works.

2. These meaning systems shape our experience. Experience, as Aldous Huxley said, is not so much what happens to us as what we make of what happens to us. Thus we do not understand another’s experience simply by knowing the events and particulars of the other, but only by knowing how these events and particulars are privately composed.

3. These meaning systems to a great extent give rise to our behavior. We do not act as randomly, irrationally, unsystematically, or molecularly as might be thought. Even the most apparently disturbed, irrational, or inconsistent behavior is, as Carl Rogers often suggests, coherent and meaningful when viewed through the perspective of the actor’s constitution of reality.

4. Except during periods of transition and evolution from one system to another, to a considerable extent a given system of meaning organizes our thinking, feeling, and acting over a wide range of human functioning.

5. Although everyone makes meaning in richly idiosyncratic and unique ways, there are striking regularities to the underlying structure of meaning-making systems and to the sequence of meaning systems that people grow through.

6. We are developing measures of increasing sensitivity to help us understand the meaning-making system of another.

7. We are beginning to learn about what facilitates or detains development.

8. But the framework is young and its gleanings should be viewed cautiously and used tentatively.

NEWER TENETS

In my own work (Kegan, 1977, 1979, 1980) I have suggested that

1. The deep structure of these meaning-making systems (their “biologic”) involves the developing person’s distinction between self and other, or, put more philosophically, between subject and object. (Figure 1 suggests how this deep structure seems to link some of the most familiar constructive-developmental stage theories.) Development, therefore, involves a process of redifferentiating and reintegrating this relationship.

2. The internal experience of developmental change can be distressing. Because it involves the loss of how I am composed, it can also be accompanied by a loss of composure. This is so because in surrendering the balance between self and other through which I have “known” the world, I may experience this as a loss of myself, my fundamental relatedness to the world, and meaning itself.

3. As practitioners, we can be most responsive to the person being helped by learning more about and engaging this meaning-making activity, rather than orienting first to the person’s “illness,” “problem,” “learning deficit,” or “stage,” none of which is the person.

EXAMPLES FROM PRACTICE

In the space of this brief article I can perhaps best suggest the orientation of the constructive-developmental framework and some of its possibilities for practitioners by drawing on some examples from the travels I mentioned first. My work with persons on a psychiatric ward, a CETA project, a high school classroom, and a college counseling center is joined not only by a common framework; the persons themselves often share common developmental concerns. Indeed, from this framework it often seems that persons have more in common with those who share their constructive-developmental predicament than they do.
with those who share their age, sex, IQ, socioeconomic status, psychiatric diagnostic label, or level of education.

CASE OF TERRY

I met Terry, for example, on a psychiatric ward. She was diagnosed as "sociopathic." She was almost sixteen and her parents, exasperated, had brought her into the hospital. They were not beastly or even unsympathetic, but they had come to an end with their daughter, whom they could not control. The final blow had come that week when the mother called the school and discovered that her daughter had skipped. When Terry returned home at the appropriate after-school hour and was confronted with the mother's information, Terry flew into a rage at what she regarded as her mother's intrusiveness and demanded that her mother give her her bankbook so that she could run away. When her mother refused, Terry took twenty dollars from her mother's purse and barricaded herself in her room. When the mother forced entry, Terry escaped through the window and led the mother, assorted allies, and eventually the police on a 7-hour chase, which Terry later told us about with glee. On the checklist at admission Terry's mother describes Terry as "bright," "ego-centric," "narcissistic," and "manipulative." Terry describes her mother as "stern," "strong," "stubborn," "nagging," "unwilling to compromise," and "headstrong."

In the hospital, where group therapy and participation in the life of a ward community are the primary media of treatment, Terry had a terrible time. She could be seen in group meetings struggling unsuccessfully to talk about herself in a way the staff would approve. When she said in many different ways that "my problems are not mental; they have to do with getting along with my family," the staff, however gently and indirectly, was not satisfied with the formulation and took it as resistance to deal with herself, her own feelings, and responsibilities. The staff could see that when she spoke the language of internal reflectivity she was doing so by triangulation, or imitation, that she was not really speaking her own voice. Her heart, they sensed, was not in it, and this too they took as a kind of slipperiness or dishonesty. Their exasperation with her grew. Finally, when it was discovered that she spoke to people outside the ward about people inside the ward (a cardinal violation of patient-patient bonds) and that she used "unprescribed drugs" during a weekend pass (a violation of patient-staff bonds), the staff threw her out of the community ("precipitously discharged"). They understood her behavior as hostility and acting out, and they justified their own on the grounds that she "would not do the work of the ward, was argumentative, disruptive, inciting to other patients, and a staff-splitter." The staff was a touch angry with Terry.

CASE OF RICHARD

I met Richard in the CETA program. He was twenty and out of work. He had held a series of jobs in factories, which he either walked out of or was asked to leave. After a few weeks in the CETA program he established himself with the staff as "one of those with an attitude, a comman." With the other CETA partici-

pants, especially those who had been in the program quite a while, he was seen as someone who "doesn't care about the program, is just in it for the money." The program, which seeks, in the context of job training, to engage the workers in cooperative decision making and to promote personal responsibility, made little sense to Richard. He could not describe its purposes other than job training, could not specify the explicit rules or implicit codes of the group. He felt he was often unfairly in trouble, and that many of the expectations others had of him (which he became aware of only in violation) were unreasonable. For example, he tended to arrive late or irregularly, to which his employers and co-workers objected. "I think they were complaining a little too much. My thought is, well, one of the mornings I didn't come in. My ride didn't show up. I could have thumbed, but I didn't call. I have a habit of not calling anyway." So I didn't think . . . if I couldn't make it I couldn't make it. I don't see why I was holding anything up." In his initial interview he presented himself as centrally concerned with the pursuit and satisfaction of his own interests, others being viewed almost exclusively in terms of either facilitating or thwarting that goal. He had no objections to the disorganization and lack of clarity in the new program, probably because such a state made it easier for him to take care of himself. Asked in the interview what kind of person he admired, his immediate response was, "Someone who's doing exactly what he wants." Asked what prevents people from doing what they want, he answered, "Other people." Asked what is important to him, he said, "Money." Asked why this is important: "You can be free." Asked why that is important: "Don't have to listen to people, follow their orders, live in places where you can't do what you want."

But Richard's story does not end like Terry's. Richard is still in the program a year later. He has not only begun to learn a trade, but the people around him feel that he has somehow changed. It is not just that they find him more reliable and cooperative; the staff feels, in some way they cannot quite name, that he understands them in a sense he did not before. Richard himself feels he has changed, but is not sure why or how. He thinks he had "a bad attitude." He talks about how he "never used to share with other people what I think." He says, "It used to be, when I screwed up I worried that I was gonna get it; now when I screw up I worry that other people are going to worry."

IMPLICATIONS OF MAKING MEANING FOR PRACTICE

Now what are we to make of all this? Terry is called "sociopathic" and Richard, at first anyway, "unemployable." One was regarded as in some way "ill," in need of quasi-medical attention; the other was regarded as "untrained," in need of some kind of educational attention. The constructive-developmental perspective would suggest that they are in a similar psychological predicament and that neither a health-and-illness model nor a learning deficit model best illuminates that predicament. What is that predicament? And what are we to make of the dramatically different

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outcomes? Given a constructive-developmental understanding of the situation, what are its implications for practice?

Terry and Richard, however else they are different, seem to share a common place in the life journey of making meaning. Every meaning-scheme is both a triumph and a constraint; it represents a broader organization than the last, and a constraint of mind with respect to developments that may follow. The constraints of the meaning-scheme Terry and Richard seem to share are probably what are clearest to those who live among them. We often experience these people as manipulative; largely oriented to the satisfaction of their own needs and interests; unable or unwilling to take other people's point of view into account, especially when it contradicts theirs; "in business for themselves" in some fundamental way; viewing authority and the rules largely as something to be gotten around, apparently unable or unwilling to see how these rules are important for everyone's successful living together. But what is less understood is the way in which this very same meaning-system is an admirable advance over earlier meaning-making, and is itself possessed of many strengths. In fact, as I will soon suggest, it is these strengths (and the felt need of a Richard or a Terry to preserve these hard-won advances) that must be recognized by others before developing persons can come to a sense of their own limits.

From my chart (Figure 1), Terry and Richard seem to be in the "Imperial" stage (Stage 2). But I have said stages are only markings in a process, so what is the process underlying their developmental predicament? Where did it come from and where can it be expected to go? And what do I mean when I say it is possessed of strengths and triumphs despite the apparent failures in living it seems to have generated thus far? Figure 1 is necessarily static, but it attempts to reflect a dynamic process—the process by which the Imperial stage is maintained, a balance of self and other in which "perceptions" and "impulses" are taken as other. What does this mean? The cognitive and affective liability of the primary school child is, by this account, a result of a balance in which the child is embedded in his or her perceptions and impulses. The child is subject to them. In some sense, rather than having impulses and perceptions, at this developmental level the child is his or her impulses and perceptions. It is not only that when the child's perceptions of a thing change the thing itself is seen by the child to change (as in Piaget's famous conservation experiments [Piaget, 1954]), but also that he or she is unable to coordinate one impulse with another because to coordinate them the child would have to have them rather than be them. The child at this age is said to lack "impulse control" for just this reason. Being one's impulses means that not expressing them threatens one's very existence. Persons who develop beyond this level can control their impulses because they have become something else. The vast and diverse array of phenomena indicating a "five to seven shift" can be understood as expressions of this basic emergence from embeddedness in the impulsive-perceptive. This includes phenomena as diverse as: (a) Children on the early side of this shift seem to need rewards that are fairly immediate, sensual, and communicating of praise; children on the other side seem to feel more rewarded by the information that they have been correct; (b) Children who lose a limb or become blind before they are through the shift tend not to have phantom limb responses or memories of sight; children on the other side of the shift do (Gardner, 1978). The capacity to extricate oneself from the impulsive-perceptive—to have them rather than be them—not only brings an end to the liability of the earlier meaning-scheme, but also brings into being a new scheme that creates a more organized self. This new scheme is a system of its own, which does its own praising, so to speak, but needs the information that its internal dialogue is correct. It is a system that can store memories, feelings, and perceptions (rather than immediately being them), so that a "feeling arm" or a "seeing eye" lives on in some way. The examples may make clear that the context that is evolving is more than cognition or affect.

MOVEMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTIVE-DEVELOPMENTAL SCHEME

A distinguishing feature of this new meaning-scheme is that the child seems to "seal up," in a sense. There is a self-containment that was not there before. Adults no longer find themselves engaged in the middle of a conversation that the child has begun alone, and the child no longer lives with the sense that parents can read his or her private feelings. The child has a private world, which was not there before.

Thus, it is not just the physical world that is being concretely organized but internal experience, too. With the constitution of the "impulse across time" or the "enduring disposition" (what I call, for shorthand purposes, the "needs"—but it should be clear I am not talking about "need" as a content) there comes as well the emergence of a self-concept. This self-concept is a more or less consistent notion of a me, what I am (as opposed to the earlier sense of self—that I am—and the later sense of self—who I am).

With the capacity to take command of one's impulses (to have them rather than be them) can come a new sense of freedom, power, independence—agency, above all. Things no longer "just happen" in the world; with the capacity to see behind the shadows, to "come in" with the data of experience, the individual now has something to do with "what happens." The end of Kohlberg's first moral stage, where authority is all powerful and right by virtue of its being authority, is probably brought on by this construction of one's own authority.

As is the case with every new development, the new liberation carries new risks and vulnerabilities. If I now have to cope with what happens in the world, then whether things go badly or well for me is a question of what I can do. Looming over a system whose hallmark is newly won stability, control, and freedom is the threat of the old liability, loss of control, and what now appears as the old subjugation from without. How much of the control and manipulation one experiences when one is the object of this meaning-making balance is a matter of one's efforts to save oneself from an old world that holds the threat, real or imagined, of ungovernable and overwhelming impulse life?

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**FIGURE 1**
Balances of Self and Other
As the Common Ground of Several Developmental Theories
Considering the process that leads to the Imperial stage gives us a sense of its triumph. It also helps us to better understand its limits. In this organization of meaning the person is not yet self-reflexive, that is, the self does not converse with itself and therefore does not yet speak the language of inner states and motivations—what we think of as being psychological. Recently a young man entered restaurants repeatedly, ordered expensive meals, ate them, and then was unable to pay for them. Brought before a judge he was asked, “What is it with you, young man? Why do you do a thing like this?” The young man answered, “I order the meals because I’m hungry, and then I don’t pay for them because I have no money.” The answer strikes people as funny—in part, I suppose, because of its unsassailable elegance, but in large part, I imagine, because of its surprise. The judge expected to hear some internal report; he thought he was speaking with someone who could talk with him psychologically. Is the young man’s failure one of resistance, refusal to comply although able? Perhaps. Is Terry’s?

RECONSTRUCTION AND RECREATION

In the same way, in this particular “Imperial” organization of meaning, one literally cannot feel feelings that would arise out of a simultaneous consideration of one’s own impulse-coordinating and another’s. To do so would require one to take impulse-coordinating as an object, which is not within the limits of this evolutionary balance. This means, for example, that if I betray a confidence or break a promise because it suits my needs to do so, as Terry does when she talks about others on the ward to people outside the ward, or as Richard does when he fails to come in to work on time, I do not experience whatever it is one experiences when one simultaneously considers one’s own impulse-coordinating with another’s (often called “guilt”). What I may experience is concern about whether the persons I have betrayed will find out, and what the consequences of their finding out will be. I am certainly prepared for their dissatisfaction with my deed, as I am able to see that they, like me, have needs and interests. I am able to understand how they might feel about being betrayed, but how they will feel (or some internalized representative of “they’s”) is not open to me or to my meaning-making. For it to be so would require me to be able to integrate one needs-perspective with another, which would not be just an additive but a qualitative reconstruction of the balance in which I hang. This is precisely the reconstruction Richard seems to reflect when he says that at the beginning of the program he used to worry when he screwed up about what would happen to him, and now, when he screws up, he worries about other people being worried.

Such a reconstruction entails not just a new level of social perspective but a new organization and experience of interior life as well. When one’s own needs and another’s are not integrated, one is unable to hold the other imaginatively and so must seek to hold the person in some other way. This is because being unable to hold the person imaginatively, one is left having to await or anticipate the actual movements or reactions of others to keep one’s world coherent. The creation of guilt, or the development of conscience, may seem to some a terrible burden and a terrible loss. And, of course, in some ways it is. It is also quite liberating however, as it frees one of having to exercise so much control over an otherwise unfathomable world. It frees one of the distrust of a world from which one is radically separate. Without the internalization of the other’s voice in one’s very construction of self, how one feels is much more a matter of how others will react, and the universally felt need to preserve one’s integrity will be felt by others as an effort to control or manipulate. When you are the object of this scheme, you are open to its projecting onto you its own embeddedness in its needs. I constitute you as that object by which I either do or do not meet my needs, fulfill my wishes, pursue my interests, confirm my self-competence. Instead of seeing my needs, I see by my needs. You may experience this as manipulation, or being imperialized, because for me to “keep my balance” I have to actually control, or at least predict, the behavior of people who, in carrying around their own agendas separate from mine, make it impossible for me to gauge reality, the essence of which, at this point, is knowing the consequences of my actions. What makes the balance “imperial” is our sense of the absence of a shared reality. The absence of that shared reality constitutes the structural limits of this meaning scheme and accounts for much of our feeling that the person is “in business for himself.”

A NEW VERSION OF METAMORPHOSIS

Only when the young person has gone on to emerge from an embeddedness in his or her “needs”—so that he or she can take them as an object of attention and coordinate them with another’s—can the person construct the meaning of the interpersonal relationship. Let me make two brief points about such a development, which I find Richard and Terry leading me to:

1. The movement from the “Imperial” to the “Interpersonal,” which Richard reminds us enables a person to regulate his working with another, may be more crucial to an individual’s “employability” than any set of trade-related skills. What is the possibility that the constructive-developmental framework offers a basis for goal-setting and evaluation in work programs, such as CETA and others, of considerably greater promise of durable effect than the customary orientations to changes in situation-specific behavior or job skills?

2. Such a development, Terry reminds us, can be extremely painful, filled with a sense of fragmentation and loss, as the old balance seems to be giving way with no new one yet to replace it. What is the possibility that the constructive-developmental perspective offers us a nonromantic growth-focused understanding of much that is taken for psychopathology?

This latter question leads us naturally to the issue of practice. From our structured interview with Terry, researchers with no familiarity with her prehospital history or her experiences on the ward were able to see that Terry was only beginning the differentiation from her needs and wishes that would eventually permit her to invest her loyalty in the strictures and benefits of interpersonal relationships. The feeling of losing others as satisfier and guarantor of her own satisfaction was still so staggering that the possibility she
The creation of guilt, or the development of conscience, may seem to some a terrible burden and a terrible loss.

might recover others again as partners in an interpersonal world was at the moment beyond her ken.

Seem in this light, I wonder if Terry's behavior, so inciting to those around her, does not begin to take on a different cast. I wonder if her "manipulation" is not, at the same time, the universal effort of all organisms to order and regulate their relations to the environment. It is just that the limits of her regulating are such as to make it impossible for her to hold "the other" interiorly or imaginatively so that she must seek to hold and regulate the other externally. I wonder if her violations of group rules are acts of defiance and hostility or whether the benefits and purposes of meeting the other's expectation when it interferes with one's own interests are lost on her. I wonder whether her inability to speak reflexively about her "problems" is a resistance, or an accurate reflection of the way she makes sense of herself. And I wonder if in fact she did not speak with poignant precision to the staff on the agony of the very transition she is undergoing when she said, "I don't feel like a whole person any more; it's like others are woven into me!" I begin to wonder if the exasperation of Terry's parents and the staff does not spring from their disappointment at not being known in the way they expect. And I begin to wonder if a form of treatment for Terry that, without realizing it, presumes at the outset a capacity (to be a member of an interpersonal community) she does not yet have is not an unwitting form of cruelty.

The lesson in the differing outcomes of Terry's and Richard's "treatments" is not that psychiatric wards are bad places, or doomed to failure, or even inappropriate. The differences in outcome seem to me to be reflected in the unlucky match, in the one case of a young woman with a program that was developmentally ahead of her, and the happier match, in the other case of a young man with a program that was developmentally attuned to him. In the CETA program the values of cooperation, mutuality, joint decision making, taking responsibility, and sharing, are not placed in the foreground. What Richard saw when he first arrived was a half-finished boat in a boatworks; a letter from a buyer offering several thousand dollars for the boat when it was done; competent adults who knew how to finish the boat and who were willing to teach people like himself how to build them. Richard was engaged by the program because he was first of all communicated with at the most fundamen-

tal level of his meaning-making, which was, at this point in his development, oriented to personal control, personal enhancement (even aggrandizement), and the display of, and acquisition of, personal competence. At powerful, subtle levels, his inability to be interpersonal was not only not being tagged as a problem, but the strengths and motivations of his non-interpersonal instrumentalism were being recognized. Once hooked, of course, it is only a matter of time before he comes to see that there are also limits to his way of making meaning. Learning to build the boat eventually becomes quite a different matter from that he first surmised. It involves not just new acquisitions for the person Richard has "always" been, but an actual reconstitution of who he is. This is the dynamic of development that constructive-developmentalists see in every domain they study, what Perry (1970) calls the Trojan horse phenomenon: Tempted from the fortress of our established habit of mind by an intriguing figure on familiar ground, we engage it only to have it explode upon us, a whole army spreading out, capturing the fortress and establishing a new ground.

One program was a luckier match than the other. But of course the most important lesson in the stories of people trying to be helpful to Terry and Richard is that the outcomes do not need to be a matter of luck at all. We know a good deal about the kind of holistic personality processes the constructive-developmental perspective attends to, and we are learning, as we must, a great deal more. In an attempt to write with some specificity in a brief space, I have focused here on just one chapter in the lifelong story of meaning-making. However, there are a myriad of clinical and supportive-preventive circumstances that are probably expressions of similar transformations between the stages, either up or down, shown in Figure 1. Instead of the Stage 2 to Stage 3 transformation, I could have chosen Stage 1 to Stage 2, and written about issues ranging from school phobia to reading readiness (Kegan, 1980); or Stage 3 to Stage 4, and considered issues ranging from anorexia nervosa to assertiveness training (Kegan, 1979). I could have discussed the way the therapist-client relationship is constructed differently at each stage (Kegan, 1979), or the way the framework helps us to understand and emulate the "naturally therapeutic" effect of healthy unself-conscious relationships in families, friendships, and work roles (Kegan, in preparation).
CONCLUSION

The constructive-developmental perspective has deep roots and a long theoretical and empirical tradition. In its present form, however, addressed to so wide a portion of the human theater, it is probably itself an early adolescent. It is trying its hand. It has a lot to say and some of what it says will be wrong. But, like those adolescents who have best served every era, it asks good questions, and in its freedom from investment in the established order, it challenges us to use ourselves in new ways. In its rigorous attention to meaning-making, it reminds us that caring is not an emotional matter alone, not alone a matter of intensity. Caring is also "structural": it knows and recognizes me, or it fails to know and recognize me. There may be nothing so powerfully helpful to us as the feeling that we are understood. If the constructive-developmental perspective finally makes a contribution in the realm of practice, perhaps it will be to assist those who would be helpful to understand better.

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REFERENCES


