INFORMATION TO USERS

The most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this manuscript from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
The death and resurrection of reason: On Kierkegaard's view of philosophy

Khushf, George Peter, M.A.

Rice University, 1990

Copyright ©1990 by Khushf, George Peter. All rights reserved.
RICE UNIVERSITY

THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF REASON:
ON KIERKEGAARD'S VIEW OF PHILOSOPHY

by

GEORGE KHUSHF

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS

APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE:

Dr. Niels C. Nielsen, Raynor
Professor of Philosophy and
Religious Thought, Director
(Religious Studies)

Dr. Carrin Dunne, Lecturer
(Religious Studies)

Dr. Thomas F. Freeman,
Lecturer
(Religious Studies)

Houston, Texas
April, 1990
Copyright
George Khushf
1990
THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF REASON:
ON KIERKEGAARD'S VIEW OF PHILOSOPHY

by George Khushf

ABSTRACT

Kierkegaard identifies "philosophy" as the perspective which seeks to grasp Truth with thought. Thought is taken as a passion for ideality, immanence, and closure. But for Kierkegaard Truth involves reality, transcendence, and openness. It thus transcends thought and can only be grasped by the whole person; i.e. Truth is known in "maximal subjectivity."

Kierkegaard's affirmations about Truth rest on dogmatic assumptions. In contrast to the Socratic view, which takes Truth as immanent and attainable by way of remembrance, Kierkegaard views Truth as "coming" in a significant Moment called "the fullness of time." To the unregenerated self this Truth will appear as a paradox. If the self affirms itself, then the paradox is taken as "offence." But if the self gives up itself and embraces the paradox in faith, then there is a resurrection of reason such that the paradox is no longer contradiction.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Historical Horizon</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Philosophical and Religious Horizons</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: KIERKEGAARD AND PHILOSOPHY</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosopher or Anti-philosopher</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Marks of a Philosopher</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kierkegaard's Apologetic</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Questions</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: THE FALSIFICATION OF REASON</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Priority of Reason</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Comedy of Christendom</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tragedy of Christendom</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications of the Perspective of Pure Thought</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Self’s Riddle</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The End of Philosophy</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Place of Language</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toward Consciousness</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Self and Freedom</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom’s Despair</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immanence and Transcendence</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Priority of the Will</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason’s Cross</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 3: THE TRUTH OF SUBJECTIVITY.................139

  The Thought Project.......................................140

  Dogmatics..................................................152

  The Unknown................................................160

  Need and Love.............................................164

  God-Man......................................................166

  Paradox......................................................171

  Interlude....................................................178

  Existential Dialectic.....................................180

  Act............................................................183

  Suffering.....................................................186

  Contra and Supra Rationem...............................299

  Contemporaneity..........................................204

  The Final Judgment.......................................215

CONCLUSION..................................................229

  Genius or Apostle?........................................229

  Dogmatics, Speculation, and the Poetic...............236

  Kierkegaard as Kierkegaard.............................246

BIBLIOGRAPHY.................................................253
In writing a thesis one is faced with the task of writing a beginning. This may seem like a completely obvious and trivial point but, nevertheless, some reflection on it is not unwarranted. One can begin reflecting upon beginning by asking: what is the relation between the beginning and the main body of that which is to be said (whatever the content may be)? If we take this question in its most general import, then there are two possible answers: the preface and the introduction; i.e. the beginning is a part of what is to be said (the introduction) or the beginning prepares for what is to be said, but stands outside of it (the preface). This difference between preface and introduction is exhibited (to use a trivial indicator) in the way the two are usually numbered. The preface uses a different numbering system for its pages, while the introduction uses the same numbers as the rest of the text. The Roman numerals of the preface indicate its outsider status.

Hegel, in delineating the role of the preface, argued that its task is to say what will be said.\(^1\) It is to give

the whole, while the introduction, on the other hand, is to
give only the first part - the introductory part - of that
same whole. But if we can say the whole in the preface, why
do we need the rest of the text? Or if we need the rest of
the text, then how can we say the whole in the preface?

Hegel sought to answer this by noting that there were
different ways to say the same thing. E.g. there is the
language of representation (Vorstellung) and the language of
concept (Begriff). In the former, one says the truth but
one cannot make clear the full interrelation and mutual
justification of what is said. In order to have that one
needs the whole system and one must express the truth in
concepts.² Using this distinction one can then say that a
preface says the content, but in a way that does not exhibit
that content in the most appropriate way. Instead it simply
gives a pre-understanding of the content. And the role of
the main body of the text will be to further specify and
clarify the content that was already stated in the preface.
There are thus two linguistic embodiments of the content,
and one (the body of the work) is more appropriate than the
other (the preface).

However it is not always appropriate to simply contrast

---

one linguistic embodiment with another. In this essay we shall be evaluating the work of Soren Kierkegaard. The content SK sought to express was the Christian faith. And this content, at least for SK, was not first and foremost a doctrine or an idea. It was a living Truth and Way (John 14:6). Ultimately it was and is the person of Jesus Christ, who died and rose and will come again. Thus for him "content" means first: the trans-linguistic Truth that is one's concern. Only secondarily does "content" mean the linguistic embodiment of that content. And for SK the linguistic embodiment was never appropriate to the content of concern. (This includes his own writings. SK never saw what he said as the final, appropriate way of saying the Truth of the faith.) That means that the whole of a written work can only be a preface to the trans-linguistic content of concern. Thus, in evaluating the role of a written preface, we are actually considering the preface to a preface. And this changes the way a preface should be understood.

When one attempts to express the Christian faith, one is guided by certain questions. One then develops the content of the faith as an/the answer to these guiding questions.3 When we discussed the answer (or content) we

---

3For a good discussion of faith as the Answer to man, viewed as question see Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 18-28. But Tillich's relegation to philosophy of the formulation of the question is problematic.
distinguished between the content itself (the reality) and the expression of that content (its linguistic embodiment). In the same way, it is important to distinguish between the question itself (as actual) and the linguistic embodiment of that question.

Ultimately, at least on Kierkegaardian premises, man himself is the question. This need and concern which man is, is then embodied in the particular questions which he asks. These particular questions express the self’s grasp of itself - a self-understanding that provides the context for the explication of the way in which the Christian faith answers the question posed by the self. Just as there are many linguistic embodiments of the answer, each giving a greater or lesser expression to the truth, so there are many linguistic embodiments to that question which asks after the truth.

When we bring together these observations, then we come to yet a third step. Any particular expression of the faith provides not just an attempt at embodying the truth. Nor does it simply attempt to embody the question after the truth. It brings the two - truth and question - into relation and attempts to embody the question-answer.

This same insight can be phrased in a more traditional Christian terminology as follows: the ultimate concern of the Christian faith is in God. God is the answer. The question is man. And the relation is given as God-man. For
the Christian, this relation is expressed in the Christ.

There is a certain ambiguity in regarding the Christ as the relation between question and answer. On one hand, the Christ is viewed as the manifestation of God. He is then the answer to the question that a particular man is - you and I. E.g. I am the question to which Christ is the Answer. Then the relation under consideration is that between me and Christ. But, on the other hand, the Christ can be viewed as the manifestation of true man. He expresses the right question; that question which we are to be. Then the relation between question and answer is that between Christ and God. And I must ask about my relation to Christ and to God in a different way. And, third, we can view the relation between God and man as a relation that is given in Christ himself. How does divinity and humanity meet in the person of the Christ?

In these differing expressions of the relation between question and answer, we find the key motifs that have occupied Christian theology throughout the centuries. The doctrine of God, developed in terms of immanent and economic trinity, develops the relation between Father and Son. In the doctrines of creation and redemption, the ambiguities of man are developed; and Christological considerations such as the hypostatic union explore the relation between the divine and human in Christ. And, of course, all these different "solutions" (i.e. embodiments of the faith) are interrelated
with each other. The idiom of the question's formulation will directly influence the idiom of the expression of the answer.

This means that when we consider a particular expression of the faith, we must consider it as a whole. We must immerse ourselves in its idiom; in its formulation of the question, the answer, and the relation between the two. If we do not remember this, then we risk a complete misunderstanding of that expression of faith that is under consideration. We must not just look at the formulation of the answer. We must look at the Question-Answer. This will be very important in the case of the writings of Soren Kierkegaard.

Very often, people will begin with their own formulation of the question; i.e. of the concern of man. This may be a question that is formulated under the influence of Augustine or perhaps Luther or Calvin. And then one will come to SK's writings on "subjectivity" or the "leap" and attempt to see these writings as the answer to their formulation of the question. However, guided by their particular pre-understanding, they will give "subjectivity" and "leap" a meaning that is completely different than that which SK gave. On this basis, they will dismiss SK's solution as a "fideism" or "existentialism."

---

4 A good example of such misunderstanding is found in the writing of Louis Pojman. Ch. 1 of my thesis will consider Pojman's interpretation in some detail.
A good example of such an approach can be found in the objection, commonly raised, that Kierkegaard advocated an arbitrary subjectivism that made truth dependent on the self. These critics take hold of the catch phrase "truth is subjectivity" and then interpret the "leap of faith" to be a completely arbitrary choice that depends on nothing but the subjective truth that the self determined on the basis of its own freedom (and here freedom is interpreted as a "liberum arbitrium").

If, however, one had carefully considered Kierkegaard's formulation of the question, then it would be clear that Kierkegaard's formulation of the answer has been drastically misrepresented. In fact, by way of his terminology "subjectivity" and "leap" etc., Kierkegaard sought to combat just that subjectivism that he has been accused of.\(^5\)

This insight was first brought to my attention in a seminar conducted by Robert Perkins. It opened for me a whole new reading of Kierkegaard's works. Perkins, a leading scholar on both Kierkegaard and Hegel, was presenting the Rockwell lectures at Rice University. During that time he agreed to conduct a theology seminar on the thought of Kierkegaard. In the seminar, he pointed out that the phrase "truth is subjectivity" should be connected with the Socratic concern "know-thyself." By doing this SK develops the truth as the truth of selfhood; i.e. the answer

\(^5\)See chs. 2 and 3 of this essay.
to the question which the self is to be.

Such a solution calls directly on the "image of God" motif in Christianity. Admittedly, this motif is implicit only and Kierkegaard's idiom is radically untraditional. But when this connection is made, then one can clearly see that SK's concern in e.g. Philosophical Fragments is man's fall from the image (a theme SK develops in much greater detail in The Concept of Anxiety), and the way in which man is renewed again to God's image. Truth is subjectivity, because God himself is truth. And man is created in God's image.

The traditional Christian Answer is that Christ makes the way for man to be renewed in God's image. He expresses in his very being the image of the invisible God, and thereby enables man to be renewed in that image. Even more, however, Christ expresses and makes the way for the right relation between man and God. The truth of human selfhood is not just a structure of selfhood that expresses the way in which the self relates to itself. It must also entail the relation of the self as a whole to the God upon whom the self depends. i.e. The truth is not just "man" but "God-man." And this is the insight SK expresses in Philosophical Fragments.

Likewise, SK's use of "leap" can be well understood in traditional Christian terminology. "Grace" designates God's unmerited favor toward man. It is especially applicable in
a discussion of man’s renewal in God’s image. Man was fallen and could not of himself return to God. But God did for man that which man could not do of himself. If the self asks why God acted, then one can only answer by pointing to God’s grace. It was nothing that man merited. The grace is rooted in the freedom of God. To the man who attempts to fit this gift into the framework of merits and conditions, God’s act can only appear as a "leap." It is a break in the normal system of human self-righteousness. Moreover, this gift of God is the very faith that expresses the renewed relation of trust between God and man. Faith is not just a means to God’s favor. That would make it a human work. It is itself God’s gift and thus grace. And to the unrenewed mind - to the person who continually thinks in terms of merit and the correspondence of virtue and favor before God - such grace, such faith is an arbitrary "leap."

We could continue to translate Kierkegaard’s idiom into a more "traditional" one. However, such a translation would fail to appreciate the power of Kierkegaard’s writings. Nor would it develop SK’s formulation of the answer in terms of his formulation of the question. I.e. It would not do justice to SK’s work as a whole; as question-answer.

SK spoke of himself as a spy who went undercover in the attempt to defeat the enemy. More specifically, his undercover work consisted in formulating the Christian faith in terms of philosophical idiom. We would thus defeat his
purpose if we went through and sought to translate his idiom back into the terminology of a traditional Christian orthodoxy. Instead, it would behoove us to enter into his world. Let us discover the enemy he was fighting against and appreciate his formulation in its own context. Then we will be able to see why he translated Christianity into philosophical terms.

Before, however, we take our step into the world and idiom of Kierkegaard, it will be helpful to set the stage for appreciating the import of our analysis; i.e. to specify the role of this preface. In the main body of this work we shall be considering the role of reason and philosophy in the thought of Kierkegaard. But in our consideration we do not stand in a vacuum. There is a long history of the faith/reason problematic. It will thus be helpful to briefly outline the most significant aspects of that history. Such an outline will serve several purposes. First, we have already noted that SK in no way absolutized his particular expression of the faith (and that includes his understanding of the relation between faith and reason). A brief overview of other positions can thus serve the function of recognizing the other diverse approaches. Second, such an introduction can give us a good pre-understanding of the key issues involved. We can then have a basis for evaluating the suitability of SK's formulation of the problematic and its resolution. Finally, third, we
will find that we today live at a time in history where it is very important to appreciate Kierkegaard's philosophy. This philosophy (SK's) was one of the key influences on "Neo-Orthodoxy." And today we live at a time when Neo-Orthodoxy is disintegrating and the "post-modern" direction we are going is unclear. By evaluating the historical development of the problematic we can perhaps find, through our analysis of SK, aspects that may help us in charting our future paths. Let us now consider the historical development of the faith/reason problematic.

The faith/reason problematic, at least in its classical form, does not arise in history until after Greek thought was allowed to play its role in the development of Jewish and Christian thought. But we do find what may be viewed as a preliminary formulation of the problematic already in the Old Testament. The tension between the prophetic and the wisdom literature can be viewed as a precursor to the tension between faith and reason.⁶

One could develop the relation between the prophetic and wisdom literature as a relation between special and general revelation. The prophetic literature can more or less be aligned with special revelation and the wisdom

⁶Cf. J.L. Crenshaw, "Wisdom in the OT," the Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplement, pp. 952-956. Esp. p. 953: "Prophet and sage inevitably come to blows, for each represents a world view wholly alien to the other. Stated crassly, the extremes are revelation and reason."
literature with general revelation. Here "special revelation" is taken as emphasizing the role of history and of the occasional character of revelation. "General revelation," on the other hand, designates the universal accessibility of God's ways in nature, tradition, and human experience. 7

The wisdom literature is very broad in scope. It is for this reason that e.g. J.L. Crenshaw states that "an adequate definition of wisdom eludes interpreters of the O.T." 8 There is family or clan wisdom, courtly wisdom, scribal wisdom, nature wisdom, judicial and practical wisdom and theological wisdom. And each type has its own characteristics. But despite this diversity, one does find, in distinction to the prophetic literature, an emphasis on principles that are more or less universally valid. And even when there is a tension among the various wisdom books in the O.T., there is still a continuity in the approach that is taken.

Consider, for example, the relation between Proverbs

7 For a note on the difference between the older scholastic distinction between natural and revealed theology and the more recent distinction between general and special revelation see Walter Horton's "Revelation" in A Handbook of Christian Theology, ed. Arthur Cohen and Marvin Halverson (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), pp. 327-328. It should also be noted that the difference between the prophetic and wisdom literature can only be viewed as one of emphasis. Aspects of both general and special revelation are found in both.

8 Crenshaw, p. 952.
and Job. Proverbs is a book designed "to help the youth of its day achieve success in life and avoid all snares and dangers. It is an optimistic book, in the sense that it finds an order in the world which a man can know and, knowing, conform with to his benefit." To put it in Kantian terms, we could say that it assumes a worldly order in which there is an accord of virtue with happiness. The way of the righteous, as a way faithful to God, is the way that leads to greatest success. And the principles of righteousness can be obtained by observation of nature (e.g. go the ant o'sluggard...), by experience, and by calling upon the traditions of elders and parents. And although much is said of the need to fear God and walk by his ways, the principles advocated are not, for the most part, derived from the revealed law. They are principles that all peoples of all nations may discover if they pay heed to nature, experience, and tradition.

Job, on the other hand, challenges "the simple arithmetic of divine justice" that is presupposed in Proverbs. "Man is more complicated and God less transparent than the teachers of Proverbs and their complacent clients assumed." Job is a man who is righteous in the eyes of

---


10Ibid, pp. 856; 860.

11Ibid, p. 858.
God and men. But despite this, great calamity comes upon him. Virtue and happiness do not necessarily coincide. And those "wise men" who attempt to reckon on that basis are shown to be transgressors. But despite this seemingly anti-wisdom thrust, the book of Job attempts to advance principles and truths that are not tied to a specific place or time. And although there is a special event of revelation that takes place in God's address through the whirlwind - a natural phenomena? - The principles are those that are available to all. It is interesting to note that Job is not necessarily Jewish, nor is the problem of evil, etc. a problem that is tied directly to the law. In both the case of Proverbs and Job as well as the rest of the wisdom literature, one is concerned with the universally applicable and the universally accessible.

In contrast to this, the prophetic literature focuses upon the particular. Its concern is with history - with that which occurs at a particular place and time. It is not coincidental that the "prophetic books" like Joshua, Judges and the books of Samuel and Kings (the "former prophets") are historical books. And the "latter prophets" (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve "minor prophets") address a particular people at a particular time. These works exhibit God's ongoing activity and revelation.¹² E.g. when Saul or

¹²"OT Propheticism may always be - certainly it has been and is now - a subject of vigorous debate in interpretation, but on one point there is no possibility of dispute. The
David, etc. asks a prophet (Samuel, Nathan, etc.) "should we go out and fight?" universal principles are not at all under consideration. Instead they are seeking God's direction for this particular battle. They are not asking about whether or not it is morally or religiously justifiable to fight battles.

The "wise man" knows how to act in general. He is often a counselor to a king. And when his advice is sought, he calls upon his base of knowledge - the universal principles - in order to address the particular concern. The "prophet" is also a counselor to the king. He, however, does not respond on the basis of those general principles which God has revealed. Instead, he seeks God's word for this particular event or concern. And through a new event of revelation, God directs the prophet in the words that are to be spoken.

As we have already stated, however, care should be taken in drawing too strong a line between the prophetic and wisdom literature. S.H. Blank well notes that

prophetic (be it invective or judgment, assurance or promise, cry of anguish or confusion, symbolic act or relationship, or whatever), the characteristically prophetic phenomenon, always presupposes (consciously or unconsciously, made explicit or taken for granted, immediately relevant or only of indirect ultimate pertinence) the decisive impingement of Yahweh upon history. Where this sense of effective relationship of Yahweh to history is absent, prophetism is also absent." B.D. Napier, "Prophet," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 3, pp. 896-919; p. 905. It is for this reason that Napier characterizes "the essence of prophetism" as "address to history." Ibid.
"there is the human wisdom which comes to a man as a gift, divinely bestowed. This is not only the revealed word of God, once recorded and now studied as the Law and the Prophets (Ecclus. 24:23; 39:1; and often), but it is also a present giving (as to Solomon in his dream in response to his prayer; cf Wisd. Sol. 7-8; also Daniel). It is wisdom through the spirit of God (Gen. 41:38-39; Isa. 11:2, of the messianic king). This is the wisdom of which the poet in Job 28 says: 'Man does not know the way to it' (vs 13 LXX; cf. Ecclus 3:20-21)."\textsuperscript{13}

Likewise, the prophet often presupposes the universal principles of wisdom (esp. with respect to justice; e.g. caring for the poor, etc.). There is thus a particular element in the wisdom literature and a universal one in the prophetic.

It should also be reiterated that in the O.T., the tension between the wisdom and prophetic literature cannot be defined as a tension between faith and reason. Faith played a central role in both types of literature. It designated \textit{faithfulness} to the paths of truth and righteousness. And "reason," viewed as an individual faculty, is almost completely absent in the O.T. The role which was later assumed by reason is played by "word" and "wisdom" in the O.T. And the "word" of the prophet is just as much the precursor of reason as is the "wisdom" of the wise men.

For the first formulation of reason as a faculty proper, and thus an explicit opposition between faith and reason, we must turn to Greek thought. The classic

\textsuperscript{13}Blank, p. 860.
statement of the opposition can be found in Plato's *Republic*. In Book IV of that work, Plato develops what he views as the three parts of the soul. His derivation of the three parts is very interesting. There are two aspects to the derivation. On one side, he argues that there is a direct parallel between the structure of the ideal state and that of the individual. Both a state and an individual can be just, disciplined, courageous and wise (the four cardinal virtues). Since in the state these virtues were intimately related to the three elements of the state and the interrelation of those elements, those virtues imply that there must be three elements in the soul whose qualities account for virtue in the same way that the qualities of state account for virtue. This derivation of the elements is indirect and depends on the parallel between individual and state. But Plato also attempts to offer a more direct proof by considering the conflicting motives that are present in individuals. In each individual, there is a faculty that calculates and decides, one that desires, and a middle faculty that accounts for characteristics like ambition, indignation, enterprise, and courage. These different concerns often compete with one another. They must thus involve separate elements. Plato then terms the elements of the soul, reason, spirit and the appetites.

---

Reason is the highest faculty and it should govern the other ones.

Whether or not we accept Plato's derivation, there is no doubt that it has played a powerful role in western thought up to the present day. Most significant is his identification of reason as a particular faculty of the soul that is distinct from other faculties. When this discussion of the individual is coupled with Plato's discussion of the world, then the uniquely Greek form of the faith/reason problematic is specified.

Plato's view of the world is dualistic. There is a realm of unchanging forms or ideas and one of change and movement. The former realm is ultimately real. It is the realm of "being" in the full sense. The latter realm, on the other hand, has a lower ontological status. It is not unreal (nonbeing). But neither is it fully real. It stands between being and nothing.

Plato demonstrates the difference between the two realms by considering the different modes of apprehension. Apprehension of the ultimate realm (the forms) is called

\[15\text{Ibid, pp. 474c-480.}\]

\[16\text{For a good summary of this see Lee's note on pp. 344-345 of his translation. His diagram is especially helpful:}\]

Knowledge: noesis   Opinion: doxa

Pure thought  Reason  Belief  Illusion
episteme  dianoia  pistis  eikasa
"knowledge." And it is reached by the faculty of reason. For Plato, this apprehension of the forms is not empirical. Rather, it involves turning inward - i.e. remembering.

For Plato, the soul already knows all truth. If it did not already know, then it could not seek the truth because it would not know that it lacks something. But at the same time, the soul does not know all truth. Otherwise, it would not need to seek the truth. Plato solves this paradox of knowing and not knowing by arguing that the soul once had the vision of truth, but it has forgotten its divinity; i.e. it has turned away from its pure participation in the realm of forms and now lives in the realm of matter. In order to attain again to that knowledge which is already its possession, the soul must turn away from the external world and move into its own interiority. The soul already knows truth and by turning inward it will discover again its prize.

In contrast to knowledge, the apprehension of the material world is called opinion or belief. Since the realm of matter is the realm of "seeming" rather than "being," the apprehension of that realm cannot be termed "knowledge." To know would be to apprehend that form which is the being of the world's seeming. But this would mean one would no

---

17Cf. Plato's Protagoras, 320b; Meno, 70a; Euthydemus, 276d. For a good discussion of this and SK's response, see Soren Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, tr. Howard and Edna Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 9-22.
longer apprehend the material world as the material world. One would have negated that particularity that makes the one many, and apprehended the unchanging factor in the continually changing material world.

In a later section of the Republic referred to as the "divided line," Plato further develops the distinction between the two realms in terms of the apprehension of the realm. Belief (pistis) is directly tied to the realm of opinion (doxa) and reason is connected with the realm of knowledge (episteme). Belief always involves a grasp of being and not-being while reason grasps being alone, completely freed from the nothingness of matter. Thus, in order to move to a more perfect knowledge, one must set aside faith in favor of reason.

The process by which one moves from faith to reason is interpreted by Plato to be a movement from the many and the changing toward the eternal one. One could illustrate this process by considering a man surrounded by a herd of pigs. To the senses there are many pigs, all in a swirl of movement and difference. But for thought there is an idea (form) "pig" which encompasses the many and varying pigs. This form gives the being of the pigs; one could call it the pigness of the particular, material pigs. To belief there are many pigs. And apprehension of "pig" involves focusing

\[\text{\textsuperscript{18}}\text{Republic, pp. 509d-511e.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{19}}\text{Ibid, 478a-e.}\]
upon the chaotic running etc. of the herd. This will result in confusion because it focuses upon a unity of being and nothing; i.e. on becoming. But reason moves inward and grasps the being in the becoming. This inward turn is a move to truth.

While the inward turn is indeed a move to truth, it is important to recognize that for Plato, the form "pig" did not give very much being - and that despite Plato's belief that the form "pig" gives the being of material pigs. The problem is that for Plato material pigs do not have very much being. If one wanted to grasp a greater being then one must grasp the being of the form "pig;" i.e. the being of the being of the material pig. This move is again from the many to the one. E.g. There are the many forms "dog," "cow," "pig," etc., and the concept "animal" grasps all of these. "Animal" gives the being of the form "pig."

In this way, a "chain of being" was developed that moved from a lesser to a greater being. And as one moved from material pig to the form "pig" and then to the form "animal" one moved more and more inward. At the depth of interiority, one attained to the most universal and most real form. Whether this form was called the "good," "true" or "beautiful", or whether it was simply called the "the one" or the "the all" - in any case, this form provided the satisfaction of human concern. It was bliss and the move toward it was salvific. And when one attained to that form,
one had the principle and truth that enabled one to rightly govern all the affairs of life. E.g. For Plato the philosopher ("lover of wisdom"), once he has attained to the vision of the Good, can rightly govern all the affairs of state, because he has the principles that enable him to address all problems.\(^{20}\)

For the Greeks, both faith and reason are thus considered in terms of the cognitive dimension. Faith is tied to particulars and concerns a unity of being and non-being. Reason is tied to the universals that give the being of the particulars. Reason grasps the same content as faith, but it grasps the content in a purer way. It has set aside the dross of non-being that was still present in belief. (The content proper can only be the being of the thing. That is why it is legitimate to say that faith and reason grasp the same content)

Although Plato does not specifically develop this, later philosophers will more specifically focus on faith and reason as two ways of apprehending the same thing.\(^{21}\) For Plato, faith was the mode of apprehension that corresponded to the material world and reason the mode that corresponded to the realm of forms. But, viewing the matter in a

\(^{20}\)Cf. Plato's discussion of the philosopher ruler, Republic, pp. 471c-521b.

\(^{21}\)For the way in which Plato's thought continued to develop, see D.A. Rees, "Platonism and the Platonic Tradition," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, vol. 6, pp. 333-341.
slightly different way, one could say that one can view "pig" - the content - according to faith or reason. Here we focus not on the realm but on the content. When we view that content according to reason, then we grasp the universal pig. But when we view it according to faith then we have only the particular, material pig. In the same way, all contents - even the most universal; e.g. the good - can be viewed according to faith and reason. In faith, one grasps the content in a shallow, inappropriate way. And in reason, one grasps the content in a deeper way - and that means in a greater interiority.

In a broad sense, one could designate the "All" (or "One") with the word "cosmos". This is the complete world of forms; the chain of being. It is the known. The knower (the soul) is the tripartite entity which (ideally) is to be ruled by reason. Reason is the faculty of soul that is appropriate for grasping the being (form) of the cosmos. But for developing Greek thought, at the depth of reality, the faculty of knowledge (reason) is one with the all-encompassing form of the cosmos. At the depth of being knower and known are one. The reason of the individual can then, metaphorically, be viewed as a divine spark or emanation that flows forth from the One. In this way, the dualism of matter and form gives way to a monism of knower and known.

These ideas, all given in their germinal form in Plato,
were further developed in later Hellenistic thought. The
"One" and its emanations flowered into a detailed cosmology
in Neoplatonic and Gnostic thought. Additionally a full
doctrine of salvation or liberation was developed and
practiced in a religious form. But in all the variant
forms, the following key themes remained constant:

1. Dualism of material and spiritual world, with the
   former taken as an evil image of the latter.
2. Priority of reason over faith (viewed as the
   priority of knowledge over opinion)
3. Monism of knower and known.
4. A salvific process by which one turned away from
   the material world and inward toward the divine
   spark of one's being.

The difference between the Greek notion of faith and
the Jewish understanding of faith (as expressed in the O.T.)
should be immediately apparent. In the O.T., there is no
opposition between faith and reason. In fact, it is
interesting to note that the same Hebrew word is rendered as
both faith (pistis) and truth (aletheia) when it is
translated into Greek.\footnote{The Hebrew word is emunah. It is seen in such varied
passages as Hab. 2:4, "the just shall live by faith" and
Prov. 12:17, "He who speaks truth declares righteousness,
but a false witness, deceit." Cf. these passages in the
Septuagint for the Greek.} (Truth, of course, is an idea that
the Greeks directly associated with reason.) However that
does not mean that "faith" was given a primarily cognitive
meaning. For the Jew, "faith" was given an ethical meaning. It referred to a "trusting and confident attitude toward God."

One could summarize the difference between Greek and Jewish thought by focusing upon the different ultimate concerns. For the Greek knowledge was the ultimate. It was even salvific. To know the good was to do the good. Even further, to know the good was to know bliss. It was to attain to one's own divinity. But for the Jew, faithfulness was the ultimate. It involved obedience to the Law which expressed God's will. There was thus a radical ethical seriousness. To know the good (the law) did not necessarily imply that one would do the good. The evil was sin rather than ignorance; i.e. it was willful rebellion and unfaithfulness to God. It occurred when man was wise in his own eyes; when he trusted (had faith) in himself and not in God. Thus for the Jew, faith/faithfulness was the highest virtue, while for the Greek, it signified an inferior type of knowledge. One could contrast the two by opposing the priority of reason (Greeks) against the priority of faith (Jews).

Martin Buber, a 20th century Jewish theologian, has attempted to contrast Judaism and Christianity in just those terms we have used to contrast Jewish and Hellenistic
thought. In Two Types of Faith, Buber contrasts the faith of Jesus with that of Paul. He argues that Jesus stood in the same faith relationship to God as the Pharisees and O.T. Jewish writers. This involved a belief in an immediate relationship between God and man that involved trust and obedience. According to Buber, Paul changed Jesus’ meaning by introducing a dualism. This dualism expressed itself in two warring natures in man. On the basis of this, Paul then drew a line between faith and action. Man could not fulfill the law. As a result, faith could no longer be identified with faithfulness to God’s ways. For Paul, Buber continues, faith became the cognitive act in which one acknowledges something as true without being able to give sufficient reason for that truth. Instead of believing in an immediate relationship to God, Paul taught a doctrine about a remote God and about Christ. In this teaching, Paul and not Jesus is the true originator of the Christian faith. Buber then argues that John and other Christian writings further develop the dualism that Paul introduced. For the Christian, faith becomes a cognitive act rather than trust or faithfulness.

If Buber were to take patristic and middle age thought as representative of Christianity, then he could somewhat justify his distinction between Christian and Jewish faith.

There was a period in the history of Christianity in which thought was largely, although not exclusively, dominated by the Greek understanding of faith. But Buber's distinctions are completely inappropriate in the cases of Paul and John.

First, it should be noted that the cognitive aspect of faith is not at all absent in the era antedating Christianity. We have already noted that the same Hebrew word can mean both faith and truth. But, even further, it is important to recognize that Jewish thought also concerned itself with the pursuit of that unitary principle which grasped the many. The Proverb, as the basic unit of all wisdom literature, involved an attempt to capture in one brief saying the truth obtained from much experience. I.e. One sought that universal that could be applied in particular circumstances. A similar concern is found in the Jewish attempt to find the universal principle that summarizes the Law and the Prophets. Jesus was fully Jewish when he spoke of love of God and man as the whole of the scripture.

The same tension we saw earlier between the wisdom and prophetic literature is now seen between Jewish and Greek emphasis. Here the whole of the O.T. (both the wisdom and

---


25 Crenshaw, p. 953; Blank, p. 856.

prophetic) can be viewed as prophetic, and the Greek concern can be aligned with the wisdom literature. The tension within Judaism is now a tension between Judaism and Greek thought. However, there are also significant differences between the Jew and the Greek. We find not just tension but opposition.

For the Jew, there can be no dualism of material and spiritual world, nor can there be a monism of knower and known. God created the world. It is therefore good. Man is also a part of that creation. He is thus not a spark of the divine, although he does have the breath of God breathed into him. And on these issues Christianity allies squarely with Judaism.

Admittedly, one can find a certain type of dualism in Paul and John. But this is not a dualism of matter and spirit (or idea). It is rather the dualism of a fallen and renewed order. The parallel for this is found not in Plato, but in the Exodus account of Judaism. Egypt signified the structure of slavery and bondage. It was an order in which God's children were bound to serving a land of false gods. In the Exodus account, we read of how God led his children out of the old order of slavery and into the new order of his promised land. This new order was Torah, God's holy will. Likewise for Paul and John, the old order - that of the "old man" (Paul) and the fallen world (John) - is that in which one is in slavery to false gods. In Jesus the
Christ, however, the new order — that of God's kingdom — is manifest. Also, for both Paul and John, faith is not just a
cognitive act. It is, rather, an act of the whole person, and trust and faithfulness are directly involved.

But, one could ask, does not the Logos motif in John
(ch. 1) and the wisdom motif in Paul (e.g. 1Cor. 1-4)
indicate that Greek thought has come to play a much more
significant role? Already in the second century, these
themes were directly connected to the Logos of Stoicism and
the forms of Plato. However, a careful examination of
wisdom in Paul shows that he was in fact reacting against a
Greek (proto-gnostic) understanding of wisdom. And his
thought can be well understood in the context of e.g. the
hymn to wisdom in Proverbs 8. Likewise, the meaning of
Logos in John is best understood in the light of the O.T.;
esp. the creation account in Genesis 1.

It should also be noted that Jewish thought was already
thoroughly influenced by Hellenism well before the birth of
Christ. Philo of Alexandria is a good example of how the
O.T. had been adapted to Greek philosophy.

We could say that both the cognitive and ethical
dimensions of faith are present in christianity. And they
were already present in Judaism. However, there was an
important shift in focus. In Judaism, one brought together
the two dimensions of faith in Torah. Torah was the word
and wisdom of God. There the unity of the universal and the
particular, the wise and prophetic, took place. But in Christianity, this unity was given in Jesus Christ. He was the Logos - the one word - to which the many words of Torah pointed (Jn 1). He was the wisdom that was with God in creation and that is now manifest in redemption (Jn 1:2; 1 Cor 1-4).

If we now bring together the three main topics we discussed thus far - namely, 1) the tension between the wise and the prophetic in Judaism, 2) the relation between faith and reason in Hellenism, and 3) the focus on Jesus Christ as the unity of the universal and particular - then we have the fundamental components of the Christian faith/reason problematic. There are two meanings of faith (the ethical and cognitive), and several meanings to reason (the one, cosmos, word, wisdom, faculty of the soul, etc.). We shall now very briefly outline some of the solutions given to this problematic.

Clement of Alexandria. For Clement the cognitive element of faith was given priority. He argued that minds have been confused because of the many different types of false information. Thus the mind should be completely emptied. One should start afresh.27 Since first principles cannot be justified, one begins by faith. i.e. In faith the first principles of the true philosophy are appropriated.

Then, one is to press on to knowledge. According to Clement philosophy performs the same function for the Greeks that the Law performs for the Jews: it prepares them for Christ. Philosophy is thus good, and the discerning Christian (the "Gnostic") will always apply his leisure time to studying the Hellenic philosophy. It enables one to attain to the "real science" (= episteme) which "is a sure comprehension, leading up through true and sure reasons to the knowledge (gnosis) of the cause."

Through philosophy, the more naive Christian (the pistic) attains to the knowledge (for Clement esoteric) which expresses full salvation. It is in this way that one becomes truly spiritual (a pneumatic). Thus Clement asserts the priority of reason and he gives greater weight to Hellenistic thought than Jewish thought.

Tertullian. Tertullian set reason and faith in opposition to each other and affirmed the priority of faith. For him philosophy, rather than a "handmaid to theology," was a seductress that led the believer directly into

---


29Ibid, pp. 517-518.


heresy. In poetic form he states "what indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians?" Instead of pressing on from faith to reason, Tertullian states that one must seek until one finds the doctrine one is to believe. Then, one must simply keep to what one believes and only believe this additional thing: "that nothing else is to be believed, and therefore, nothing else to be sought, after you have found and believed what has been taught by Him who charges you to seek no other thing than that which he has taught." Instead of seeking answers to the questions of the philosophers, Tertullian councils that one should live according to that which one has found. In fact, a mark of the heretic is that his conduct is frivolous, worldly and without seriousness,


34 Ibid, p. 248.
authority or discipline. In opposition to the "knowledge" of the heretics, Tertullian advances the three classic criteria of true faith: canon, creed and community.

The opposition of ideas seen in Tertullian and Clement provide a new formulation of the tension between the prophetic and wisdom motifs. One could parallel the wisdom literature with Clement and the prophetic with Tertullian. It is also not insignificant to note that the historical development of both sides involved a further radicalization of their onesidedness. Untempered by the prophetic concerns, Clement's thoughts were further hellenized by his most noted student, Origen. They developed into an elaborate philosophical cosmology which was deemed by the Catholic church to be heretical. Likewise, Tertullian's prophetic and ethical radicalism led him to a sect called Montanism. This involved prophetic figures and an extreme ethical rigorism, both of which, in their Montanist form, were decreed to be heretical. Ironically, the author who set up the classic criteria of orthodoxy, was deemed unorthodox by that same criteria.

Augustine of Hippo. The church required a position which would do justice to both the prophetic and wisdom concerns. And it was in Augustine's famous maxim "Credo ut

---


36 On canon, ibid, p. 247; on creed, ibid, p. 249; on community, ibid, p. 252.
Intelligum" (I believe in order to understand) that the church found its answer. For Augustine, the majority of people must begin with belief because their souls are not strong enough to see the reasons for the truth. This belief (or faith) involves submission to the authority of the church and its teaching.\textsuperscript{37} Augustine argues against those who say it is a fault to believe.\textsuperscript{38} It is a fault to be credulous but everyone who has a friend knows that belief is not a fault. Just as it is not wrong to believe a friend, so also "it be not base to believe before one knows."\textsuperscript{39}

In \textit{On the Profit of Believing}, Augustine seems to imply that some people are qualified to come to the truth on the basis of reason rather than faith. These people are very few and even they should come in faith so that the multitude is not confused. "Although they will in no way harm themselves by what is done, yet they will harm the rest by the precedent."\textsuperscript{40} It will not hurt one to come the round about way of faith, but it may hurt to come by reason if one does not have the strength of soul to come in the right way.


\textsuperscript{38}He is more specifically arguing against the Manichees who profess to give reasons rather than require belief. Ibid, p. 348.

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid, p. 357.

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid, p. 358.
Through belief, the mind is cultured and treated so that it can press on to the deeper truths of reason.

In a manner similar to Plato, Augustine places reason above belief. But unlike Plato, he places belief above opinion (rather than viewing it as a subset of opinion). "What we understand, we owe to reason; what we believe to authority; what we name an opinion on, to error," and "the first is always without fault, the second sometimes without fault, the third never without fault."41 If one wishes to guard against the error of opinion, one should begin with belief and then press on to the certainty of understanding. "In retaining faith, even of those things which as yet we comprehend not, we are set free from the error of such as have an opinion."42

There are, however, several passages in Augustine's work which imply that all people must begin with belief. There is no one who has a sufficiently trained mind for beginning with reason alone. In On the Profit of Believing, he states that minimally one must believe in the existence of that for which one seeks reasons. If one believed nothing, one would find the reasons for nothing. "Therefore, I should not come unto him, who forbids me to believe, unless I believed something."43 Without first

41 Ibid, p. 359.
42 Ibid, p. 360.
believing "health cannot return to sick souls."\textsuperscript{44} Since all souls are sick, all must come by way of belief. And for Augustine, belief is in the authority of canon, creed, and community. "To man unable to see the truth, authority is at hand, in order that he may be fitted for it, and may allow himself to be cleansed."\textsuperscript{45}

Thus, Augustine accepts Tertullian's emphasis on the need for canon, creed and community. But he also accepts Clement's priority of reason over faith. He criticizes Tertullian's epistemological complacency and demands that one press on to discover the deep, systematic unity that is the reason for those things that faith accepts. This systematic unity is none other than the very wisdom of God. And the reason for the incarnation was so that the eternal reason of God could be manifest in time to fallen man.\textsuperscript{46} But Augustine also criticizes Clement's all too rapid embracing of Hellenistic philosophy. This philosophy can just as easily lead to e.g. the heresy of the Manichaeans as it can lead to the true faith. There is (as advocated by Tertullian) an absurdity to the faith that is due to our own fallenness and corruption.\textsuperscript{47} Because the fallen soul resides in the shallow realms of reality (the world of the material

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid, p. 362.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, p. 364.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, p. 363.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, p. 355.
senses), it perceives truth in an inappropriate way.\textsuperscript{48}

In his classic work \textit{On the Trinity}, Augustine exemplifies the way the soul is to move from faith to understanding.\textsuperscript{49} On the basis of scripture and the teachings of the church, the believer discovers those truths of God that are to be accepted.\textsuperscript{50} However, because of the exceeding brilliance of that truth and the fallenness of the knower, this truth of God seems contradictory. How can God be one and three? Since man is created in the image of God, the analogy for understanding this truth is present at the depth of one's being. Thus, beginning with faith, Augustine journeys to the deepest interiority of selfhood so that he can find the principle for understanding the unity of God.\textsuperscript{51} Faith seeks understanding. And guided by the authority of faith, Augustine arrives at the vestige of the Trinity—namely, memory, intellect and will—whereby the absurdity of faith gives place to the unity of reason.\textsuperscript{52} However,

\textsuperscript{48}Ibid, p. 354.


\textsuperscript{50}"The following dissertation concerning the Trinity ... has been written in order to guard against the sophistries of those who disdain to begin with faith, and are deceived by a crude and perverse love of reason." Ibid, p. 17. On the procedure of the work, see book I.

\textsuperscript{51}One should carefully note the development from the early books, where scripture is discussed, to the later, philosophical discussion. On the attempt to understand that which faith has discerned, see books ix-xv.

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid, book xiv.
even at the depth of the soul the vision of the Truth is still incomplete.\textsuperscript{53} It is not until we see face to face that the beatific vision will be granted in its fullness. Thus, while one can increasingly understand — and faith seeks understanding — one will not fully understand until the resurrection.\textsuperscript{54}

This solution was regarded as the Christian solution for well over 600 years. It is still today considered to be one of the most viable answers to the interrelation of faith and reason. But in the middle ages another answer was given that would hold equal sway.

\textbf{Thomas Aquinas.} In many ways the position of Aquinas on faith and reason is still an Augustinian one.\textsuperscript{55} We saw that for Augustine, there were some people who could grasp at least the elementary principles of faith on the basis of reason. It was only when one comes to the deeper truths (such as the Trinity) that faith was a necessary beginning point. For \textit{apologetic} reasons Augustine argued that all should begin with faith (so that the less able would not be led astray in presumption). It is thus interesting to note

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid, pp. 221-222.

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid, pp. 222-223.

\textsuperscript{55}The similarity is well exhibited by noting that everything J. Hick attributes to Aquinas on faith could also be attributed to Augustine, with the one exception being that Augustine would not say that "knowledge excludes faith." J. Hick, "Faith," \textit{The Encyclopedia of Philosophy}, vol. 3 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1967), pp. 165-169; p. 165.
that it is also for apologetic reasons that Aquinas argues the opposite: one should begin with reason.\textsuperscript{56} The earlier church fathers had a common ground between those they sought to convince and themselves, because they came out of the same heresies and paganism of those they seek to evangelize. But at the time of Aquinas, one sought to speak to people outside the faith with whom there was no common ground. Thus, according to Aquinas, the only place of meeting was reason.

Aquinas distinguished between two types of truth - that which was accessible to reason and that which transcended reason. The fullest truth is the very being of God.\textsuperscript{57} But there is a "disproportion between our finite understanding and the infinite essence of God."\textsuperscript{58} The only truths that reason can ascertain are those that are appropriate to our finite understanding. But if it is accessible to reason, then faith has no place.\textsuperscript{59} This does not mean that these natural truths are not a part of faith. God has also given them as a part of faith so that all - even those untrained


\textsuperscript{57}Ibid, book 1, chs. 4-6.


\textsuperscript{59}Ibid.
in the use of reason - can grasp the truth.\textsuperscript{60} But if something can be known by reason, then one should seek to know it by reason.

Since both revealed truth and the truths of reason are God’s truth, there can be no opposition between the two. They are thus complementary.\textsuperscript{61} Reason strengthens faith and faith strengthens reason. And "just as Grace does not destroy our nature, but fertilizes, exalts and perfects it, so faith, by its influence upon reason as such, promotes the development of a rational activity of a more fruitful kind."\textsuperscript{62} In this way, faith strengthens understanding. And understanding strengthens faith by leading one to faith’s threshold. If Augustine’s approach could be termed "faith seeking understanding" then that of Aquinas can be termed "understanding seeking faith."

\textbf{Martin Luther.} From Tertullian (2nd Century) until Luther (16th Century) the cognitive (Greek) meaning of faith was given priority. Even Tertullian, with his ethical rigorism and later prophetism, tied faith to "doctrine."\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{60}Aquinas, book 1, ch. 4.

\textsuperscript{61}Ibid, book 1, ch. 7.

\textsuperscript{62}Gilson, p. 44. The same idea is well exemplified in Aquinas’ quote of Hilary: "Though he who pursues the infinite with reverence will never finally reach the end, yet he will always progress by pressing onward." Aquinas, book 1, ch. 8.

\textsuperscript{63}Tertullian, p. 246. He speaks of faith as "the doctrine which they [the apostles] received from Christ."
Augustine interpreted the faith in Platonic categories, and Aquinas used Aristotelian ones. But Luther, seeking to reject philosophy and the "great whore" reason, turned back to Biblical categories. For him, "faith was not primarily belief in the church's dogmas, but rather a whole-hearted trust in the divine grace and love revealed in Jesus Christ...it is not belief that, but belief in."  

This rediscovery of Biblical faith changed the face of Christianity.

Luther did not, however, reject reason in a naive way. He tied "reason" to the present world order and argued that man cannot completely escape that order in this life. But through faith, one also becomes a participant in another order - that of God's kingdom. This kingdom also has its logic; namely, the Logos himself. To paraphrase a saying of Pascal's, faith has reasons of which the reason knows nothing. Luther thus did not reject all that was meant by "reason" in e.g. the philosophy of Augustine. To use non-Lutheran terms, one could say faith has its reason and the world has its reason. For Luther, the two reason's are in conflict. One is simultaneously a participant in both the

64 Hick, p. 166.

65 Martin Luther, "Secular Authority: To What Extent it Should be Obeyed," in Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings, ed. John Dillenberger, pp. 363-402. This is on the two kingdoms. On reason's connection to the kingdom of the world see p. 401. For Luther's more negative statements on reason see pp. 85, and esp. p. 128.
kingdom of God and that of the world. In addressing this paradox, Luther argued that one must give reason its due in secular matters. It, like the secular sword, was set up to restrain evil. But in matters of religion, faith must be given complete priority.66

The influence of Science. Luther did not reject a cognitive element to faith. He simply changed the emphasis so that the cognitive element was subordinate to the act of total trust and commitment. However, even as the Protestant reformation was taking place, scientific developments were occurring that would challenge the cognitive aspects of faith in a much more radical way than Luther.67 As a result of advances in historical criticism and astronomy the world view of the Bible was challenged. Connected with "the faith" were certain truths (e.g. the three level world) that reason "proved" false. No longer could Aquinas' complementarity of reason and faith be advanced in a naive way - at least not if the world view of the Bible was presented as a part of the content of faith. Also, developments in e.g. Newtonian mechanics fueled a new trust in the power of reason to unlock even the most universal structures of the universe. In England, many turned to a


deism, in which God was the master watch-maker and the world was the engineered time-piece that he set in order. And throughout Europe, a new belief in reason led to intricate philosophical systems in which the truths of the soul, world, immortality, and God were all grasped in their systematic unity.

Immanuel Kant. Kant, however, observed that while great progress could be seen in the developments of natural science, there was no verifiable development in the philosophical arena. The ability of reason to penetrate nature thus did not imply that reason was able to penetrate to the deeper truths of e.g. the soul and God. In his Critique of Pure Reason, Kant investigated the conditions of the possibility of experience. Through that investigation, he concluded that reason was only adequate for grasping the phenomena of the empirical world. Even further, he argued that cognitive claims about things like the soul and God were all contradictory and meaningless.

Kant did not, however, reject religion. He simply

---


69 This is the argument of Kant’s "Transcendental Analytic."

70 This is the argument of Kant’s "Transcendental Dialectic."
rejected its cognitive claims. He also rejected any "special revelation." Instead of revelation, he grounded religion in "practical reason." In his Critique of Practical Reason, Kant argued that immortality and the existence of God were postulates needed in order to insure that there is a moral order of reality (i.e. that there will be a perfect accord between virtue and happiness). Religion was then developed within the limits of reason alone - and this meant it was developed in terms of morality.

Friedrich Schleiermacher. Kant's first critique had a tremendous impact on the thought of his time (and today still). Schleiermacher was among those that embraced his philosophy. But Schleiermacher was uncomfortable with the reduction of religion to morality and the elimination of special revelation. Influenced by Schlegel and the identity philosophy of Schelling, Schleiermacher argued that religion was tied to a "feeling of absolute dependance" (schlechthinnige Abhangigkeit). This was a "creaturely consciousness" in which one was aware of a Ground that

71 For a good example of this rejection see Immanuel Kant, Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, trs. Theodore Greene and Hoyt Hudson (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 175.

conditioned all human existence.\textsuperscript{73} This Ground transcended all thought and language. The purpose of religion was to use language - poetically understood, and always inadequate - to promote the appropriate religious consciousness.\textsuperscript{74} Jesus was one whose every word and act manifested the religious consciousness in a pure way.\textsuperscript{75}

For Schleiermacher, philosophy and theology both were concerned with the same thing - that identity which is the Ground of all that is. But the two disciplines approach the Truth from different directions. Philosophy approaches from the side of thought and religion approaches from the side of feeling. At their limit the two are one.\textsuperscript{76}

\textit{G.W.F. Hegel.} At the same time as Schleiermacher, but in a different part of Germany, Hegel developed a very different response to Kant's philosophy. Hegel rejected the limits Kant set on reason. He argued that Kant's very approach involved a transcendence of the limits that he imposed.\textsuperscript{77} According to Hegel, philosophy was above

\textsuperscript{73}\textit{Friedrich Schleiermacher, Ueber die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern} (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), Zweite Rede; esp. pp. 41-89.

\textsuperscript{74}\textit{Ibid}, pp. 145-147.

\textsuperscript{75}For a good discussion of this see Martin Redeker, \textit{Friedrich Schleiermacher} (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1968), pp. 188-197.

\textsuperscript{76}\textit{Ibid}, pp. 145-147.

\textsuperscript{77}Cf. Hegel's discussion of Kant in Enzyklopaedie, the second attitude toward objectivity.
religion. It could grasp the content of religion and faith. But religion could not grasp the Truth of philosophy because it did not grasp the Truth in its appropriate medium; namely, thought.\textsuperscript{78} In his system of philosophy (the Encyclopedia) Hegel claimed to have grasped the very being of God. Even further, he argued that his system gave the appropriate linguistic expression to God. It thus provided the hermeneutical key for understanding all the claims of religion.

It is in the context of the philosophy of Kant, Schleiermacher, and Hegel that the writings of Kierkegaard can be best understood. In the second chapter of this thesis we shall develop SK's response. In this preface, however, we shall skip over his writings (since they will be the concern of the whole thesis) and continue our brief outline of some of the developments that took place after him.

\textbf{Liberalism.} Until the beginning of the 20th century Kierkegaard's writings had almost no influence on theology. Instead, Catholicism and Protestantism continued to develop the thoughts of their predecessors. And a new strand of Protestantism (the so-called "liberal" strand) developed the interpretations of Kant, Schleiermacher, and Hegel. Kant's influence is clear in the moral emphasis of liberalism. (Kant was not the first to develop religion in terms of

\textsuperscript{78}Ibid, second preface, esp. pp. 23-31.
morality, but his work is probably the most influential.) A good example of this influence is seen in e.g. Adolf von Harnack's characterization of "the essence of Christianity." For him the truth of religion is given in the affirmation of the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the infinite value of the human soul. Schleiermacher's influence is best seen in what may be termed the "linguistic relativism" of liberalism: all linguistic expressions of faith are inappropriate and they should not be considered in terms of their cognitive content. True religion involves a feeling that transcends language. One of the best examples of the way in which Schleiermacher's thought was developed can be found in R. Otto's classic The Idea of the Holy. This work was an exploration of the "mysterium tremendum," i.e. the Other that confronted man with both terror and fascination. Hegel's influence was primarily seen in reflection on history. Hegel's systematic work involved careful reflections on the role history had in the development of thought. Certain categories and ideas were associated with certain periods in history. On the basis of this association, liberal theologians sought to tie the world view of the Bible to a distinct time period and then translate the content of the faith into the idiom of today.

Neo-Orthodoxy. Liberalism was connected with a positive view of human nature and a belief in the continuing progress of mankind. With the advent of WW II, this optimistic approach was radically challenged. Coupled with this challenge, the writings of Kierkegaard were discovered at the beginning of the 20th century. Although they had been written over half a century before, they were not translated from Danish and their influence even in Denmark was minimal. The combination of the disintegration of liberalism, the discovery of Kierkegaard, and the rediscovery of the reformation and Biblical writers, led to a movement now referred to as "Neo-orthodoxy."

This movement, also referred to as dialectical or crisis theology, was characterized by a new-found appreciation of the prophetic element in scripture and the doctrine of sin found in the New Testament. On the basis of certain notions of Truth and language which were first formulated in their modern form by Kierkegaard, the cognitive aspects of faith were integrated with the prophetic/ethical aspects. Language need not be viewed as univocal. It has a metaphorical and symbolic function that enables one to say more than could be directly said. Likewise "reason" need not be developed only as the "technical reason" of logic. There is also an "ontological reason" which refers to broader structures of creation and
our participation in those structures.\textsuperscript{81} Although there was considerable debate over the relation between general and special revelation, there was an almost unanimous espousal of the importance of special revelation. But here the content of the special revelation was not doctrinal truths about God, given in propositional form. Rather, the content was viewed as God Himself - God manifested and manifests Himself in the person of Jesus Christ.

Up until the early 1960’s, Neo-Orthodoxy was perhaps the most powerful and significant 20th century expression of developing Christianity. But in the 1960’s the movement began to disintegrate. The reasons for the disintegration - one that is far from complete - are varied. One reason given is that despite formulations such as the Barman declaration, the Neo-orthodox theologians did not address in an ethically serious and responsible way the concrete needs of the present world. Deliberations on sin and atonement do not help alleviate those who are starving and oppressed in unjust structures of government and society. This is the accusation leveled by J. Moltmann.\textsuperscript{82} There are also many other reasons which may be given for the disintegration but we cannot consider them here. It is also difficult to account for why an inadequacy is perceived because the

\textsuperscript{81}The terms "technical reason" and "ontological reason" are Paul Tillich’s. Systematic Theology, vol. 1, pp. 71-75.

\textsuperscript{82}Juergen Moltmann, Theologie der Hoffnung (Muenchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1964).
disintegration is not complete. And we do not yet see what a "post-modern" theology will entail.\textsuperscript{83} There are also powerful theologians such as E. Juengel who are attempting to further develop the Neo-orthodox motifs.\textsuperscript{84}

In order to better appreciate the inadequacies as well as the strengths of Neo-orthodoxy and thus address the present concerns of theology, it will thus prove very helpful to consider the writer whose understanding of truth and faith had such an impact on Neo-orthodoxy in the first place. By returning to the inspiration of the "new" ideas, we can appreciate their contribution. Kierkegaard's importance for understanding Neo-orthodoxy cannot be overestimated. Whether his influence was direct, on authors like Barth, Tillich, Gogarten, Bultmann, and Brunner, or indirect, mediated through the existentialism of Heidegger, Jaspers, and Sartre, an understanding of Kierkegaard is of central importance in appreciating the most significant developments of 20th century theology and philosophy. It is with this in mind that we now turn to his thought.

Before, however, taking our step into the main body of the thesis, it is important to remind the reader of the importance of considering the question together with the

\textsuperscript{83}On the designation of the newly emerging "paradigm" as "post-modern" see Hans Kung, \textit{Theologie im Aufbruch} (Muenchen: Piper, 1987), pp. 208-250.

answer. In order to do justice to Kierkegaard's work, the step from the preface to the introduction will thus be a step into the world view of Kierkegaard. From this point onward our questions, our language, and our answers will be those of SK's own idiom. It is only in this way that we can best guard against the misunderstanding that has so often plagued his writings.
INTRODUCTION

This essay is an investigation into the thought and life of Soren Kierkegaard. But why do we need another investigation into Kierkegaard? It seems there are many written already. What unique contribution does this essay seek to make? In order to answer this it is helpful to note that an overview of the literature written on Kierkegaard reveals a rather chaotic state of affairs. On one side some scholars argue that Kierkegaard is a philosopher who uses arguments and concepts for the purpose of logically compelling others to accept certain conclusions. On the other side some say he is a poet who wrote against philosophy and attempted to undermine the most fundamental tenets of the philosophical perspective. Again, some see him as an upholder and apologist for orthodox Christianity while others see him as a critic of that same faith. It seems that everyone who reads Kierkegaard's writings reads them differently. And as the literature grows the semblance of consensus more and more disappears. Is he a rationalist, poet, irrationalist, etc.? How can so many contradictory things be said of the same person?

An answer to this can be found in noting that many

---

1For more on this state of affairs and the appropriate references, see pp. 33-41 of this essay.
scholars will consider certain themes and horizons in Kierkegaard's writings independently from other ones. But for SK they were all interconnected and interrelated. The interconnection, however, is not that of a philosophical system. It is rather the interconnection of a life in which several horizons meet. Thus an important step forward can be taken into the appreciation of Kierkegaard as a whole and into each of his particular writings, if we look at the interrelation of the various horizons that were influential upon Kierkegaard. And it is that which this essay shall attempt.

In this essay an analysis of Kierkegaard will be given that:

1. Shows the manner in which SK's writings are to be read if one does justice to SK's life as a whole (reading SK as SK).

2. Exhibits the response SK gave to the philosophical concerns of his day, esp. with respect to the role of reason.

3. Exhibits Kierkegaard's response to the religious crises of the Christian church in Denmark and Europe in the middle of the 19th century.

In such an analysis three horizons come together: the historical, philosophical, and religious. And in this introduction now I would like to briefly outline the basic concerns and parameters of each horizon so that the reader
may appreciate the broader context to which this essay responds.

The Historical Horizon

"The philosophy of Kant can be fully understood without a more careful consideration of his person and his life. But for a fundamental understanding of Schleiermacher's meaning, his worldview and his works one requires biographical material."²

This affirmation of Dilthey about Schleiermacher can be and has been even more emphatically applied to Soren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard's life and his ideas are intimately bound together. And an at least brief biography is indispensible to understanding the motivation and context of his writings.

The question, however, is how thought and life are related. How is a life to be (re)presented? These, in fact, are questions upon which Kierkegaard himself intensely reflected. For example, SK did not pen most of his important writings in his own name. Rather they were written under the guise of different pseudonyms. Each pseudonym represented a specific approach to life. And the words in the given text would then be developed as an expression of that approach to life. To illustrate the way in which the words and thoughts relate to the life of a

given pseudonym we shall now briefly consider the pseudonyms of Either/Or (SK's first "aesthetic" writing).

Either/Or is a two volume work which seeks to instanciate the life-views of a "young romanticist" (vol. I) and a "mature ethical idealist" (vol. II). The two views are brought together in a third pseudonym who claims to be the editor of the writings of the first two. Victor Eremita - the pseudonymous editor of the work - tells a story of how he bought a desk. One day while hurriedly attempting to open a stuck money drawer with a hatchet a secret door somehow opens and the editor finds a collection of several papers. After reading through the papers Victor Eremita is able to divide them into two groups. One is written by an unnamed aesthete. His authorship involves reflection on themes such as music, poetry, Faust, Don Juan and tragedy. In addition there are several small sayings, referred to by the editor as "Diapsalmata," which seek to express a romantic philosophy of life. And at the end of the aesthete's papers is a "diary of a seducer." The aesthete presents it as another's work, but Victor Eremita thinks it is actually a poem the aesthete wrote. The aesthete later distanced himself from the diary, however, because "he actually became afraid of his poem, as if it continued to

---


terrify him, like a troubled dream when it is told." The other group of papers is written by a man named Judge William. He is an ethical individual who writes three lengthy letters to the aesthete in an attempt to convince him of the futility of his life and the value of the ethical. And with the last letter the judge encloses a sermon that is written by a friend of the judge whose name is Frater Taciturnus.

It is interesting to note that not only does the content of the different writings differ but also the style and mood varies greatly. The letters of Judge William give a "direct communication" - the form (epistolatory) corresponding to the content (the ethical ideals which are to be directly externalized). But the aesthetic writings are poetic. And their content is presented as a fleeting moment that can never be captured. Finally the pastor who wrote the sermon expresses his content in a religious form of communication (the sermon) that corresponds to its content; namely, the insufficiency of all deeds (and words?) and the need for God's grace. He then ends the sermon (and the two volumes of Either/Or) by raising the question of the need for salvation. This parallel between the form and content of the writings shows that a given pseudonym does

---

5Ibid, p. 9.
not just represent an idea but rather a whole life-view.\textsuperscript{6}

Perhaps it is most enlightening, however, to consider

\textsuperscript{6}Later in this introduction it will become clear that
the three pseudonyms here mentioned represent the poetic,
philosophic, and religious perspectives. The equation of
the aesthetes writings with the poetic, and Frater
Taciturnus' sermon with the religious is clear (although it
is not clear whether the sermon represents religiousness A
or B - I think B, because it points to the inability of
salvation on immanent terms, i.e. "against God I am always
in the wrong." Ibid, p. 343f. On the difference between
religion A and B see SK's Concluding Unscientific
Postscript, (trs.) David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 493-
519.) But the relation between the ethical pseudonym of
Judge William and the philosopher's perspective is more
difficult. For several reasons, however, I think that SK
parallel's the ethical sphere and the philosopher's
perspective. In Soren Kierkegaard, The Point of View For My
Work as an Author (tr.) Walter Lowrie (New York: Harper and
Row Publishers, 1962), p. 75, SK refers to the poetic and
the philosophic as the two main perspectives that are to be
relativized in favor of the religious. But in the
Postscript, p. 448 SK speaks of the two relativized spheres
as the aesthetic and the ethical. In Soren Kierkegaard,
Fear and Trembling (tr.) Howard and Edna Hong (Princeton:
Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 54-67 the relativized
ethical sphere is related to the "universal" of philosophy.
This is further confirmed in pages 82f, when speakability
(linguistic externalization; see pp. 102-109 of this essay)
is related to the ethical. There are also many passages in
Either/Or, vol.2 where the philosophical and ethical can be
directly related in terms fo the knowability of an ideal
and its speakability. Finally, SK's parallel between the
role of the Law (as showing the impossibility of the
ethical) and the role of the Socratic demand for ideality
(as showing the impossibility of the philosophical) further
confirms the philosophic perspective is in the ethical
sphere (see pp. 38-39 on the relation between the Law and
the Socratic demand for ideality). All these things taken
together make a strong case for the equation of the ethical
and philosophic. The importance fo being aware of such an
equation will become clear later in this essay when we note
e.g. Lousi Pojman's accusation that SK's movement "away from
speculation" (and thus the ethical) is grounded in concerns
that could, in a broad sense, be characterized as the very
basis of a concern with right action; i.e. the fulfillment
of the telos of the ethical, even though it does not proceed
by the way of the ethical.
the form and content of Victor Eremita's writing. He provides a preface to a work he claims to edit. In the work he brings together two oppositional views of life. And in his preface he exhibits characteristics of both those life views. When Victor Eremita tells us of the way he took the hatchet to open the desk or of the trip he takes to the country and the "romantic spot" he seeks out to read the papers we recognize attributes of the aesthete.\textsuperscript{7} But then the same editor will pedantically reflect on the historical accuracy of certain reflections or tell of the way he tries unremittingly to find the original authors so he can pay them. Here we see traits of the judge.\textsuperscript{8} Just as the two collections of papers give a "negative unity" of the two world views, so we see in Victor Eremita himself a negative unity of those same attributes. Is Victor Eremita the pseudonym that brings together the aesthetic and ethical pseudonym?\textsuperscript{9} This is a very hard question to answer. And

\textsuperscript{7}Either/Or, vol.I, pp. 4-6.

\textsuperscript{8}Ibid, pp. 7-15.

\textsuperscript{9}A brief answer to this question and the following one can be sketched as follows: The phrase "negative unity" is one that SK uses in describing a relation of two oppositional relations in selfhood. The self is e.g. a unity of temporality and eternity, etc. Both of these are themselves relations. And "in the relation between two, the relation is the third as a negative unity." [Soren Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death (trs.) Howard and Edna Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 13.] This "negative unity," however, is not yet a third relation. "If, however, the relation [the negative unity] relates itself to itself, this relation is the positive third, and this is the self." Although we cannot develop
then we have the additional question of how that pseudonym (the editor) relates to Soren Kierkegaard.

One could schematize the pseudonymous authorship of *Either/Or* as follows:

```
Soren Kierkegaard
   ↓
   Victor Eremita
      ↓   ↓
Aesthete                Judge William
       ↓           ↓
Johannes the Seducer      Father Taciturnus
```

When someone reads *Either/Or* and then seeks to present Kierkegaard's position, one is faced with a real riddle. For example, there is a famous quote in the "Or" volume (written by the Judge) which reads:

"So then choose despair, for despair itself is a

this here, the two oppositional relations of selfhood can be well paralleled to the aesthetic and ethical sphere. The editor of *Either/Or* then well represents the relation of the relations, but only as a "negative unity." This negative unity is then related to Soren Kierkegaard as the beginning perspective of his authorship. The development of his writing can then be outlined as the relating of that initial relation that was given as a negative unity. This would be an important key for a further development of the relation between SK's life and his authorship (thoughts). It give a way of bringing together the poetic concerns expressed in the pseudonymous writings and the more philosophical concerns expressed in SK's anthropology.
choice; for one can doubt without choosing to, but one cannot despair without choosing. And when a man despairs he chooses again - and what is it he chooses? He chooses himself, not in his immediacy, not as this fortuitous individual, but he chooses himself in his eternal validity."\(^{10}\)

This quote has been used as a key to understanding later pseudonymous productions such as *Philosophical Fragments* and *Sickness Unto Death*. On its basis people argue that Kierkegaard affirmed any choice - it does not matter what one chooses, but simply that one chooses. Only the leap is important. On such a view the "leap" in favor of Christ is simply one among many other alternatives. And in any leap one "chooses himself in his eternal validity."\(^{11}\) However such an interpretation completely forgets that this quote is from Judge William. And minimally what the judge says is twice removed from Kierkegaard.\(^{12}\)

The failure to account for the pseudonymous nature of SK's writings is one factor that accounts for the chaotic status of the research on Kierkegaard.\(^{13}\) But now the


\(^{11}\)Louis Pojman is a good example of one who reads SK this way. See ch. 2 of this essay.

\(^{12}\)It is interesting to note that SK directly reflects on the distance between pseudonyms when e.g. he has the pseudonymous editor of Either/Or note that he is "twice removed from the original author" of the diary of the seducer. Either/Or, vol. 1, p. 9.

\(^{13}\)This is an argument that is well made by Louis Mackey in *Kierkegaard: A Kind of Poet* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971). But unfortunately Mackey simply adds to the chaos because he does not do justice to the religious nature of SK's authorship. The importance of this
question is: how do we account for the pseudonyms? Is there a way to take into account the perspective of the pseudonym so that his words can be transformed into an affirmation that represents Kierkegaard's own position? The answer to this depends on the reasons as to why Kierkegaard wrote in pseudonyms in the first place. Or, in other words, it depends on the nature of Kierkegaard's authorship.

The question of the nature of SK's authorship brings us back to the importance of the biographical material. Just as the life-style of a pseudonym gives a key into the way in which the words and thoughts of the pseudonym are to be understood, so SK's own life gives the key into the way the pseudonymous productions are to be taken.

One way to account for the pseudonyms is to show the connection between a given event in Kierkegaard's life and the issues in a given work. For example, Fear and Trembling is about Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac. Kierkegaard wrote that work just after he had broken his engagement with Regina Olsen. It is known from Kierkegaard's journal entries that he made a parallel between himself and Abraham: just as Abraham was called to give up Isaac, so SK felt himself called to give up Regina. The pseudonym of Fear and Trembling is a pseudonym named Johannes de Silentio. He is one who respects Abraham's "leap of faith" but who cannot understand it. It is known that SK also respected Abraham's
faith but felt he could not rightly understand it. He thus fails to receive Regina back (unlike Abraham who received Isaac back).\textsuperscript{14} But if SK and the pseudonym share the same position of respect yet lack of understanding toward Abraham, why does SK write pseudonymously? What distance is there between SK and Johannes de Silentio?

The issue of the relation between biography and thought thus includes but also goes beyond the relation between a given pseudonymous work and a specific event in SK's life. In order to rightly understand SK one must look at the whole of his authorship in relation to the whole of his life. Only then can the details of the particular events and writings be properly understood.

An account of the whole life of a person is referred to as a biography. Often this is taken to be simply a chronological ordering of the significant names, dates, etc. But a true biography - as a narrative account of an individual - is much more than that. It is an attempt to present a life as a unity. This unity unfolds the fundamental principles and guiding concerns of that life. What motivated that individual? Why did he or she do this or that, and why was it done in the way it was done?

There are two fundamental ways in which a biography can

\textsuperscript{14}The relation between Fear and Trembling and SK's engagement to Regina is well documented in Walter Lowrie's \textit{A Short Life of Kierkegaard} and the "historical introduction" to the Hong translation of Fear and Trembling.
be written; two fundamental ways in which that unity can be expressed:

1. The inductive - Here one begins by looking at the concrete events of a person's life. When was he born? What was his father like? Where did he go to school? etc. Only after one considers the innumerable details does one then attempt to find a concern or interest or perhaps idea that ties together the different events and accounts for why this or that event took place in this or that way and not another way.

2. The deductive - This approach begins with an overarching theme or idea and attempts to exhibit the way this unity directed the many and very different events in an individual's life. This is the approach that is often taken when an individual's biography is written with the purpose of exhibiting a given movement, period, or idea (e.g. a biography of Schlegel written to illustrate the nature of Romanticism).

The inductive approach begins with the many and moves to the one, while the deductive approach begins with the one and moves to the many. Each approach has its problems. The inductive biography often fails to move past the many. The only unity is then the manifold of space and time that gives the field of an individual's being. Narrative then becomes a string of events that may well exhibit a causal chain but that lacks any sense of purpose and meaning that makes the
life significant in a broader context. However, on the other side, the deductive biography all too often fails to exhibit the more specific concrete factors that constitute an individual in his or her particularity. One begins with a unity that cannot fully do justice to the multiplicity and complexity of personhood. Then the narrative gives way to the idea.

Ideally a biography will incorporate both the inductive and deductive aspects. And it will present the unity not as a being but as a becoming. It will exhibit the life as a narrative development which shows both the universal and particular aspects of the single individual.

In the biography of Kierkegaard there are two types of events that need to be considered. There are the concrete personal event (e.g. his engagement to Regina, his relation to his father, etc.) and there are his writings (both pseudonymous and non-pseudonymous). The common way of writing about SK as a person usually leans toward the inductive. This can begin either with the individual personal events or the individual writings. An example of the former is given in Walter Lowrie's outstanding A Short Life of Kierkegaard. And Louis Macky's Kierkegaard: A Kind of Poet illustrates the latter.

Another approach to Kierkegaard's work, however, is well exhibited in a non-pseudonymous writing that Kierkegaard penned himself. In his autobiographical The
Point of View for my Work as an Author Kierkegaard considers the relation of each pseudonymous work to his life as a whole. Individual personal events are not emphasized. And the approach clearly leans toward the deductive.

In that work Kierkegaard presents the unifying theme of his life as that of "becoming a Christian," and his authorship is characterized as "religious":

"The contents of this little book affirm, then, what I truly am as an author, that I am and was a religious author, that the whole of my work as an author is related to Christianity, to the problem 'of becoming a Christian,' with a direct or indirect polemic against the monstrous illusion we call Christendom, or against the illusion that in such a land as ours all are Christians of a sort."\(^15\)

Here "Christendom" is a catch phrase which SK uses to designate that societal form which has resulted from the transformation of Christianity into aesthetic, bourgeoisie, philosophic categories. It represents an untrue form of Christianity. There are thus two sides to SK's authorship: 1) the positive concern of "becoming a Christian;" i.e. the move toward Christ, and 2) the negative critique or polemic against untrue forms of Christianity; i.e. the move away from Christendom.

When SK characterizes his discourse as religious and himself as a religious author, he does not mean to affirm that he is an apostle or even a teacher:

"No, not that at all; I am he who himself has been educated, or whose authorship expresses what it is to be educated to the point of becoming a Christian ... I am not a teacher, only a fellow student."\(^{16}\)

By this he means that Providence has directed his writing in such a way that he has been educated in the very event of his own authorship. Through his aesthetic and philosophic discourse he has discovered the deepest meaning of religious discourse. And in the light of the religious telos, even the earlier writings (the aesthetic and philosophic) are seen to be religious in their intent. At each level of his literary production the result "is the outcome, not of the poet's or the thinker's passion, but of godly fear, and for me [SK] it is a divine worship."\(^{17}\) Just as the development of his own authorship has been SK's education, so, by following that development, the reader may likewise be educated. He or she may be a fellow student with Kierkegaard.

In speaking of "the share Governance had in my whole activity as a writer," SK states that through his life he became conscious of the process by which God instructed him:

"The process is this: a poetic and philosophic

\(^{16}\)Ibid, p. 75. One should note that this denial refers to SK's pseudonymous works, as discussed in My Point of View. No mention is made of his more "prophetic" attack on Christendom, where a case could be made that SK did feel a calling from God in which he was "sent" (note the etymology of apostle), and thus empowered for the sending.

\(^{17}\)Ibid, p. 68.
nature is put aside in order to become a Christian."18 (my emphasis)

Here the move away from Christendom is further qualified as twofold: it is a move away from the poetic nature on one side and the philosophic nature on the other.

Just as SK followed this process (or rather was educated by God in this way) so he argues:

"The task which has to be proposed to the majority of people in Christendom is: Away from the 'poet'! Or away from having a relation to or from having one's life in that which the poet declaims; away from speculation! From the fantastic conceit (which is at the same time an impossibility) of having one's life in that (instead of existing) - and to become a Christian!"19 (my emphasis)

SK then outlines the way in which the task has been accomplished in his authorship:

"The first movement (away from the poetical) constitutes the total significance of the aesthetic production within the totality of the authorship. The second movement (away from speculation) is that of the concluding Postscript, which, while it draws or edits the whole aesthetic production to its own advantage by way of illumination its problem, which is the problem of 'becoming a Christian,' makes the same movement in another sphere: Away from speculation! From the system, & c. - to become a Christian."20

Although SK's authorship is chronologically developed in such a way that one first moves away from the poetic (the aesthetic production) and then away from the speculative (Philosophical Fragments and the Postscript), SK states that

---

18Ibid, p. 73.
19Ibid, p. 74.
20Ibid, p. 75.
"the two movements begin simultaneously ... the second movement does not supervene after a series of years which separate it from the first." Thus the providential education is a dialectical movement in which one is brought simultaneously away from both the poetic and the speculative; and toward "becoming a Christian."

It is important to emphasize the simultaneity of the "away from." If one was not simultaneously brought away from both, then, when one is brought away from one, e.g. the poetic, then the natural movement would be to the other, e.g. the speculative. But when both are negated simultaneously then the natural movement is barred. The "neither/nor" confronts one as the emptiness of a natural existence, and one is lead to a "leap" which brings one into the sphere of the religious. It is only there that the question of becoming a Christian can be asked with an earnestness sufficient for recognizing the Answer.

In this deductive autobiographical account Kierkegaard provides his reader with indispensible information. He gives the reader the key as to how he or she is to understand SK's authorship. Earlier in this introduction we noted the importance of biographical material for the appreciation of SK's writings. We noted that the usual emphasis in Kierkegaardian scholarship was on the inductive. But now, taking SK's own autobiography as the point of

\[21\]Ibid, p. 73.
departure, we have a way to appreciate each of the particular writings in the context of the whole.

The Philosophical and Religious Horizons

It is a well known hermeneutical maxim that the parts are to be understood in the light of the whole as well as the whole in the light of the parts (one form of the hermeneutical circle).\textsuperscript{22} Previous Kierkegaard scholarship has largely focused upon the parts. It called upon the inductive biographical for an appreciation of the interrelation between life and thought. But this made it difficult to move to the whole. But now, in the light of SK's autobiographical notes (here the emphasis is on his My Point of View rather than his journal entries\textsuperscript{23}), we can begin with the whole. He gives us an outline of how each work is related to the others. This then gives a good preunderstanding for moving back to an analysis of the parts (e.g. the understanding of the relation between a particular text and the concrete event in SK's life that gave the point


\textsuperscript{23}Kierkegaard kept extensive journal notes. These have often been used to shed light on the character of certain of his writings. However, while indeed very helpful, the journal notes do not give SK's life as a whole. For this we must turn to My Point of View.
of departure for that text).

Summarizing the whole, SK's life can be schematized as follows:

Poetic Perspective \( \rightarrow \) SK \( \rightarrow \) Christian Perspective

Philosophic Perspective

Although the telos of this movement (becoming) is unitary, the point of departure is twofold. Under the qualification of the point of departure - i.e. for one who begins from the poetic or philosophic perspective - the whole can be given in two parts:

1. The move away from the poetic toward becoming a Christian.
2. The move away from the philosophic toward becoming a Christian.

Note: it is important to remember that the whole can be developed from three perspectives: the poetic, philosophic, and religious. For Kierkegaard the religious perspective grasps the truth given in both the poetic and philosophic perspectives. The philosophic perspective, however, only grasps its own truth (being-for-thought). Likewise the poetic only grasps its own truth (the infinitude of the moment). Thus the philosophic attempt to grasp poetic truth falsifies the poetic, and the poetic attempt to grasp the
philosopher's truth falsifies the philosophic. As a result of this only the religious perspective can truly grasp the whole. The philosophic perspective grasps the aspects of the whole that are accessible to thought. The whole is then given as a movement away from philosophy toward Christ. The poetic perspective grasps the aspects of the whole that are accessible to sensibility. The whole is then given as a movement away from the poetic toward Christ. As a first approximation, given under the qualification of a difference between the perspectives of selfhood\(^{24}\), the whole is then the first movement taken together with the second. But this is only a first approximation. As one simultaneously follows the two movements one comes to the perspective of the unified self. This is the religious perspective. And then the whole is given as the unitary movement: away from the poetic and philosophic and toward Christianity.

If we assume that the reader (or fellow student of SK) has not yet attained to the religious perspective, then an

\(^{24}\)I.e. the qualification of a divided will rather than a subjectivity in which only one thing is willed. In Soren Kierkegaard's, *Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing* (tr.) Douglas Steere (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1948) a "false perspective" is one in which the different interests of the self are not united. In the "divided will" one first persuades one interest, then a different one, etc. But in the "united will" only one thing is willed: the Will of God. When the movement toward Christ is developed as a unity of two different movements, then one is taking the perspective of the divided will. For the united will the movement is one, but under the qualification of a divided origin (corresponding to the origin in the divided will, which is that that one moved away from).
attempt to outline the whole process of becoming in terms of the final unity would be futile, given that SK’s understanding of the relation between the three perspectives is correct. The educative process could however be developed in three phases:

1. Under the qualification of the philosophical, one can develop the move away from philosophy and toward Christ.

2. Under the qualification of the poetic, one can develop the move away from the poetic and toward Christ.

3. Under the qualification of the religious, one can develop the move away from poetry and philosophy toward Christ.

The perspective of the third phase is arrived at through a simultaneous realization of phases 1) and 2). All three phases taken together would then provide a good deductive biographical account of the life of Kierkegaard.

This now brings us to a further specification of the task which this essay seeks to accomplish. Basically this essay shall attempt to exhibit the whole movement or becoming of SK’s life under the qualification of the philosophical. I.e. it will attempt to outline phase 1 of the above-mentioned three phases. This is the move away from philosophy and toward Christ.

One way of accomplishing this essay’s task is to compare the early writings of SK with the later ones and see
if and how there is a move away from the philosopher's perspective and toward Christianity. In order to take this approach, however, one must know at the outset what "philosophy" and "Christianity" mean. Only on the basis of such a preunderstanding would one have the criteria needed to qualify the nature of the development. I.e. one must already have an understanding of the process of "becoming a Christian," if one is to test whether and how the biography of SK's life can be developed as the narrative of such a becoming.

One of Kierkegaard's main contentions was that most people did not understand what is involved in becoming a Christian. "Christendom" confuses the process by developing it in poetic and philosophic terms. And since it does not rightly appreciate the religious, it falsifies that process in its formulations. Thus, on SK's assumptions, most people would develop the deductive biographical account of SK's life in an inappropriate way because they do not in the first place rightly understand the movement that SK designated as the unity of his own life.

In fact, we should recall, SK suggested that the development of his own life is to provide the education by which others can be brought to an appreciation of the nature of Christianity. In this the reader, as a fellow student with SK, is thrown back upon the details of each individual work. He or she must then follow the inductive road to an
understanding of that process. But this road has been just that approach that has led to the chaos in Kierkegaardian scholarship. Thus the catch 22: In SK's deductive autobiographical writing the reader is given the whole which enables him or her to rightly understand the parts. But it is only through the individual writings (the parts) that the reader can attain to the meaning of the whole.

Here again we return to the hermeneutical circle. As Schleiermacher and, since him, many others have shown, this circle is not a hopeless one. One can simply begin with a part. Through it one comes to the whole. Then, in the light of the whole, one moves back to a part. This process is then iteratively continued until the meaning one finds in going from whole to part is the same as that which one finds in going from part to whole. But what if the content is such that rather than a convergence of meaning one has a divergence of meaning as one seeks to bring together the move from whole to part and that from part to whole? Such divergence would show that the fundamental perspective which governs the hermeneutical circle is inappropriate. Then one is challenged not just in terms of the particularities of one's knowledge. Rather one is challenged in terms of the way one knows. One's very hermeneutic is called into question. And it is such a challenge that SK's life and work provide. The chaotic situation of Kierkegaardian scholarship is but one testimony to this. Thus we are
thrown back upon the catch 22. And the traditional way of escape (Schleiermacher and co.) is at least in part barred.

There is, however, one important additional factor that provides promise of reprieve: the process away from speculation and toward Christianity is not just a process that characterizes SK's life. It is also the very content upon which SK focuses in his major writings. It is the theme which he describes, as well as the theme which describes him. That means that not only My Point of View but every other work can be taken as autobiographical - not just in the sense that it corresponds to a particular event in SK's life (e.g. Fear and Trembling corresponding to his broken engagement), but also in that it corresponds to a particular perspective on that content which describes his whole life. In considering that content we come now to the other two horizons that give the context of our essay.

Until now we have been focusing upon the ways in which we can do justice to SK's life and writing as a whole. This concern can be, in a general way, characterized as historical. And we found that a first approximation to a deductive biographical account of SK's life can be given in the movement away from the philosopher's perspective and toward christianity. In order to appreciate the nature of

---

25 This point is made directly by SK throughout My Point of View. It can also be readily discerned from his writings that the central content is the move away from the poetic and philosophical (or the aesthetic and ethical, see note 6) and toward becoming a Christian.
this movement, however, one must know what philosophy and Christianity mean. This forces the reader to turn to the specific content of SK's works, for it is there that SK attempts to characterize the meaning of these terms. It is in this way that we now come to the philosophical and religious horizons.

SK's answer to the concerns of philosophy is that one must move away from philosophy if one is to attain to meaning and truth in one's life. This does not mean however that he simply ignores philosophy. Rather he develops it in such a way that the very results undermine the philosopher's perspective. The philosophical horizon is that of a land which is not to be one's home. Rather one hears and sees many portents and signs which call for one to leave that land and journey to a far country - to a land of promise. As Abraham was called to leave Ur and journey to a land which God promises, so the "single individual" is called to leave the philosopher's perspective and journey to a new perspective which God Himself will give, namely, the religious.

But what are the signs and portents which 1) show the inadequacy of philosophy, and 2) point one in the right direction to the new land? In this introduction we shall not give a detailed answer to these questions. That will be the concern of the main bulk of this essay. At this point we shall simply provide some broad strokes so that the
reader may be sufficiently oriented for the appreciation of the details.

We shall begin by considering the general structure of the essay. The three main chapters are developed in a way that allows the reader to move from the historical horizon to the philosophical and then to the religious. In the historical horizon one asks: who is Kierkegaard? And one can answer this be e.g. viewing SK as a philosopher, poet, or religious writer. In the first chapter of the essay we shall consider the arguments of a scholar who views SK’s intent as fundamentally philosophical. Through Louis Pojman’s book The Logic of Subjectivity we shall present a speculative reading of SK’s life and work.

Louis Pojman, though a relatively young scholar, is one of the more prominent of SK’s interpreters within the analytic/positivistic tradition. He received his doctorate on Kierkegaard under John Macquarrie and has spent a year in Copenhagen studying under one of the foremost of Kierkegaard scholars, Gregor Malantschuck. But despite such credentials he does not seem to be one of the profoundest expositors of SK’s thought. Hence it will be useful to briefly explain why this one particular book, among the many written on SK, is given such a central role.

Pojman’s book is used for heuristic reasons. Many writers simply presuppose SK should be read philosophically. But Pojman is one of the very few who has recognized the
need to justify such an approach. His book thus serves to raise the appropriate questions and concerns, even if it gives a very inappropriate answer. Since our task in this essay is to develop the nature of the movement "away from speculation," it is helpful to have an instantiation of the speculative. And since, in addition to the movement "away from ...," there is also another movement - namely, that which moves from viewing SK as an object to viewing SK's object; i.e. the move form the historical to the philosophical and religious horizons - we need the speculative movement instantiated in such a way that SK himself is the object of concern. Pojman's book fulfills both requirements. Our essay's movement can then be expressed concretely as "away from Pojman's interpretation of Kierkegaard." And although the movement is developed in the light of a particular (namely, Pojman's interpretation), it is structured such that it expresses the universal, "away from speculation!"

The first chapter presents a speculative SK by way of Pojman's thesis. The second chapter will then falsify that speculative presentation by way of a falsification of philosophy's faculty; namely, reason. But we shall not directly consider that faculty. Rather we shall consider SK's consideration of that faculty. In order to do this we shall develop SK's argument in the context of Hegel's thought, for it is in relation to Hegel that SK formulated
much of what he said.

This second chapter will then present two forms of the "away from ..." In relation to chapter one, it develops a movement away from Pojman's interpretation of SK. But, in terms of its own content, it exhibits SK's own movement as one away from Hegel; and, even more primordially (because Hegel is only a particular who represents the universal of philosophy), a move away from the philosopher's perspective. The identity and difference of these movements provides the transition from a consideration of SK as an object (the historical horizon) to a consideration of SK's object (the philosophical and religious horizons).

For SK the philosopher's perspective can be developed as that perspective in which reason is given priority over all other faculties. His falsification of that perspective will proceed by showing that reason is not capable of leadership. There are three main dimensions of reality that escape its grasp: Reason is blind to God, freedom, and the difference between thought and reality. This threefold transcendence shows that that faculty should be taken as but one aspect of selfhood.

"Subjectivity" is SK's term for a united self. In such a perspective reason is brought together with the other faculties (the other passions). Only then can the self be led rightly. Here, however, the leading is not by one faculty or another. Rather, one is at the place where the
voice of God can be heard. Then God leads the whole self.

It is important to recognize that subjectivity does not exclude reason. It does not take "another" faculty - e.g. some feeling or intuition - and set it up in opposition to reason. Instead it integrates reason into the whole. As a part of the whole, reason is affirmed in its interests and goals. But as soon as one falls back to the objective perspective - i.e. that perspective in which reason alone governs - then the concern of subjectivity can only appear as paradox and contradiction to objectivity, because it involves distinctions which are meaningless, as a result of the dimensions that transcend reason's grasp.

This is the basis of SK's answer to philosophy. But his concern is only penultimately within the philosophical horizon. He considers that perspective simply to show that it is inadequate for grasping the truth of selfhood. His ultimate concern, however, - that concern which directed both his writing and his life - is with the truth of selfhood itself. In fact he argues that the task of selfhood is to come to the perspective in which it rightly asks about the truth of itself. The philosopher also asks for the truth about himself, but he asks in the wrong way.

According to Kierkegaard the Truth (of selfhood) is both other from the self (God) and also selfhood (subjectivity). It is the image of God. It is thus the fulfillment of the two fundamental quests which have
directed mankind; namely, "know God" and "know thyself." However in a "right asking," i.e. in the unified passion of subjectivity, the two questions are one. They give the concern with the relation between God and man.

The problem, however, is that most people do not ask rightly. They do not express a concern with the relation between man and God. They must thus be educated so they are brought to the place where they ask the right question. Only then will they be able to hear the Answer.

The beginning of a right asking is to ask how one can attain to a right asking. Through such an initial asking one becomes open not only to a yet unknown Answer but also to a yet unknown question; namely, the question that one is to be, if one is to rightly ask.

For SK the beginning of this right asking - the asking about asking - is not an achievement of the self alone. Rather the Truth, which is the Answer, prescribes the nature of the quest (the question) as well as its fulfillment. And it is in considering the way in which that Truth directs the question that we come to the religious horizon.

In the third chapter of this essay we shall attempt to show the way in which that Truth, as the ultimate telos, brings one to properly question after Truth; i.e. we shall attempt to outline the way in which Truth prescribes the question of selfhood. We shall find that the beginning of the asking is prompted by the presence of Truth Himself;
i.e. Revelation! Since this Truth, however, appears to a perspective that is false (one governed by only a part of the self) it cannot be rightly known. Instead it confronts the self as an unknown. This Unknown encounters the false perspective of selfhood as a judgment. The self can then either negate the Unknown, calling it "negativity," or it can give up itself in favor of the self-giving Unknown. In the latter case the self receives itself back, but now as a united rather than divided self. Slowly the self is brought to an awareness of both itself and that Truth, which is the Teacher.

For Kierkegaard this teaching Truth is the concretely present God-man (the Christ). To the false perspective of philosophy this "presupposition" is simply a paradox and an embarasement. But to the unified perspective of selfhood (maximal subjectivity) this presupposition is revelation and grace. In the religious perspective it is not an embarasement to have a presupposition. There one stands before the Other who speaks and leads the self to its purpose and truth.

Finally, in concluding, we shall return to the historical horizon and briefly attempt to give a religious characterization of the deductive biographical movement which has been the concern of this essay. In the move from chapters one to three we exhibited that biographical movement under the qualification of the philosophical. But
this gave just a first approximation. The move away from poetry and toward the religious would give a second approximation. And only from the religious perspective could one rightly appreciate the twofold movement away from poetry and philosophy toward Christianity. Thus in the conclusion we point to a direction Kierkegaardian scholarship should take if it is to rightly do justice to the religious character of Kierkegaard's life and authorship.
CHAPTER 1: KIERKEGAARD AND PHILOSOPHY

Philosopher or Anti-philosopher

Louis Pojman begins his book The Logic of Subjectivity by stating:

My thesis is simple but controversial: Kierkegaard is a philosopher, a thinker who uses arguments, develops concepts, and employs 'thought projects' to establish conclusions.\(^1\)

Until recently, most "scholarship" has simply presupposed Pojman's thesis. Kierkegaard has been read and critiqued as if he were a philosopher. But today there are several who argue that Kierkegaard is a poet or a religious writer; and that he can no more be read as a philosopher than Shakespeare or St. Paul.\(^2\)


\(^2\)To give two examples: Louis Mackey begins his book on Kierkegaard with a statement parallel but antithetical to Pojman's: "The thesis of this book is neither difficult nor novel. Quite simply, it argues that Soren Kierkegaard is not, in the usual acceptation of these words, a philosopher or a theologian, but a poet. ... not the philosophic scald whose penetrating eye scans the ramparts of Being, nor the theological 'witness for truth' of Christianity who authoritatively propounds the faith." Louis Mackey, Kierkegaard: A Kind of Poet (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), p. ix, and 291. Mackey further argues that "if Kierkegaard is to be understood as Kierkegaard, he must be studied not merely or principally with the instruments of philosophic and theologic analysis, but also and chiefly with the tools of literary criticism."
While there have been several major works in Kierkegaardian scholarship, which have attempted to show that Kierkegaard is not a philosopher\(^3\), Pojman's book represents the first, which has as its express intent the thesis that SK is a philosopher.\(^4\) That such a book would come to print, shows that today the "non-philosopher" position is being regarded with utmost seriousness. No\[\,\]
p. x. The other example we take from the preface to Jacques Colette's anthology titled *The Difficulty of Being Christian* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969). There Ralph McInerny argues: "Just as Kierkegaard cannot properly be called a philosopher, so too it is misleading to describe him as a theologian. He was a religious writer who posed ultimately but one question: what does it mean to be a Christian?" p. x.

\(^3\)In addition to Mackey's book, he has several major articles on SK as a poet. The most significant have been published in Josiah Thompson (ed.), *Kierkegaard: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1972). Thompson himself has an important article on the poetic theme in that collection (pp 103-163). It is also interesting to note that several authors who have themselves published significant works on SK as a philosopher are now moving to an emphasis on the poetic motif. Two notable examples are John Elrod [whose book *Being and Existence in Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Works* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975) is a classic], with his article "Kierkegaard: Poet Penitent" in *Kierkegaardiana XIII* and J.H. Gill [who edited *Essays on Kierkegaard* (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Co., 1969)], with his alignment of himself with Mackey in "Understanding and Faith" in *Concepts and Alternative in Kierkegaard* vol 3 of *Bibliotheca Kierkegaardiana* Edenda Curaverunt (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Boghandel, 1980), p. 42.

\(^4\)Several books have been published, which argue that SK gives more weight to reason than has been traditionally thought, but these books work within the framework of the faith vs. reason problematic, not the philosopher vs. non-philosopher problematic. In the former problematic, even those scholars who argue that SK radically rejected reason, still assume that SK was directly communicating ideas; i.e. they read him as a philosopher.
longer can it be presupposed that Kierkegaard's ideas can be approached directly, as if they gave philosophical or even conceptual formulations of truth(s).

Because of the broad implications, which Pojman's thesis, or its opposite, has for the way in which SK's works are regarded, Pojman's book is an important one for Kierkegaardian scholarship to take seriously. It goes beyond the traditional faith vs. reason problematic and asks whether it is legitimate to read SK as a philosopher at all.

In the past the philosopher vs. non-philosopher problematic has not been completely ignored. For example, T.H. Croxall begins a chapter on SK's view of philosophy by asking: "Is Kierkegaard, in the strict sense of the word, a philosopher? There are some who would say 'no'." 5 As an example of one who says "no," Croxall quotes Guido de Ruggiero who says that SK cannot be viewed as a philosopher in the "traditional" sense. But Croxall then goes on to identify Kierkegaard's anti-philosophy with his rejection of the Hegelian "system" and that system's Cartesian heritage:

"Kierkegaard made a complete break with the current systematic method of European philosophical thoughts; methods which had begun, let us say, with Descartes and had culminated, in Kierkegaard's day, in Hegel." 6

But, Croxall argues, one should not identify SK's rejection


6 Ibid.
of "traditional" philosophy (i.e. Hegel and co.) with a rejection of "reason", "understanding," and "system." Kierkegaard advocated an "existential philosophy" which has Christianity as its "unifying element." 7

"It is most important to stress that in attacking the philosophic systems (and especially the system of Hegel) so sharply, Kierkegaard did not mean to attack all systems as such. His own thought, if not "systematic" in the Hegelian sense, is entirely coherent and unified, as I have said. Christian thought, likewise, is, if not a system, at all events a well-built whole, which he accepted. It is only when systematic thought is regarded as the final word, as though it could of itself solve the riddle of existence, that Kierkegaard is up in arms." 8

Thus, Croxall’s deliberation over whether SK is a philosopher does not radically question whether he can be read as philosopher at all. Rather, he notes that SK cannot be read as a Cartesian philosopher. But it is presupposed that one can look for ideas and directly communicated themes in SK’s writings.

Likewise, Hermann Diem, after noting Kierkegaard’s criticism of Hegel, argues:

"Had Kierkegaard lived a hundred years later, that is in our own day, when a "system" is conceived in rather more modest terms than it was then... he would at once have been able to offer the Hegelian system competition in the form of a system of existential dialectic, which, starting from the existential ego, would have set in motion, with the aid of thinking of which this ego was capable, a system of philosophic mastering of history that, at least in the dynamism of the movement immanent

7Ibid, p. 59.

8Ibid, p. 62.
in the system, would have yielded nothing to that of Hegel."^9

Here again, SK's rejection of philosophy and of "thinking" is equated with a rejection of Hegel and of the Cartesian principles that underlie the "system". But it is taken for granted that in SK's books, such as Philosophical Fragments, Kierkegaard "already worked out in detail the epistemological presuppositions for such a system."^10 Thus, according to those writers, SK does not reject philosophy in general but rather a particular kind of philosophy.

In the contemporary debate, however, it is simply assumed that Kierkegaard rejected the Hegelian type of philosophizing. But now many go even further, and argue that Kierkegaard did not just have Hegel in mind when he rejected philosophy. Several studies have shown that Kierkegaard knew quite well the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, and even Augustine and Aquinas.^^^11 And when Kierkegaard attacked "philosophy" he rarely singled out attributes he thought


^10Ibid.

unique to Hegel for the attack. Rather, in a more general way, he attacked the presuppositions which he saw as underlying all attempts at philosophy. Hegel was simply viewed as an arch-example of the philosopher's position. If he wanted to provide a more parochial critique, he knew the history of philosophy well enough to level his guns on Hegel or the Cartesian tradition alone. But he did not do this.

Consider his masters thesis on the concept of irony. In that work Socrates is lauded. But he is not honored for his philosophical knowledge. For:

"He was ignorant in a philosophic sense. He was ignorant of the reason underlying all things, the eternal, the divine; that is to say, he knew that it was, but he did not know what it was. He was conscious of it and yet not conscious of it, since the only thing he could predicate of it was that he knew nothing about it...Socrates had the idea as limit."  

In contrast to Socrates, Plato seeks to attain to a "result" rather than an awareness of ignorance. And this makes Plato largely suspect in the eyes of Kierkegaard.  

As SK further develops his discussion of Socrates, it seems that Plato and all philosophers are no more than Pharisees, "who bind up strong burdens for others but who do

---

12 This will be seen when we consider SK's attack on reason by way of a contrast between SK and Hegel (ch 2).


14 Concept of Irony, p. 142. In contrast to Plato, not only does Socrates "end without a result ... but [he] ends with a negative result."
not lift the least themselves.\textsuperscript{15}

"With respect to the chosen people, the Jews, it was necessary for the skepticism of the law to prepare the way, by means of its negativity to consume and burn away the natural man, as it were, in order that grace should not be taken in vain. It is the same with the Greeks... It was necessary for the silence of [Socratic] irony to become the negativity preventing subjectivity from being taken in vain. Irony, like the law, is a demand; indeed, irony is an enormous demand for it disdains reality and demands ideality."\textsuperscript{16}

In this view, the Socratic method simply consists in polemic against all the false claims to ideality. And this polemic

"is a beginning that is equally a conclusion, for the destruction of the previous development is as much its conclusion as is the beginning of the new development, since this destruction is only possible because the new principle is already present as possibility."\textsuperscript{17}

Thus the only valid move in philosophy is the destruction of all claims to philosophical knowledge (ideality). Philosophy becomes the destruction of philosophy; namely, it becomes anti-philosophy.

\textsuperscript{15}SK explicitly develops this idea in a draft of his unfinished work Johannes Climacus trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), supplement, p. 235: "The philosophers are worse than the Pharisees, who, as we read, impose heavy burdens but themselves do not lift them; in this they are the same, but the philosophers demand the impossible. And if there is a young man who thinks that to philosophize is not to talk or write but in all quietness to do honestly and scrupulously what the philosophers say one should do, they let him waste his time, many years of his life, and then it becomes clear that it is impossible, and yet it has gripped him so profoundly that rescue is perhaps impossible." See also the "Historical Introduction," p. xiv.

\textsuperscript{16}Concept of Irony, p. 236.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid, p. 237.
This is but one example of the more "radical" strand which one finds in Kierkegaard's writings. When such passages are coupled with the fact that SK wrote his "philosophical" works under pseudonyms; and when one considers the stories, metaphors, paradoxes, etc. that are strewn through every writing, then one must ask whether we can still say that SK simply meant to attack Hegel's system.

If the "anti-philosopher" view of SK is developed, then one can no longer even say that Kierkegaard is an "existentialist" philosopher.\(^{18}\) Of course, as T.H. Croxall notes, "it cannot be doubted that his influence on philosophical thought has been widespread," especially on existentialism.\(^{19}\) But that influence may be like Socrates' influence on Plato. For SK, as we saw above, Socrates' role was wholly destructive. But Plato appropriated the "destructive" and sought to overcome it in his dialectic. In this way, the destructive was made constructive.\(^{20}\) But, according to SK, the transformation was a deception and Plato made the Socratic method doubly destructive by

---

\(^{18}\)John Macquarrie, *Existentialism* (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1972), p. 276: "If the charge of irrationalism could be established then existentialism could not be called a philosophy - For the philosopher must surely be the man who harkens to reason and allows himself to be guided by it." See also p. 143.

\(^{19}\)Croxall, p. 58.

\(^{20}\)Concept of Irony, pp. 141-149. SK argues that Plato has attempted to fill in the "mysterious nothingness," which constituted the essential point in Socrates' life, by giving him the Idea.
introducing into its polemic the false premise of ideality. In this way Plato did to Socrates what the Pharisee did to the law. Namely, he deprived it of its purpose by seeking to domesticate it. The radial power of both Socrates and the law is thus lost by failing to recognize the intent which lies behind them.21

In a similar way, could we say that the power of SK's writing is lost when he becomes the "father of existentialism"? When one reads him as a philosopher does one "domesticate" him? Can one find any constructive role in the pseudonymous writings? Or must he be viewed like Socrates and the law; namely, as a destructive force which undermines all the "buildings" ("house of being")?22

The Marks of a Philosopher

It is against this background that we must view Pojman's thesis. Pojman argues that Kierkegaard is a philosopher; that he is a constructive writer who "uses arguments, develops concepts, and emphasizes thought

21 See note 15.

22 For SK's discussion of philosophy as a house of being see Alexander Dru (ed. and tr.), The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), entries 156 and 583. SK clearly antedates Heidegger in the use of the metaphor. And the parallel will become even clearer in ch 2 when SK's view of language and its relation to philosophy is discussed.
projects to establish conclusions." In this chapter, we will now evaluate Pojman's thesis, with a view to discerning whether or not he has sufficiently proved it.

To proceed in our evaluation, we need to know what the marks of a philosopher are. Then we evaluate whether Pojman succeeds in showing that SK has those marks. If Pojman succeeds, then we can conclude that SK is a philosopher.

There are however, several factors which will complicate our evaluation. First, the marks which indicate who is and who is not a philosopher are not directly apparent. There are many different characterizations of "the philosopher" and each has its own marks, often considerably different from the marks of another characterization. If the marks we need were given in a standard and generally accepted form then our task would be relatively easy. But they are not. Thus we must come up with our own marks of philosophy.

Now, how should we go about this? Before, however, we consider this question an observation is useful. Namely, although there is no standard form of "the marks" there is an at least partial consensus. "Philosophy" is a word which is used in common discourse. Thus any attempt to specify

\[23\text{Pojman, p. ix.}\]

the marks of philosophy should involve an appeal to those marks which are generally recognized to be implied by the word as it is commonly used. This is a question of convention.\textsuperscript{25}

Philosophy is a word which is also used to characterize (perhaps, "signify") a specific content and approach. As such it concerns more than convention (unless one argues that truth is simply a question of convention). This means that there is some endeavor or pursuit which is rooted in the very being of man and can be presented as the content to which the word "philosophy" refers.\textsuperscript{26}

In both uses of the word "philosophy" (convention and content) the meaning of the word is far from clear. To adequately develop the consensus/convention meaning on the one hand, we would need to overview the history of philosophy with a view to the marks which characterize those endeavors which are today called "philosophy." To adequately develop the content/reference meaning, on the other hand, we would need to develop a view of the subject that philosophizes, and show what marks distinguish that capacity or movement which is identified as the reference of the word "philosophize." Combining these, we would need to

\textsuperscript{25}If we work with the linguistic distinction between meaning-as-sense and meaning-as-reference then the consensus concern, while not identical, can be developed in terms of sense.

\textsuperscript{26}Here the concern would be with meaning-as-reference.
bring together the history of philosophy approach (consensus) with the philosophical system approach (content) so that some agreed upon "marks" could be established. 27

Surely a development of these concerns and even a brief treatment of their content would take us far afield from our primary consideration; namely, an evaluation of the degree to which SK is a philosopher. But our predicament is not as precarious as the above mentioned observations may indicate.

St. Augustine, in speaking of time, notes that we know what it is until we attempt to specify what we know. Then the problem becomes much more acute. 28 But since "we certainly understand what is meant by the word both when we use it ourselves and when we hear it used by others" we can evaluate whether and how the word is used even though we cannot specifically present the "marks" of time. 29

27 An example of such an attempt to delineate the meaning of philosophy can be found in Hegel. With him the concern is to overcome the difference between the history of philosophy (what could be called the consensus concern) and the system which accounts for the nature of pure thought (the reference concern — although Hegel would never call it that, because reference is negated in favor of sense). In the "reconciliation" between the two approaches, one finds that Truth which gives the mark of the philosopher. For further reflection on the problematic involved in developing the marks of a philosopher see R.G. Collingwood, "Refutation and Discovery in Philosophy" in Philosophic Problems (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1967), pp. 18-27.

28 Saint Augustine, Confessions, tr. R.S. Pine-Coffin (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 264: "What then is time? I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try explain, I am baffled."

29 Ibid.
The same can be said of philosophy. Even though we do not fully specify the marks of philosophy we can still evaluate whether a given approach can be called philosophical. For example, even thought Kant strongly criticized the role of reason, he approached his criticism in a very rational way, and thus came to be called a philosopher. On the other hand, if some individual rejected reason altogether and said that all argument should be based on emotion - even the argument that says all should be based on emotion - then we would be safe in saying that individual is not a philosopher. Somehow reason and philosophy go together.\(^\text{30}\)

But we could not say that reason must be used in "such and such" a way in order for an individual to be a philosopher. An existentialist "philosopher" like Heidegger would use reason in a very different way than an idealist like Hegel. Thus, although we could not use "reason" as a mark in the strong sense of the word (i.e. in the strict sense of an absolute indicator whose presence determines the predication "philosopher") we can use it in a weak sense, as an indicator which somewhat expresses the meaning we intend with the word "philosopher." As Augustine says of time, so with philosophy we have a strange combination of knowing and not knowing. And this combination is what leads us to using "mark" in the weak sense.

\(^{30}\)Macquarrie, p. 276.
A recognition that "reason" is only a mark in the weak sense, brings us likewise to the recognition that the philosopher vs. nonphilosopher issue is broader than the reason vs. faith issue. Up until recent scholarship, by far the prominent emphasis in Kierkegaard studies was on the faith vs. reason problematic. Debate concerned whether catch phrases like the "the leap" and "believe by virtue of the absurd" could be considered reasonable in the light of Christian belief and doctrine, or in the light of the human condition. Theologians such as Barth and Bruner developed SK's position on faith by arguing that faith has its own logic and criteria. And philosophers such as Heidegger and Sartre developed SK's position on faith by affirming the absurdity of existence or the inadequacy of the "objective" position. But in all cases, it was assumed that SK's observations on faith and reason referred to the state of things (reality) as they are in themselves. In other words,


it was assumed that SK directly communicated concepts and ideas. And if that be the case, then he could be regarded as a philosopher even though he affirmed a radical priority of faith over reason.

While the issue of philosopher vs. non-philosopher is indeed broader than the issue "reason vs. faith," it does not, however, exclude the dynamic of the reason vs. faith problematic. The following relation can be established between the two issues: In the philosopher vs. non-philosopher debate, certain "marks" are needed in order to carefully evaluate whether or not SK is a philosopher. But, as we have argued above, "marks" must be understood in the weak sense because of the ambiguity and complexity which is involved in any attempt at delineating the meaning of the word "philosopher." As we shall see shortly these "marks," understood in a weak sense, must give a characterization of philosophy which can guide our evaluation.34 But in the faith vs. reason debate, one was concerned with the meaning of and relation between faith and reason as they are given in the thought of SK. In this debate it was assumed that SK communicated directly in terms of concepts and ideas. Thus the results of the faith vs. reason debate in Kierkegaardian

34Here we call on the classical distinction between a characterization and a definition. The former simply gives attributes that generally hold. It does not give sufficient conditions. While the latter gives the necessary and sufficient conditions. For example, "a bachelor is a lonely man" may be a part of a characterization, while "a bachelor is an unmarried man" is a definition.
studies, gives the material which is used by the scholar who advocates the thesis that SK is a philosopher. The characterization of "philosopher" which is given in the "marks," is related to the position which is developed in the faith vs. reason debate. And if SK's approach to the faith vs. reason problematic can be characterized as a "philosophical" approach, then, even if SK's conclusions are radical, he can still be called a "philosopher."

Thus far we have been developing ideas in a very general way. Let us now return to our earlier concern with the marks of philosophy and develop them in a way that is more directly applicable in our attempt to evaluate Pojman's thesis. We must now present the "marks" and evaluate the degree to which Pojman exhibits or fails to exhibit them as present in the writings of SK.

Our method of evaluation will be relatively straightforward. First, we will state the "marks" of a philosopher which Pojman himself presents. We will then ask how well those marks characterize the strange combination of knowing and not knowing which we intend when we speak of "philosophy." Second, we will present Pojman's view of Kierkegaard's position. We will then, third, evaluate how well Pojman's view of SK's position corresponds to the marks that he has given of a philosopher. And, finally, we shall evaluate whether Pojman's view of SK does justice to the writings which represent SK's actual view. Here we will
test Pojman's reading by the primary sources.

Pojman never explicitly states the "marks" which will indicate that SK is a philosopher. But in his preface he reformulates his thesis in several ways and together the various thesis statements can be set forth as a characterization of "philosopher." In this essay we shall isolate five "marks" which Pojman claims apply to Kierkegaard. These are:

1. Kierkegaard is a thinker who uses arguments, develops concepts, and employs "thought projects" to establish conclusions.\(^{35}\)

2. SK has a message to communicate which is founded on objective truth. And he claims that the goal of his work is to reach what he calls the "highest truth."\(^{36}\)

3. SK's work is an exercise in giving reasons why there are no reasons, so that there is ground for pursuing the truth through subjectivity.\(^{37}\)

4. SK offers a "Christian epistemology."\(^{38}\)

5. SK was a "Christian philosopher," concerned with explicating and defending the Christian faith at the same time he sought to win his fellow Danes to the

---

\(^{35}\) Pojman, p. ix.

\(^{36}\) Ibid.

\(^{37}\) Ibid.

\(^{38}\) Ibid, p. x.
faith.\textsuperscript{39}

If Pojman succeeds in showing that these marks do indeed represent SK's concerns, then he has gone a considerable way in proving his thesis. Before, however, we consider the marks in greater detail, we must make one further clarification in the way in which they are to be used.

Consider, for example, the first mark. "A philosopher is a thinker who uses arguments, develops concepts, and employs 'thought projects' to establish conclusions." This seems to be a very reasonable assertion. But note that a poet or even a shoemaker, salesman, etc. also uses arguments, develops concepts, and employs thought projects to establish conclusions. It is the fallacy of affirming the consequent to say that the predicate conditions the subject - unless the predicate gives a definition and not just a characterization.

As we have argued above, the marks we present do not give an exhaustive definition of 'philosopher.' We use 'marks' in the weak sense, as giving a characterization rather than a definition. But there are also two ways in which "philosopher" can be predicted. In the weak sense one can argue that everyone is a philosopher. Here "philosophy" refers to that approach to life, which involves arguments, develops concepts, etc. And to the degree that any person does this, that person may be called a philosopher. But in

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid.
the strong sense, only those whose very existence is characterized by the marks will be a philosopher. Argumentation, etc. must express the primary concern of the individual.

In order for Pojman to move beyond a trivial thesis, he must mean "Kierkegaard is a philosopher in the strong sense." Thus even though "marks" must be used in the weak sense, "philosopher" as a predicate of SK must be used in the strong sense. And that must mean that the characterization which is expressed in the five marks must be exhibited as the primary concern of SK.

Let us consider the marks. The first, third, and fifth mark are all interrelated. In the first, argumentation, etc. is advocated as the method or way to reach conclusion. In the third mark, it is assumed that a conclusion which is based on the argumentation of reason, must be the basis of a legitimate pursuit. Pojman states that Kierkegaard's work "is an exercise in giving reasons why there are no reasons, so that there are grounds for pursuing the truth through subjectivity" (and Christianity is the ultimate expression for the pursuit of truth through subjectivity). It is directly implied in the affirmation that without reasons for there being no reason, there is not sufficient ground for pursuing truth through subjectivity. For if reason could not show there are no reasons, then one must pursue truth through reason. Implicitly reason is given priority over
subjectivity. It has veto power and that is why it must negate itself before any pursuit apart from it could be considered legitimate.

In the fifth mark, Pojman attempts to give the telos of the argumentation which is affirmed in marks one and three. SK has an apologetic aim: to win his fellow Danes to the faith.

Early in his book, Pojman summarizes the "bare bones" of Kierkegaard's philosophy, by attempting to present the argument that underlies SK's "Christian philosophy." The argument is given as follows:

1. There are two opposing ways to approach the truth: the objective and the subjective ways.
2. The objective way fails.
3. Hence the only appropriate way is the subjective way.
4. Christianity is the subjective way of life that meets all conditions for the highest subjectivity.
5. Hence Christianity is the appropriate way to teach the truth."\textsuperscript{40}

This argument simply brings together marks one, three, and five. To state that such an argument, given in deductive form, presents the "overall argument" of SK's most significant writings (including his private papers) is to affirm that argumentation, etc. is central. Thus the first mark is met. To present the objective and subjective as mutually exclusive approaches, and then argue for the subjective by negating the objective, is to make

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid, p. xi.
argumentation the basis for a legitimate pursuit. Thus the third mark is met. And to argue that Christianity best meets the conditions of the subjective approach, is to present an apologetic for Christianity that is rooted in reason. Thus the fifth mark is met.

In the fourth mark, "epistemology" is presented as a central philosophical concern. Here one attempts to outline the way in which truth can be reached. This mark must thus be connected with the second mark, which states that there is a "highest truth" which is objectively present, and thus directs the way in which one comes to truth. If there was no given "highest truth" then it would be ridiculous to delineate a way to truth, for there would be no truth to approach. For Pojman, the objective state of affairs is grasped by reason. Thus, even though one pursues truth by subjectivity (note argument form above), one understands the nature of the pursuit by reason; namely, by objective reflection. The "Christian epistemology" is thus intimately related to the apologetic argument, which Pojman sees as underlying SK's writing.

Thus if Pojman can prove that an apologetic argument of the form given above underlies SK's writing and expresses its primary concern, he will have exhibited the "marks" which we have outlined above. And these marks do express certain central affirmations which are intended when the word "philosopher" is used. A philosopher is one whose
central concern is directed by some "objective", "highest" truth. A philosopher attempts to ground a pursuit in reason, and seeks to go as far as possible with rational reflection. If, as with Immanuel Kant, reason is denied in the name of faith, it is still reason that provides the grounding for a denial of reason.

Kierkegaard's Apologetic

Let us now move to a brief summary of Pojman's book. We have presented the "marks" of philosopher and have suggested that if they express a central intent of SK, then Pojman has gone a long way in proving that SK is a philosopher. We noted an apologetic argument which Pojman claims underlies SK's most significant writings and private papers. This argument exhibited the characteristics expressed by the "marks." Now we must ask if the argument is supported by the evidence Pojman brings forth in his book.

Pojman begins his book with an overview of SK's Christian purpose and its relation to the enterprise of philosophy. He argues that Kierkegaard must be viewed within the classical tradition of fides quarens intellectum (faith seeking understanding). Here "understanding what is involved in being a Christian...is seen as the dominant

41Ibid, p. 4.
motif, which gives unity and perspective to all other themes.  

Pojman advocates a particular interpretation of fides quares intellectum, which is captured in the phrase "credo ut intelligam." "I believe in order to understand." Understanding is thus the telos of faith, and faith becomes a means to an end.  

42Ibid, p. 2.

43Jorgen Pedersen well elaborates Pojman’s view of SK in his article "Credo ut intelligam" in Theological Concepts in Kierkegaard in vol. 5 of Bibliotheca Kierkegaardiana Edenda Curavent (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Boghandel, 1980), pp. 113-116. However Pederson argues that SK squarely rejects the position. SK "turns radically against it [the maxim] ... taking the position that neither understanding in order to believe nor believing in order to understand is the Christian principle, but rather obedience to the commands of Christ and the will of the Father is the way to faith. ... Faith does not lie on the same level as the reason it collides with (and which repels it), but above it." (p. 115). Pojman’s argument, however, is more in accord with the thesis that SK is a philosopher. Whether or not it is more in accord with SK’s own view, however, we shall consider later in our essay.

44In support of his view that "understanding what is involved in being a Christian" is primary, Pojman quotes the following passage from SK’s My Point of View as an Author: "The whole of my work as an author is related to Christianity, to the problem of becoming a Christian, with a direct or indirect polemic against the monstrous illusion we call Christendom, or against the illusion that in such a land as ours all are Christians of a sort." [tr. Walter Lowrie (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962), p. 5-6] Pojman views this as support for his view, because the emphasis is placed on the Christian as opposed to non-Christian intent of SK’s writing. But if we move the emphasis to becoming vs. understanding, or becoming vs. being, then we find that SK’s self-characterization contrasts with Pojman’s view. SK himself states that the intent of his authorship is not "the listener’s understanding" but "the reader’s own decisive activity, and all depends on this." See Soren Kierkegaard, Purity of
In considering the relation between this interpretation of Christianity and philosophy, Pojman outlines a development that has taken place in the thought of SK. In the early writings, SK affirms a contrast between philosophy and Christianity, but he opts for the former. In Nietzschean fashion, SK argues that

"Christianity instead of giving individuals strength...actually deprives them of their manhood and causes them to compare to heathen as gelding to stallions."\(^{45}\)

But after his conversion in 1838, SK opted for the other side of the contrast. He then argued that reason is like what Paul calls the Law.\(^{46}\) It is thus inadequate for solving the ultimate problems of life. Pojman concludes that for SK "while there may be a Christian philosophy, it must be on Christian terms, not on philosophy’s."\(^{47}\)

Pojman also, however, identifies two poles in the developing thought of SK. One is speculative and metaphysical. It is concerned with "philosophical speculation and mediation." But the other is subjective and

\(^{45}\)Quoted from SK’s papers, I A96 in Pojman, p. 5.

\(^{46}\)This comparison is an important one, and it is probably rooted in SK’s study of Hamann. See Pojman, p. 7. We have already discussed it with reference to Socrates, where we saw that it has radical implications for philosophy. Pojman does not seem to have appreciated the implications for philosophy in general.

\(^{47}\)Ibid, p. 6.
personalistic. It is concerned with action and, according to Pojman, emphasizes "the good over the true." As his thought progresses, SK moves to the subjective and speculative pole.

This contrast is an important one. Pojman must show the continued presence and even dominance of the "speculative and metaphysical" pole if he is to support his contention that SK is a philosopher; a writer who seeks "understanding" (credo ut intelligum) and who presents an apologetic for the faith.

Pojman returns to the speculative and metaphysical pole by arguing that SK's concern with action parallels Kant's concern in the "second critique." Freedom is presented as "the cross which philosophy could not bear." Then reason is critiqued in order to make way for faith.48

But Pojman is uncomfortable with the place SK gives to freedom. He states that SK's position implies a "synergism," because "God chooses man in redemption, and yet, at the same time, man's response is made without compulsion."49 SK thus rejected an absolute predestination in favor of a "relative" one, which allows for an individual to reject his or her election. Pojman will later critique SK's position as a "volitionalism" which does not do justice to the nature of belief.

48 Ibid, pp. 10-11.

49 Ibid, p. 10.
In conclusion to the overview of SK’s early writings, Pojman argues that:

"The subjective or personal pole has hegemony, but the speculative and analytic is never entirely absent. Action is prior to reason in his thought, but action needs reason for its own uses."  

Here we have the main themes that Pojman must evaluate. And he does state that "we will follow the development of these ideas through the rest of this (Pojman’s) book." Pojman’s whole thesis hinges on the "but" which conjoins the phrase "action needs reason for its own uses." Even further, Pojman will have to show that action must in all cases be based on reason.

Pojman next briefly overviews SK’s anthropology and the "stages on life’s way." The anthropological position is taken from the first section of The Sickness Unto Death. There SK defines the self as a synthesis of opposing forces (body and soul) which are brought together in spirit. Pojman then attempts to delineate an argument for the existence of God, which he sees as implicit in SK’s anthropology. He argues that SK affirms an eternal aspect to the self which implies an "eternity" and thus a God. Pojman also argues that SK’s anthropology requires that the self be constituted by another. This requirement is given in the very possibility of there being a misrelation (despair) in the way the self relates itself to itself.

---

50Ibid, p. 16.
Thus the self must have a telos in a God which has constituted the self. Pojman concludes that "there are assumptions in his [SK's] work that, if accepted, would lead to the conclusion that a philosopher's God must exist."\textsuperscript{51}

Pojman also finds an argument for God to be implicit in the stages of existence. In the stages of aesthetical, ethical, Religion A and Religion B, Pojman finds a "scala pardisi, an existential chain of being, which, if rightly followed, leads to the summum bonum, blessedness in one's God-relationship."\textsuperscript{52}

Pojman's treatment of both SK's anthropology and SK's "stages on life's way" obviously supports (or attempts to support) his argument that SK is a philosopher. But Pojman develops his ideas in only a cursory way, and himself acknowledges that he is being only suggestive rather than rigorous in his argumentation. His main argument rests upon SK's contrast between objectivity and subjectivity, and the apologetic form which we outlined above on P. 000.

In his second chapter, titled "Attack on Objectivity," Pojman begins to develop what he sees as SK's fundamental argument.

Pojman begins the chapter by affirming the traditional explanation of SK's relation to philosophy, which we outlined at the beginning of this essay. Namely, when SK

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, p. 21.
rejects "philosophy" he means "speculative philosophy;" i.e. the philosophy of Hegel. But

"If the terms 'philosopher' and 'philosophy' are given wider scope than Hegelian speculative philosophy' and if they include the sort of investigation into the meaning of concepts and validity of arguments that men like Socrates, Kant, Lessing, and Trendelenberg were involved in, then Kierkegaard must be seen as a philosopher."\(^{53}\)

Pojman argues that for SK "the role of reflective reason is largely negative." But this negative reasoning is presented as a via negativa which leads to positive results. "Faiths syllogism" is thus presented as a form of "modus tollendo poneni" or 'principle of denying the disjunct.'\(^{54}\) It's form is:

1. p or q
2. not [p and q]
3. not p
   q

Where p and q are the approach to truth via objectivity and subjectivity respectively. Premise 1 presents the two approaches as the alternatives. Premise 2 states that they are mutually exclusive. (This makes the 'or' in premise 1 a strong rather than weak 'or'.) Premise 3 falsifies objectivity. Thus, via the negative reasoning, one concludes that subjectivity is the way to truth.

In the remaining part of Ch. 2 Pojman attempts to

\(^{53}\)Ibid, p. 23.

\(^{54}\)Ibid, p. 25.
outline the two primary ways in which SK falsifies objectivity. The first way involves a critique of rationality. According to Pojman, SK criticizes the adequacy of reason on five counts:

1. It abstracts from existence. This is exemplified in Hegel, whose "system" represents the archexample of hubris.

2. It is limited, and serves as a slave to the passions.

3. It provides only possibility, and probability, whereas certainty is required.

4. Its instrument, language, distorts reality.

5. Reason is not the essence of man, and thus must be integrated with the whole person.

The second way in which objectivity is falsified goes beyond a simple critique of reason. It attempts to show that not only is the objective attitude unhelpful, it is also undesirable because it falsifies the character of the object of faith.

The object of faith is the paradox, which asserts that God became man in history. According to Pojman, this paradox is a means to the generation of maximal subjectivity. Since its purpose is to generate passion, one should not even care if the God-man can be verified. To approach the history with intent to verify, is to ask about the God-man in an objective disinterested way. But this is the negation of the maximal subjectivity which the paradox
is to generate. Thus objectivity as an attitude is rejected.

Pojman concludes the second chapter with a criticism of SK's position. He argues that "Disinterestedness or impartiality is not necessarily opposed to subjectivity." Just as a referee can be impartial yet also passionately involved, so also reason can be impartial and yet passionate. Thus, according to Pojman:

"It seems that Kierkegaard fails to take sufficiently into account the possibility that one can be both objective (impartial) and subjective (passionately interested) at the same time. Herein, I believe, is his greatest weakness."56

In the third chapter, Pojman moves on to consider the relation between epistemology and a given view of subjectivity. He argues that in SK's thought there are actually three epistemologies corresponding to three views of subjectivity.

Each epistemology begins with the negative reasoning found in "faith's syllogism." But the three views differ on the relation between "subjective reflection" (subjectivity) and the "Highest Truth" ("Eternal Truth").

In the "Reduplication Model of Subjectivity" the emphasis is on existence rather than speculation. The important thing is to reduplicate in one's being the ideals that one has. Thus the key relation is to one's own beliefs

56Ibid, p. 50.
rather than to Ultimate Truth. And the attitude to the
Highest Truth is thus skepticism.

In the "Metaphysical Model of Subjectivity" the
emphasis is on arriving at the Highest Truth. And
subjectivity, via the miutic method, is deemed appropriate
and adequate to the attainment of that truth. Here the way
of subjectivity is based on a via negativa. "So that by a
process of elimination false goals and actions are annulled
and only the true goal and/or act remains."57

The third way of subjectivity Pojman calls the
"Necessary-Condition Model." This is a compromise between
the first two models. It states that subjectivity is a
necessary but not sufficient condition for attaining to
Ultimate Truth. Here, also, some metaphysical truth may be
attained, although it is yet "infinitely far from the
highest truth."

In overviewing the three approaches, Pojman states that

"The simplest explanation for this discrepancy
between the three approaches] is to concede that
Kierkegaard was not terribly interested in logical
connections. He was concerned to promote the
value of subjectivity, and as he concentrated on
it, he sometimes made claims which are
inconsistent with what he said elsewhere."58

Pojman then goes on to admit something very telling to his
thesis. We quote him here at length:

"If he [SK] had been asked which theory was his,

57Ibid, p. 69.
58Ibid, p. 72.
he might have replied that all of these theories were merely possibilities. He wasn’t interested in a detailed theory – only in an imaginative set of descriptions to awaken us to the need for looking inward and acting on the basis of that vision. In this sense, writers such as Mackey are correct to emphasize the poetic tone of what may mistakenly be taken for straightforward philosophy. I think there is a good bit of truth to this interpretation of Kierkegaard. The religious-poetic motif is very strong in his work, and it is helpful to view his theories as ‘thought projects.’ However, another side to his work (a side we noticed in the second chapter) reveals a striving for consistency and comprehensiveness, an attempt to map reality for the Christian. There is the attempt to unveil a Christian epistemology.\(^59\)

Pojman then concludes that there is a "thorough dialectic" between the poetic and philosophic attitude, which runs through all of SK’s work. This dialectic is further paralleled with a dialectic of dispersion and synthesis. But Pojman views the synthesis as following dispersion. Thus it gives the final word.

In this way Pojman attempts to account for the poetic motif, while still affirming the priority of philosophy. But it is still interesting to note that this chapter on subjectivity and epistemology ends with an affirmation of the poetic motif rather than the philosophical.

Pojman does attempt to bring together the three views and concludes that for SK:

"Subjectivity, by the providence of God, leads to the highest truth. Subjectivity is the means by which God brings us to the summum bonum, which includes the vision (knowledge) of the good and

\(^{59}\)Ibid, pp. 72-73.
the true as well as rapturous experience of it." (emphasis added)\textsuperscript{60}

In the next three chapters (chs. 4-6) Pojman considers the meanings of "faith" as they are developed in the different writings of SK. Faith is "a species of subjectivity."\textsuperscript{61} Thus an evaluation of the meaning of faith, involves an evaluation of that subjectivity which is the means to the attainment of truth.

In the first stage of existence (the aesthetic) faith is viewed as intuitive immediacy. SK calls on Hegel's criticism of Jacobi for his evaluation of this. And his main criticism argues that this "faith" is indistinguishable from the "first immediacy" which characterizes the natural attitude of a child.

In the second stage (the ethical) faith is faithfulness or commitment to the moral law and the ethical way of life. Here "the universal" is necessarily the mediation between the individual and ultimate truth. The universal is the moral law as given in conscience and the ethical way as given in society. But this "faith" ignores the possibility of an individual's relation to God.

Pojman then considers "Religion A" (what SK calls "immanent religion") and he places SK's evaluation of Abraham and the "second immediacy" under this heading.

\textsuperscript{60}Ibid, p. 75.

\textsuperscript{61}Ibid, p. 77.
"This type of faith is immediate like aesthetic faith - spontaneous - but it appears after a certain sophistication of maturation has been attained in the ethical realm; so it is second immediacy. It is characterized by a leap into the unknown."62

Here faith involves a "teleological suspension of the ethical" in which there is "an absolute relation to the Absolute." The universal is thus relativized and no longer stands as the mediation to the truth. Since reason requires the universal, the suspension of the universal also involves a suspension of reason. Thus "the leap" is "over 70,000 fathoms of water;" i.e. a volitional movement which is not substantiated in reason.

Pojman identifies this view of faith with SK's own position, and he criticizes it.

"It seems that Kierkegaard was laboring under an unduly rigid understanding of a universal, as an objective absolute of the most general sort....He seems to have assumed that the most general judgment is automatically the universal."63

But, Pojman argues, Abraham had "inductive evidence" which supported his willingness to sacrifice. According to Pojman, Kierkegaard thinks that the voice that Abraham heard calling him to sacrifice Isaac was "the depths of a mysterious self" which is indistinguishable from intuition. But, Pojman argues, Abraham had heard that voice before and things turned out well. Thus it was reasonable to follow it

63Ibid, p. 85.
again when it said "sacrifice Isaac."

Here Pojman's criticism is very similar to that given in Ch. 2. Basically he is arguing that objectivity and subjectivity are not mutually exclusive, thus the passionate movement of subjectivity should be based on objectivity. e.g. In Abraham's case, it was legitimate to go sacrifice Isaac (the passionate movement) because Abraham had heard the voice before and things worked out well (the objective evidence).

Pojman next considers the faith of "Religiousness B" ("transcendent religion"), as it is developed in Philosophical Fragments. Here faith is "the capacity for receiving eternal truth." And since "the truth" is a historical "proposition" (God became man), faith becomes "an organ for apprehending the past or history: the function or process of making the past present."

Through an evaluation of "The Interlude" in Philosophical Fragments Pojman concludes that for SK: "Belief is an act of the will, a free act. In the act of believing, the mind assents to a proposition and risks error." (emphasis added)

Pojman then launches a detailed critique of the "volitionalism" which he sees involved in SK's view of

---

64 Ibid, p. 91.
65 Ibid, p. 77.
66 Ibid, p. 94.
faith. He argues that "beliefs" are not to be attained by willing them. Rather, belief is "recognition of the truth value of a proposition" and it is thus acquired passively, as something which happens to us, rather than actively, as something which we will.\textsuperscript{67} Pojman even argues that it is immoral to will a belief.\textsuperscript{68} Thus "there is something wrong" with SK's evaluation of faith:

"Kierkegaard had enormous faith in the passions as intuitions informing us of the right way. Unfortunately, many people find themselves with conflicting intuitions or with intuitions which are reliably wrong. Nevertheless, we may grant Kierkegaard his point about the insufficiency of reason in certain situations. What is hard to grant is that this is a general truth about our deepest beliefs...Even if we admit that our deepest metaphysical beliefs cannot be proved, they are open to rebuttal and falsification, to new evidence and adjustment. At least the person who values objective truth, who wants to have rational beliefs, would strive to qualify even his deepest beliefs."\textsuperscript{69}

Here, again, Pojman's criticism relates directly to whether or not objectivity and subjectivity are mutually exclusive. Pojman argues that they are not. Belief must be based on objective evidence. The passions, which Pojman identifies with subjectivity, lead to wholly arbitrary conclusions without the direction of reason.

Pojman finally moves to a discussion of faith in the

\textsuperscript{67}Ibid, p. 106.

\textsuperscript{68}Ibid, p. 112. Pojman also elaborates upon this in an unpublished article titled "On Rational Religious Beliefs."

\textsuperscript{69}Pojman, p. 116.
Postscript. Here faith is a "synergistic" combination of God's grace and man's response. The "essential paradox" is the proposition on the God-man. Its purpose is to generate maximal subjectivity, which is the means to attaining the highest truth. Faith is that maximal subjectivity which is generated by believing the paradox.

This view of faith, according to Pojman, fails on four counts. First, it presupposes an untenable volitionalism. Second, its premise allows for any paradox which is truly absurd (e.g. God became a rattlesnake). Third, it leads to a reductio ad absurdum in which Christianity denies itself (the paradox allows for, and leads to, its own negation, since it is only a means to generating maximal subjectivity; i.e. once it is accepted, then its negation would generate a greater subjectivity). And, fourth, it is "bad psychology" (it assumes a paradox is needed to generate maximal passion).

In his seventh chapter, Pojman attempts to summarize his results in a formal argument, which he presents as the systematic exposition of the argument which underlies Kierkegaard's writing. Because of the criticism he has developed throughout the book, Pojman concludes that SK's argument does not succeed.

His main criticism is against the mutual exclusivity of subjectivity and objectivity. Kierkegaard's notion of subjectivity
"is both too narrow and too broad for the task. It is too narrow in its neglect of the objective factors of existence. Probability is, after all, the guide of life and, incomplete though it is, must be brought into the debate, even if it may cause us to have a less tenacious faith than Climacus would like. Subjectivity is also too broad, for it seems to allow almost any object at all."\(^{70}\)

Thus, although Kierkegaard "attempted something great" (namely, an argument for Christianity) he "failed to attain it."\(^{71}\)

Some Questions

Given the evidence, has Pojman succeeded in showing that SK is a philosopher? If Pojman’s evaluation of SK is correct (and we will consider this shortly), then it seems reasonable to assert that he has proved his thesis.

Pojman brought together a large part of SK’s most significant writings and exhibited an argument from which one can account for much of the data of each writing.\(^{72}\) For example, he has dealt with the anthropology in Sickness Unto Death, the stages in Either/Or and Stages on Life’s Way, the

\(^{70}\)Ibid, pp. 145-146.

\(^{71}\)Ibid, p. 146.

\(^{72}\)It is in a qualified sense that we say Pojman brought together SK’s writings. There are yet many themes in SK’s corpus which have not been accounted for. But SK is notoriously difficult to synthesize, and thus, to be unable to account for everything is not necessarily required in Kierkegaardian scholarship, although, of course, the more that can be accounted for, the better.
'leap' in Fear and Trembling, and the meaning of "faith's syllogism" in Philosophical Fragments and Concluding Unscientific Postscript. He also continually referred to SK's private papers and journal entries.

If we refer back to the marks, we can find each one verified in Pojman's book. First, Pojman has exhibited that SK is a thinker who uses arguments (e.g. faith's syllogism), develops concepts (the concept of faith), employs 'thought projects' (like that in Phil. Frag.) to establish conclusions (e.g. approach truth by believing the proposition on the God-man). Second, SK affirms objective truth and, via his evaluation of subjectivity, attempts to exhibit a relation to that truth. Fourth, SK offers a Christian epistemology, as Pojman showed when he developed the relation between subjectivity and epistemology. And, fifth, SK sought to win his fellow Danes to the faith (presumably through "faiths syllogism"). Thus Kierkegaard is a philosopher. ... Or is he?

The reader will note that the third mark was skipped. It states that SK's work is "an exercise in giving reason why there are no reasons, so that there is ground for pursuing the truth through subjectivity." This mark is of central importance because it implies that reason must be falsified before there is sufficient ground for pursuing the truth through subjectivity. In other words, if reason is not falsified, then, presumably, it must be the basis upon
which a pursuit is grounded.

Unless this third mark can be exhibited, Pojman has not gone beyond proving that SK is a philosopher in the weak sense. Marks 1, 2, 4, and 5 are indeed verified in Pojman's evaluation. But they are not exhibited as the primary concern of SK until Mark 3 is also verified.

It is also important to notice the similarity between Mark 3 and "faith's syllogism." In faith's syllogism, one begins with the mutual exclusivity of objectivity and subjectivity and then subjectivity is affirmed as the way to truth. While objectivity is broader than reason, we clearly see a parallel when, in the third mark, the falsification of reason is presented as the ground of the pursuit through subjectivity.

We can thus see that the third mark is intimately related to the argument which Pojman presents as the underlying argument of SK's work. And both Mark 3 and "faith's syllogism", in turn, are intimately related to Pojman's thesis that SK is a philosopher.

But we should even further note that it is over the relation between subjectivity and objectivity that Pojman has his greatest criticism of Kierkegaard. Pojman continually chastises SK for affirming that objectivity is falsified. Instead, Pojman wants to affirm that reason and the objective attitude are needed as a basis for a legitimate (even "moral") pursuit. And Pojman even seeks to
present SK's work as providing such a basis.

Given the "philosophical" intent which Pojman argues that SK has, it is easy for Pojman to undermine SK's falsification of objectivity. SK's work becomes, to Pojman, a failure because the argument (with its objectivity) is undermined by the falsification of objectivity which stands as premise in the argument.

With Jerry Gill, however, we are led to wonder whether Pojman has perhaps missed the true character of Kierkegaard's work. Given "the obvious brilliance and self-conscious authorship" of Kierkegaard, how could such a blatant self-contradiction pervade his writing? Kierkegaard explicitly rejected apologetics. For example, he likened Christianity to a fortress and apologetics to a bridge:

Imagine a fortress, absolutely impregnable, provisioned for an eternity. There comes a new commandant. He conceives that it might be a good idea to build bridges over the moats - so as to be able to attack the besiegers. Charmant! He transforms the fortress into a country-seat -- and naturally the enemy takes it. So it is with Christianity. They changed the

---

73 "Understanding and Faith", p. 38: "There are several difficulties with this approach to SK's notion of understanding. For one thing it entails that SK was guilty of offering a clearly argued case for and explanation of faith. Not only does this fail to do justice to the complexity of the works in question, but it implies that SK was unaware of the self-contradictory character of his own work, which seems unlikely given his obvious brilliance and self-conscious authorship. For another thing, this reading must deliberately ignore the pseudonymous authorship of the crucial philosophical works and the importance of indirect communication in SK's own understanding of his works."
method -- and naturally the world conquered.\textsuperscript{74} 
And yet Pojman sees such an apologetic argument to be foundational to SK's work. Could it be that Pojman has misunderstood the fundamental meaning and import of SK's discussion of subjectivity and objectivity?

The pivotal issue concerns Kierkegaard's falsification of objectivity. This was the focus of Pojman's second chapter ("Attack on Objectivity"). In the remainder of this essay we will attempt to evaluate in detail the way in which SK falsifies reason and affirms the priority of subjectivity. We shall structure our evaluation after the format of Pojman's second chapter, but we shall interrogate Pojman's conclusions by an appeal to other secondary sources and especially to the primary sources (Kierkegaard's own writing).

\textsuperscript{74}Quoted from SK's Journal in Lowrie, p. 234.
CHAPTER 2: THE FALSIFICATION OF REASON

Pojman's second chapter outlined two ways in which objectivity was falsified. In the first way, reason itself was considered, and its inadequacy was identified. The emphasis was on the self, and SK asked which attitude (subjectivity or objectivity) best does justice to the dynamics of that self. i.e. In what attitude is the self most truly itself?

In the second way, the "object" of faith was considered. And one asks: What attitude is most appropriate to the object that is to be known? Kierkegaard held to the classical maxim "like knows like."¹ Thus, in the second way, SK shows the incommensurability between the "object" of faith (the God-man) and the objective attitude. Instead, subjectivity is that disposition of the self which is "like" the God-man.

In the next two chapters of our essay, we will seek to bring together the two ways in which objectivity is falsified. Then we will be able to appreciate the nature of both subjectivity and objectivity as they are found in SK's thought. We will also be in a position to decide whether or not Pojman has succeeded in showing that

SK is a philosopher.

The Priority of Reason

Pojman calls the mutual exclusivity of subjectivity and objectivity "the cognitive disjunct thesis" (CD).² And he claims that SK justified CD by an appeal to interest. Objective inquiry requires disinterest. But subjective inquiry entails interest. One cannot be both disinterested and interested at the same time. Thus objectivity and subjectivity must be mutually exclusive.³

Pojman is uncomfortable with the neat either/or of CD. He questions whether it falsifies experience. For in most experience: "The objective seems to precede the subjective: Because I believe a proposition to be objectively true, I

²Pojman, p. 37. This designation (CD) is not the most appropriate, because it carries connotations of a faculty anthropology which SK rejected (see p. 135-136 of our essay). Rather than view the contrast between subjectivity and objectivity in terms of disjointed parts, SK would view it in terms of whole (subjectivity) vs. part (objectivity). It would probably be more accurate to designate Pojman's position as cognitively disjointed. But we shall continue to use CD to characterize the mutual exclusivity of subjectivity and objectivity. It is ambiguous enough to apply; if we exclude the inappropriate connotations and use it strictly as a technical term.

³Ibid, p. 36. Although "interest" is partially the basis of SK's affirmation of CD, his argument is much broader and more complex than Pojman indicates. One needs to grasp SK's whole paradigm in order to appreciate any part of his argument (ref. Croxall, p. 81). Thus to show that one can be both interested and disinterested is not sufficient as a falsification of CD.
feel passionately about it."⁴ Here Pojman states the classical priority of reason.⁵ As the highest faculty, reason is to provide direction for the will and feelings. Thus one first knows objectively, evaluating the truth and worth of a given proposition or ideal. And then subjectively one pursues that truth which has been objectively appropriated. Here, subjectivity and objectivity are not mutually exclusive. Rather they complement each other.⁶

As we have noted previously, Pojman implicitly places SK within the framework of the priority of reason, when he argues that SK’s intent is to give reasons why there are no reasons, so that a ground is present for pursuing the truth through subjectivity. The assumption here is that objectivity, grounded in ‘reasons,’ is necessary, and

⁴Pojman, p. 38.

⁵In a classical anthropology there are different faculties. When reason is designated as the highest faculty, which is to direct and govern the other faculties, then the philosophical anthropology is said to hold to the "priority of reason." A good example of such a position can be seen in Plato’s Republic, where the cardinal virtues involve reason’s governance of spirit and the appetites. (See Republic book four).

⁶Note the discursive nature of Pojman’s anthropology. First one knows objectively, and then one knows subjectively. Here Pojman still holds to a disjunct between the two, but time is given as the condition for overcoming the disjunct. SK would accept such a divided movement in the relative affairs of history, but, for him, it would never be appropriate for ultimate matters. In knowing the Absolute, such a discursive moment is a "double-mindedness". But one should "will one thing."
precedes a subjectivity which is based on the objectivity. Thus, when Pojman states his discomfort with CD, we recognize not only a discomfort with a particular thesis of SK. Rather we sense that there is something in SK's approach to truth which is radically different from that of Pojman; something which even seems to undermine the thesis that SK is philosopher in a strong sense.

In a non-pseudonymous writing titled Purity of Heart, Kierkegaard explicitly advocates the priority of the will.7 Speaking of the "double-minded man" SK states:

"He does not believe that it is the will by which a man should steady himself, yes, that when all

---

7The "priority of the will" is traditionally understood within the same faculty anthropology as that of the "priority of reason," with the one significant difference that the will rather than reason is given first place. As we shall see, however, SK did not advocate a faculty anthropology of the Platonic or even Cartesian sort. The will is viewed in broadest terms, as encompassing reason and the feelings. It thus can be designated as "the self" (see Elrod's Being and Existence in Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Works, p. 80) The will thus becomes SK's central concern, and all else depends on it. e.g.: "Christianity in the New Testament has to do with man's will, everything turns or changing the will, every expression (forsake the world, deny yourself, die to the world, and so on; to hate oneself, to love God, and so on) - everything is related to this basic idea in Christianity which makes it what it is - a change of will." [quoted from Kierkegaard, The Last Years: Journals 1853-55 ed. R. Gregor Smith (New York, 1965) p. 226 in Macquarrie, p. 216.] We shall however maintain the designation "priority of the will" and develop its meaning in the light of SK's anthropology. As we shall see, SK views Hegel's writings as a development of the implications which are contained in the "priority of reason" position. In a parallel way, we can view SK's writings as the development of the implications which are contained in the "priority of the will" position. Just as Hegel extended reason to encompass the whole self (and thus broke out of the faculty anthropology), so SK extends the will.
fails, that it is the will that a man must hold to. He does not believe that the will is itself the mover, but rather that it...should be moved and supported by causes, considerations, advice of others, experiences, rules of life...But in the same stroke the will is made impotent...He has turned everything around...Such a person must certainly remain in double-mindedness, upon the inland lake of double-mindedness, busy with trivialities."\(^8\)

Thus SK criticizes the "priority of reason" position which Pojman advocates both for himself and for SK.

CD and the priority of the will go together as complementary affirmations. If the will is primary, then it need not follow reason or the objective attitude. Instead, subjectivity is given first place.

This does not mean, however, that reason is never allowed to direct the will. Deliberating over the place of reflective thought, SK asks:

"How far am I bound in responsibility to what my understanding says; I mean, to what extent does this responsibility apply: when my understanding tells me that I may not do this and this, then I must not do it?
This responsibility may hold in finite matters, but face to face with the word of God it is impossible."\(^9\)

Here, SK allows for some cases, in finite concerns, when the understanding may govern action. He also admits a relative

\(^8\)Purity of Heart, pp. 117-118.

place to science and even Hegel's philosophy.\textsuperscript{10} But it is in ultimate matters that reason is inadequate and the will must take absolute priority.\textsuperscript{11}

Pojman, in questioning CD, argues that in many matters objectivity precedes subjectivity, thus they are not mutually exclusive. But this sort of inductive inference does not recognize that the whole issue revolves around whether or not such an inductive move is legitimate.\textsuperscript{12} Pojman begs the issue, by saying that normally objectivity precedes subjectivity thus...

But why does SK argue that in ultimate matters the will has priority? What distinguishes the absolute from the

\textsuperscript{10} He says "I always say: All honor to the sciences, etc. but ..." Dru, entry 1169.

\textsuperscript{11}See also Dru, entry 1051.

\textsuperscript{12}In the history of philosophy one finds a parallel debate in the exchange between Anselm and Gaunilon on the Prologium argument. Anselm argues that the affirmation of existence is directly implied in the definition of God. Gaunilon attempts a reductio ad absurdum of Anselm's argument by attempting to show that a parallel structure could prove the existence of a perfect island. Anselm however responds by stating that the sequence of his argument can only be applied to "the being than which none greater can be conceived." God is different from all else, and thus a logic unique to God's being is required. See Saint Anselm, Basic Writings S. N. Dane trans. (Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1968), p. 158. In a similar way, SK argues for the uniqueness of the self's relation to the Absolute. And the logic of that relation (it could appropriately be called "the logic of subjectivity" - but with a different meaning from Pojman) is, for SK, given in his discussion of the paradox. For "the paradox is not a concession but a category, an ontological definition which expresses the relationship between an existing cognitive spirit and eternal truth." Dru, entry #633.
relative? In order to appreciate SK's response, we must consider his evaluation of reason and why it is falsified in ultimate matters.

The Comedy of Christendom

In evaluating reason, SK is not concerned with its capacity in general. Rather, he is concerned with its capacity to grasp or express the deepest and fullest truth of the human person. SK's concern is with ultimate truth.

As Pojman notes, philosophy is the discipline which seeks to attain to this highest truth in terms of thought. For

"Knowledge of the truth in an infinite sense is the goal of philosophy, and it has always been philosophy's task. "The history of philosophy is the history of the discovery of thoughts about the absolute, which is its object."\(^{13}\)

And the faculty of this knowledge is reason.

It was Hegel who attempted to show that philosophy's faculty (reason) was sufficient for the attainment of its object. Via a dialectical methodology one moved from lower categories in which truth seemed contradictory, to the higher categories in which the lower contradictions are overcome. And finally one attains to the Absolute Idea; that idea in which the Whole of Truth is grasped in its coherence. There all contradiction is overcome in the

\(^{13}\text{Pojman, p. 27.}\)
identity of identity and difference.¹⁴ This is "the account of God, as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and any finite spirit."

But for SK, Hegel never showed that reason was sufficient to Ultimate Truth. Rather, as James Collins notes,

"His [SK's] verdict was that Hegel became so alarmed by Kant's skepticism, that he decreed an arbitrary solution of the problem...Hegel simply stipulated that, in his system, thought and being must be regarded as fundamentally identical. Thus, he developed his notion of pure thought, so

¹⁴Hegel's account proceeds from the identity of immediacy. There one has not yet attained to the difference between the inner and outer, however, so the immediate does not know identity as identity. It is not until one moves from the realm of being to that of essence, that the difference between identity and difference is grasped. In essence one finds abstract identity and the abstract difference, and in the category of ground one finds both the unity and difference of identity and difference (Hegel's Lesser Logic, s 121). However the unity exhibits a formalism which does not yet allow for a full identity of identity and difference. This is because the categories of essence do not allow for a unity of the immediate and mediate. It is thus not until Notion (specifically, in the category of Idea) that the contrast between subjectivity and objectivity, which conditions that of identity and difference, is superseded. (s 225) Then the process itself, as the dialectic, is accounted for in its own idea. For "The Idea is essentially a process, because its identity is the absolute and free identity of the notion, only in so far as it is absolute negativity and for that reason dialectical. It is the round of movement, in which the notion, in the capacity of universality which is individuality, gives itself the character of objectivity and of the anti-thesis thereto; and this externality which has the notion for its substance, finds its way back to subjectivity through its immanent dialectic." (s 215) In this way Hegel attempts to provide, both a progressive and regressive justification of reason's capacity to grasp its object (which is itself). And by showing reason's grasp of itself, Hegel argues, one has grasped reason's grasp of all else. Thus one concludes with the whole.
as to beguile himself into believing that philosophical reasoning is productive of actual being." 15

The nature of the stipulation can be seen, for example, in Hegel’s preface to Philosophy of Right:

“What is rational is actual and what is actual is

15 James Collins, The Mind of Kierkegaard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 125. We should, note at this point, that such an argument assumes what Klaus Hartmann has called "the metaphysical reading" of Hegel. [Klaus Hartmann, "Hegel: A Non-Metaphysical View" in Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays, Alasdair MacIntyre (ed.) (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), pp. 101-124.] In contrast, Hartmann advocates a "non-metaphysical reading" [H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr. has called it a "meta-ontological" reading in his "The Dialectic as a Meta-Ontological Method." ] This is a Kantian reading of Hegel, which views the dialectic as an "implementation procedure" which allows for a systematic ordering of the necessary categories of thought. "Negation and double negation are the artificial means of regarding the synthesis of a granted content as established in a forward reading." (emphasis added; Hartmann, p. 109). While I think that Hartmann’s reading holds great promise for a positive appropriation of Hegel’s contribution, I think it has considerable difficulty in accounting for Hegel’s posthumously published lectures on the history of philosophy and on the philosophy of religion. It also construes the Phenomenology in a way that seems contrary to Hegel’s original intent. And since SK continually assumed a metaphysical reading of Hegel (whether rightly or wrongly), in this essay we shall also read Hegel as such when we contrast him with SK. As a final note on Hartmann’s reading: I think a case can be made that shows that SK advocated a meta-ontological reading of Hegel, but without closure. Thus he does not allow for the regressive justification. SK’s meditations on Schelling especially lends evidence for such a contention. If this idea is developed, then I think one can account for both SK’s vehement rejection of Hegel (viewed metaphysically) and the odd prevalence of Hegel’s views in SK’s own writing. The ambiguous relation between SK and Hegel has caused considerable difficulty for Kierkegaardian scholarship, and Hartmann’s distinction between a metaphysical and non-metaphysical reading seems to allow for a resolution of that difficulty. But we cannot develop this idea further in this essay.
rational. On this conviction the plain man like the philosopher takes his stand, and from it philosophy starts in its study of the universe of mind as well as the universe of nature...nothing is actual except the idea. Once that is granted, the great thing is to apprehend in the show of the temporal and transient the substance which is immanent and the eternal which is present."\(^{16}\)

Hegel then goes on to say that rationality is synonymous with the Idea. And both are attained unto via the immanent movement of thought, which is the dialectic. This immanent movement, in order to be wholly immanent, must not base itself upon anything outside itself. Thus it must have a presuppositionless beginning.

But SK responds by arguing that:

"pure thought is a phantom. If the Hegelian philosophy has emancipated itself from every presupposition, it has won this freedom by means of one lunatic postulate: The initial transition to pure thought."\(^{17}\)

---

\(^{16}\)T. M. Knox, trans. *Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 10. It should be noted, however, that this quote takes place in the preface to the work, and Hegel viewed a preface as impossible. Hegel would argue that the logic itself should be viewed as that which shows the identity of the real and ideal. And then the arbitrary character of the affirmation is overcome. In other words, Hegel would require that the Philosophy of Right be situated in the proper place in the Encyclopedia. Then all that comes previous to it would be the justification needed. And the preface could then be abolished. The whole purpose of the preface is to bring one to the perspective of pure thought. After that, the preface is no longer needed. For further reflections on Hegel’s view of the preface see Spivak’s preface in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak trans. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p.x.

\(^{17}\)Postscript, p. 279. With this objection SK does not just strike at the preface of the Philosophy of Right. He strikes at the heart of Hegel’s system by arguing that the philosopher’s very attempt to grasp truth in terms of pure
Thus Hegel's "system" is not presuppositionless, for it presupposes that it can legitimately begin with that which is immanent to itself. And according to SK, this is a "lunatic postulate."

In his critique of Hegel, SK is not arguing that from the perspective of pure thought Hegel has a presupposition. But rather that that perspective is the presupposition (which is more a position than a presupposition).\textsuperscript{18} For SK, thought is a false position. Even if Hegel succeeds in his task, what he accomplishes is not what the human subject requires in order to attain to its self-fulfillment. Reason's self-fulfillment is not the self's self-fulfillment.

\textsuperscript{18}Klaus Hartmann supports SK's contention in his "On Taking the Transcendental Turn" in the Review of Metaphysics Vol. XX, No. 2, issue No. 78, Dec. 1966, pp. 223-249. There Hartmann notes that "Transcendental Philosophy [which includes Hegel] must provide arguments, so it seems, on the pre-transcendental level to establish the transcendental position." (p. 223) He notes how Kant attempted to do this, but concludes that Kant must presuppose what he later rejects in order to succeed at his argument. (p. 231) Hegel is somewhat more successful in his Phenomenology of Spirit, because thought can be viewed as self-validated from the viewpoint of the end which is its ground. (p. 238) But still there is no way to directly lead one in a necessary way from a "lematic" (non-transcendental) perspective into the "pure categorical" (transcendental) perspective. "We rely on a qualitative leap, somewhere along the line. It seems, then, that the autonomy of the transcendental domain of explanation is a jealous position, not admitting of introductory procedures which avoid the difficulty of categorial circulatory." (emphasis added, p. 244) The difficulty concerns whether or not one should accept "privileged area of self-evidence," whether that area be viewed as pure thought (ref. Logic) or pure consciousness (ref. Phenomenology). Hartmann recognizes that one needs some "plausible motivation" to take the transcendental turn. He believes that the capacity to give a categorial account of the subject (including its social forms, as Hegel gives in his Philosophy of Right) is such a motivation. (p. 245) Stanley Rosen in his \textit{G.W.F. Hegel} (New Haven: Yale
however, the philosopher's perspective (pure thought) is inappropriate because it distances the subject who thinks from the actual world in which one lives. Thought and

University Press, 1974) also argues that such a capacity is needed if we are to avoid the reductive views of life which are present in either a Platonic dualism or the present day scientism (e.g. Positivism). (see his preface). For both Hartmann and Rosen the need to grasp the subject with thought justifies the "leap" into the position of pure thought (what Hartmann refers to as the "pure-categorial" position).

SK recognizes the need (grounded in ethical concerns) but argues that the leap to pure thought does not satisfy the need. It only allows for a grasp of the subject by falsifying the subject. The subject becomes other than what it is, when it is viewed from the pure transcendental position. This is why he terms the transcendental turn a "lunatic postulate."

19 The philosopher's task can be defined as "that of dying away from the pleasures of the body and from sensuousness in the broadest sense; through such a dying away he would enter into eternity." [see editors note 26, p. 246 of Soren Kierkegaard, The Concept of Anxiety, Reider Thompte (ed. tr.) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980] But for SK the body is essential to the self (ibid, supplement, pp. 195-6). Macquarrie puts SK's view in Heideggerian terms when he says: "To exist is already to be in confrontation with that which is other than oneself. If indeed by definition 'ex-sistence' is a standing out, then the environment from which he stands out is just as primordial as the existent himself ... The problem ... of the reality of the 'external world' is not a matter that exercises the existentialist as it has done those philosophies who begin with a subject on one side and a world on the other and try to bring them together. The existentialist begins with concrete being-in-the-world, and out of this initial unity self and world arise as equiprimordial realities." (p. 81-2) Thus if one seeks to die away from one's body, or one's "being-in-the-world," then the self falsifies itself. Rather, one should "exist" in the categories which relate self and world in a concrete way. (Although Hegel claims that the philosopher's thought is concrete, what he calls concrete is only thought's grasp of concreteness. But thought, for SK, cannot say what it intends. And Hegel confuses the two.) For SK the "otherness" of reality and one's confrontation with that otherness is central to the self. Hegel reduced "otherness"
actuality are not one. Thus

"In relation to their systems most systematizers are like a man who builds an enormous castle and lives in a shack close by; they do not live in their own enormous systematic buildings. But spiritually that is the decisive objection. Spiritually speaking a man's thought must be the building in which he lives - otherwise everything is topsy-turvy."²⁰

The "system" of Hegel is, for SK, a grand achievement. But it should be presented as a "thought experiment"; as a possibility.²¹ In that system, the category of "actuality"

²⁰Dru, Journal, entry #583. See also entry #582: "The difficulty of speculative thought increases according to the degree to which one makes existential use of what one has speculated upon...But usually the philosophers (Hegel as well as all the rest), like the majority of men, exist in quite different categories for everyday purposes from those in which they speculate, and console themselves with categories very different from those which they solemnly discuss. That is the origin of the mendacity and confusion which has invaded scientific thinking."

²¹Dru, Journal entry #1054: "'Reality' cannot be conceived. This has already been shown by Johannes Climacus quite simply and correctly. To conceive reality is to reduce it to possibility - but in that case it is impossible to conceive it, because to conceive it is to reduce it to possibility, and consequently not to hold fast to it as reality. Compared with reality to conceive is a step backwards and not progress. Not as though 'reality' were not conceivable; not at all, no, the concept which results from reducing it to possibility by conceiving it is also in reality, but there is something more - that it is reality. To go from possibility to reality is a progress (except in relation to evil), to go from reality to possibility is a step backwards.

But the unhappy confusion is due to the fact that in the modern world 'reality' has been included in logic and thus in distraction it is forgotten that 'reality' in logic is only a 'reality which is thought' i.e. possibility."
is no more actual than possibility. If Hegel had recognized that it was only a "possibility" then he would have been the greatest philosopher in the world. But since he called his system actual by identifying the real and the ideal, his system becomes comic.

The Tragedy of Christendom

The comedy, however, has become a tragedy because "Christendom" has allowed the identification of Christianity and Hegel's system.

"Now the only Christianity we have is a falsity -- and here is the greatest danger. So there is no

---

22Concept of Anxiety, p. 16. The true distinction between possibility and actuality is only first appreciated when one takes into account "interest." This is the mark which distinguishes subjectivity from objectivity (ref. Pojman, p. 36) For "immanence [which expresses the concern or "interest" of the philosopher] runs aground upon "interest." With this concept, actuality for the first time properly comes into view." (Concept of Anxiety, p. 21) It is in a twofold sense that "immanence runs aground upon interest." First, immanence is the interest of the philosopher. But why should one affirm such an interest? For SK, the ground of an interest is the will, and this transcends the immanence which is the interest of the philosopher. Second, "interest" is concerned with "repetition," namely, with the reduplication of a desired state of affairs in reality. Here SK appeals to everyone's desire (or "interest") to have things go a certain way. But that this interest overthrows the philosopher's position is seen by the inability of thought to effect the desired result. Action is needed, and this involves different categories from pure thought. It especially involves SK's category, "the single individual."

23Journal

24Dru Journal, entry #1052.
philosophy so harmful to Christianity as the Hegelian. For earlier philosophies were honest enough to let Christianity be what it is - but Hegel had both the stupidity and the effrontery to solve the problem of speculation and Christianity by altering Christianity - and then everything was splendid."

The final phrase of this quote was obviously sarcastic. Everything was not splendid. Christianity was made into an inferior moment of the movement which culminates in the perspective of pure thought. It represented a stage in which the explicit truth (the Idea) was given figuratively in the doctrines of Christianity. Or, to put it in Hegel's words:

"The earliest teachings of religion are figurative conceptions of God. These are imparted to us in youth. They are the doctrines of our religion, and in so far as the individual rests his faith on these doctrines and feels them to be truth, he has all he needs as a Christian. Such is faith: and the science of this faith is Theology. But until theology is something more than a bare enumeration and compilation of these doctrines ad extra, it has no right to the title of science...To get that, we must go on to comprehend the facts by thought - which is the business of philosophy. Genuine theology is thus at the same time a real philosophy of religion."  

But, Kierkegaard argues, such an understanding of religion and Christianity is only acceptable if one has initially accepted Hegel's supposition that "pure thought" is the

---


26 Hegel's Logic, s 36 Zusetze.
Implications of the Perspective of Pure Thought

It is at this point that Kierkegaard's affirmation of the primacy of the will is central. If one accepts the primacy of reason, as Pojman for example does, then the perspective of pure thought is advocated as the necessary basis for any legitimate act (ref. Pojman's third mark). When Hegel says that pure thought is the highest, he simply means that it is the ultimate basis upon which all else finds its legitimacy. It is the ground of action.  

27 For more on SK's criticism of Hegel's view of religion, see Fear and Trembling, p. 7-8 and Problema II (pp. 68-81) - although the whole book is an attack on Hegel's view of religion and faith. Also Hong Journal Vol. 3 entry 3657. These are just two of many citations that can be given. The core of SK's criticism can be given as follows: The self is broader than reason, religion is broader than philosophy, and God is other from the self. Self is also identified with will, and faith is viewed as a movement of the whole self rather than just an aspect of the self (e.g. reason).

28 For Hegel, thought is the being of all else. And that which is "other" than thought is ultimately nothing. Thus Hegel goes much further than Pojman. For Hegel, thought is not "just" the ground of action. It is everything (the whole). And to truly know, is to know everything. (see Rosen, p. 15). In this true knowledge, one transcends the difference between "Ground" and that of which the ground is the ground. (In fact, 'ground' is a category of essence, and thus it does not even partake of the tripartite structure of "Notion.") And, in turn, one then transcends the difference between action and thought. For Hegel, the movement of thought was the true movement which is one with action. Thinking is acting and true acting is thinking. SK radically challenged this understanding with his doctrine of "the leap." He attempted
Here Hegel is simply representative of all philosophy. He, however, extends the implications of the position.\textsuperscript{29} When Hegel says that pure thought is the ground of action he means it in a twofold sense. To use a distinction which Hegel argued is somewhat suspect, pure thought is ground in the sense of both the "is" and the "ought." The former sense is developed in Hegel's philosophy of history and the latter is developed in the philosophy of right. But they both can be directly linked to the implications which arise out of the position which advocates the primacy of reason.

The rationality of the actual process of history is a condition of the legitimacy of the philosophy of right as a categorial rendering of the priority which should be given in claims in conflict. In other words, rationality (as the Idea) should direct action because the movement of history itself is one with the movement of rationality. Thus an action according to reason allows for a unity between the

\textsuperscript{29}It is important to recognize this point, in order to see Sk's attack as one on all philosophy and not just on Hegel. Hegel's position simply works out the implications by allowing for reason to justify its priority. If one remains in a classical faculty anthropology reason must simply take by force its governance; i.e. why should will and feelings allow for reason to rule? If one answers this by giving reasons then one begs the question. But with Hegel, you don't have this problem because reason becomes the all. The otherness of the other faculties, which would resist "reasons", is negated.
movement of subjectivity and that of objectivity.\textsuperscript{30} In this way there is a reconciliation between the process of history and that of thought.\textsuperscript{31}

If the process of history, as the movement of externality, is viewed as necessity, and the movement of subjectivity is viewed as freedom, then, in the identity of the movement of history and the movement of thought, there is an overcoming of the difference between freedom and necessity.\textsuperscript{32} This, in turn, involves an aufhebung of finite

\textsuperscript{30}For Kant the incommensurability between practical reason (moral willing) and the movement of objectivity (the way things happen in the world) stood as a fundamental antimony of practical reason. Only immortality and the existence of God provided the conditions for a reconciliation between morality and happiness, where the latter implies that the external state of affairs corresponds to that form of interiority which is willed ("everything goes according to wish and will," Immanuel Kant, \textit{Critique of Practical Reason}, trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1958), p. 129). Hegel, however, attempts to overcome this antinomy by considering the movement of externality on a broader scale. History moves toward a greater and greater commensurability between practical reason and the way "everything goes." In the ideal state, the conditions are present for the unity of moral willing and happiness. But the condition of these conditions is the rationality of the movement of history and the categorial rendering of moral and ethical priorities. In this way, Hegel claims to have overcome the Kantian antinomy and provided the basis needed to substantiate an action which is based on reason.

\textsuperscript{31}It is against this claim of reconciliation that SK will focus a central line of attack. See Tillich, p. 163.

\textsuperscript{32}This is but one form of the reconciliation which Hegel discusses. There is also the logical form, in which one "recognizes" that necessity and freedom are mutually implicatory concepts (Lesser Logic, s 35, Zusetze, and s 158). And the discussion of will in Hegel’s Philosophy of Right (see paragraphs 6-32), which could be called the ethical form of the reconciliation "shows" that "the
spirit into the being of that Absolute Spirit which directs and is both the Ground and Telos of all movement.

Hegel notes the parallel between the two movements in his lesser Logic:

"The same evolution of thought which is exhibited in the history of philosophy is presented in the system of philosophy itself. Here, instead of surveying the process, as we do in history, from the outside, we see the movement of thought clearly defined in its native medium. The thought, which is genuine and self-supporting, must be intrinsically concrete; it must be an idea; and when it is viewed in the whole of its universality, it is the idea, or the Absolute. The science of this idea must form a system."

In this quote we find together several of the main themes, which we have considered in Hegel thus far. We see the affirmation that the movement of history is one with the movement of thought, only the former is perceived "from the outside" as a survey, while the latter is developed "in its native medium," i.e. in thought. Also, we find that the "system" which arises from the immanent movement of thought is "self-supporting." It thus does not depend upon its absolute goal, or, if you like, the absolute impulse, of free mind...is to make freedom its object; i.e. to make freedom objective as much in the sense that freedom shall be the rational system of mind, as in the sense that this system shall be the world of immediate actuality...In making freedom its object, minds purpose is to be explicitly, as idea, what the will is implicitly." (paragraph, 27). The will's activity then consists in "annulling the contradiction between subjectivity and objectivity and giving its aims an objective instead of subjective character." (para. 28) And this immanent movement is the dialectic, which is the necessary movement of thought.

33Hegel's Logic, s 14.
relation to externality; it is presuppositionless. And,

further, this system, as the idea, is the absolute. Thus,

although this is only implicitly implied in the above quote,

the true content of religion (and thus Christianity) is
given in the immanent movement. This is the position of
freedom, because there no incommensurability is present
between the movement of interiority (present as thought) and
that of externality. Or, to put it in a metaphorical tone,
the individual is in perfect harmony with the world.

All of this Hegel develops from the supposition of pure
thought, or, to put it another way, the priority of reason.
And if one views the perspective of pure thought as the
philosopher’s perspective then Hegel’s "system," with all
its correlates, is seen as the fullest development of the
implications that are already present in any philosophy. To
this extent, Hegel is, as he said of himself, the
culmination of philosophy.34

34Peter Singer, Hegel (Oxford: Oxford University
Press, 1983), p. 71. The key passage for this occurs in the
final paragraph of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit. But
there is some debate over whether Hegel actually claimed
that he attained to "Absolute Knowing." e.g. George Rupp
argues that Hegel simply gave the conditions for that
knowledge. To put it in Hartmann’s categories, Rupp
advocates a metaphysical reading of Hegel, but one that
denies that Hegel made a claim to closure. But, as Hartmann
argues, closure is essential to Hegel’s regressive
synthesis. Without it, all the lower categories, and even
the dialectical movement, is not justified. As with
Hartmann’s "meta-ontological reading", I think Rupp’s
metaphysical reading holds promise for a positive
appropriation of Hegel today, but it does not give that
reading which is closest to Hegel’s intent.
The Self's Riddle

Surely Hegel's intellectual achievement is remarkable. Kierkegaard himself expressed an appreciation of "the system" and in many subtle ways owes a profound debt to Hegel's thought.\textsuperscript{35} But SK addresses one significant question to Hegel. Namely, has Hegel shown that his "reconciliation" is actual and not just ideal? SK states with a clear sense of irony:

"When one sometimes finds, and almost solely in propadeutic investigation, the word "reconciliation" [forsoning] used to designate speculative knowledge, or to designate the identity of the perceiving subject and the object perceived, or to designate the subjective-objective, etc., it is obvious that the author is brilliant and that by means of this brilliance he has explained every riddle, especially to all those who even in matters of science use less care than they do in daily life, where they listen carefully to the words of the riddle before they attempt to guess its meaning. Otherwise he gains the incomparable reputation of having posed by virtue of his explanation a new riddle, namely, how it could ever occur to any man that this might be the explanation."\textsuperscript{36}

Despite the convoluted way in which his thought is expressed, SK's meaning is clear. The "reconciliation" which is advanced by Hegel as the conclusion of his system,

\textsuperscript{35}Although his analysis of Kierkegaard is often too Hegelian, Mark Taylor has well documented SK's debt to Hegel in his \textit{Journeys to Selfhood} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.)

\textsuperscript{36}Concept of Anxiety, pp. 10-11.
is actually presupposed by him. It is given in the propadeutic. But it is far from clear that the "riddle" Hegel solved was the actual riddle that is of concern to the "daily life" of man. The true riddle is not how to reconcile the movement of history as grasped by thought and the movement of thought itself as given in the system. Rather, the true riddle is how to synthesize actuality and ideality, where the actuality under consideration is not the category of actuality which is grasped by ideality but rather the concrete actuality which opposes and transcends all attempts to grasp it in terms of thought.37 SK continues his questioning:

"The notion that thought on the whole has reality was assumed by all ancient and medieval philosophy. With Kant this assumption became doubtful. If it is now assumed Hegelian philosophy has actually grasped Kant's skepticism thoroughly...and now has reconstructed the earlier in a higher form and in such a way that thought does not possess reality by virtue of a presupposition - does it therefore also follow that this reality, which is consciously brought forth by thought, is a reconciliation? In that case, philosophy has only been brought back to where the beginning was made in the old days, when reconciliation did in fact have enormous

37The movement of history itself, as well as the movement of action, is viewed by SK as a "transcendence that has no place in logic." (Concept of Anxiety, p. 13). For SK, this movement is grounded in the presence of the "other," where "other" is that which makes actuality what is, and distinguishes it from the actuality of ideality, which for SK is only possibility (ibid). There is an ideality of actuality, but this is the religious ideality and it presents itself to reason as the paradox which is both the fulfillment and downfall of reason (ibid, p. 17 and Philosophical Fragments, p. 37).
significance."\textsuperscript{38}

This quote provides an important key in appreciating both Kierkegaard's relation to Hegel and his understanding of Hegel's philosophy. SK states that, for the most part, all philosophy assumed that thought had reality. By this, as the contrast with Kant shows, SK means that philosophy has assumed that thought grasps things as they are in themselves. Kant's first critique, however, challenged this assumption by arguing that the structure of thought is given by categories of the understanding and forms of intuition, which in no way are determined by noumenal objects. Rather thought and consciousness are determined by the conditions of discursive, finite, knowing.\textsuperscript{39}

Hegel discusses the nature of the Kantian challenge to the older philosophy in the introductory portion of his Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences. The ancient and medieval philosophies are characterized as standing in "the first attitude of thought toward objectivity."\textsuperscript{40} This attitude is "seen in the method which has no doubts and no sense of the contradiction in thought, or of the hostility of thought against itself."\textsuperscript{41} There is supposedly no

\textsuperscript{38}Concept of Anxiety, p. 11.


\textsuperscript{40}Hegel's Logic, s 26-36.

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid, s 26.
awareness of the antithesis of subjective and objective.\textsuperscript{42}

But in empiricism and especially in Kant we find a "second attitude" toward objectivity, which recognizes a need for a fixed grounding of concepts.\textsuperscript{43} Otherwise, as seen in exemplary fashion in scholastic philosophy, anything can be proven.\textsuperscript{44} In the second attitude one attempted to find that grounding for a secure scientific system in externality. But eventually one was led first to a Humean skepticism which rejected objectivity, and then to Kantian skepticism which modified objectivity so that it corresponded to the determinateness of subjectivity (the conditions of finite, discursive thought).

Hegel, however, argued that the noumena, which Kant said one could not know, was simply the negativity which moved the dialectic of thought.\textsuperscript{45} As we already noted, Hegel identified the real and ideal and thus returned to what he thought was positive in the first attitude of thought toward objectivity.\textsuperscript{46} But he also came with an "awareness" of the opposition in thought. Thus, in this third attitude, one attains to a "scientifically" grounded

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid, s 27.
\textsuperscript{43}Ibid, s 37-60.
\textsuperscript{44}Ibid, s 37.
\textsuperscript{45}Ibid, s 44.
\textsuperscript{46}Hegel argued that the affirmation that "thought and being are different" was but "the petty stricture of the Kritik" [i.e. Kant's first critique]. Ibid, s 51.
system in which the subject-object opposition is overcome by the immanent movement of thought.

To quote again SK's understanding of Hegel's claim: "[Hegel] now has reconstructed the earlier in a higher form and in such a way that thought does not possess reality by virtue of a presupposition." But then SK asks again whether Hegel has truly achieved the sought for reconciliation. The obvious import of the question is that Hegel has not. He has simply returned to where philosophy has begun, namely; confronted with the problem of the relation between the real and the ideal.

The End of Philosophy

Kierkegaard is not just being redundant when he begins with the question of the relation between reality and ideality and then returns with the same question. From the way he develops the first part of the Concept of Anxiety we can see that SK does not question Hegel's status as the consummation of philosophy. But instead he argues that the consummation ends where all of philosophy begins. And that is with the incommensurability (rather than commensurability) between thought and being.

To say that philosophy runs full circle would not be disagreeable to Hegel. Hegel defines his own system as a
circle. But he argues that although one ends where one began, one is not in the same perspective as when one begins. In immediacy, which is the nothing with which philosophy has its presuppositionless beginning, all truth (the Idea) is implicitly present. But it is not present as accessible to itself (to thought, which is the being of immediacy). In the dialectic, the implicit is processionally made explicit, so that Truth comes to its own in the medium of its being, which is thought. Until, at the end, that which was wholly present, but only implicitly, is now wholly present in a fully explicit form.

We can thus see that SK's interpretation of Hegel ridicules Hegel's circle, by arguing that indeed the end is at the same place as the beginning, but one is no closer to actuality (the real) at the end than one was at the beginning. Thus when Hegel is presented as the consummation of philosophy, this is a statement of the vacuity of philosophy rather than of the achievement of Hegel.

Speaking of the Kierkegaardian writing with which we

47Ibid, s 15.

48Phenomenology of Spirit, paragraph 808. The circle is everpresent, so one must always start afresh. But "it is none the less on a higher level that it starts."


50Concept of Anxiety, p. 16.
have been dealing (The Concept of Anxiety) Niels Thulstrup in Kierkegaard’s Relation to Hegel notes that:

"The book’s whole anti-Hegelian perspective is indicated clearly enough on the reverse of the title page, where Socrates and Hamann are singled out because they undertook an important distinction which "the system’s" originator and adherents did not undertake."\(^{51}\)

This, of course, was the distinction between reality and ideality. And it is important to note the prominence which Socrates is given in the discussion and criticism of Hegel.

As was noted in the introduction to this essay, Socrates was valued very highly by Kierkegaard. And he was indeed viewed as the arch-example of the true philosopher’s perspective. But Socrates never attained to any positive philosophical results. His role was wholly destructive, so that his polemical attitude toward any system "is a beginning that is equally a conclusion, for the destruction of the previous development is as much its conclusion as is the beginning of the new development."\(^{52}\)


\(^{52}\)The Concept of Irony, p. 237. It should be noted that there is considerable debate over whether Kierkegaard saw Socrates as advocating anything positive. In "Kierkegaard’s Early and Later View of Socratic Irony" Thought vol. 55 No. 218 pp. 271-282, Winfield Nagley argues that if one is to view Socrates as an ethicist and an existential and religious thinker, then one needs to view Socrates as going beyond Socratic Irony. But this misses SK’s appreciation of Socrates. For SK, Socrates status as an ethicist is seen by his willingness to hold fast to, and not compromise, the philosophical demand for ideality. Likewise his status as an existential and religious figure
We can see from a comparison between the "circle" in Socrates's thought and that in Hegel's and the whole history of philosophy, that in SK's view, philosophy is reduced to a reductio ad absurdum of the priority of reason. In an ironical twist, Kierkegaard, as with Hegel, parallels the movement of thought and the movement of the history of philosophy. But the commensurability that is exhibited is simply the incommensurability of ideality and reality. And the only legitimate role of philosophy becomes the falsification of the philosopher's position.

In conclusion, Kierkegaard argues that the two movements of history and subjectivity (the self) are not directly accessible to the philosopher's perspective (pure thought). Both history and the self must be broader and more comprehensive than rationality and reason.53

The Place of Language

Thus far in our discussion of SK's falsification of reason we have concentrated on the duplexity of ideality and actuality. For SK, ideality, as that which is accessible to pure thought, is transcended by the actual (although there is expressed in irony; namely, his adherence to the 'that' that is, even though he could not grasp 'what' it is. (Concept of Irony, p. 195).

53Hong Journal, entry 3657. See also Pojman, p. 34.
is also an immanence of actuality to ideality - i.e. it is both transcendent and immanent). But this is only one side of reason's transcendence. External to the self, actuality transcends thought. But internal to the self (interiority) there is a self-transcendence in freedom. And SK's concept of freedom must be appreciated before we can fully understand why he advocates the priority of the will.  

Before, however, we discuss freedom, it will be helpful to overview SK's understanding of language. As we shall see shortly, for SK language is incapable of fully grasping the nature of freedom. Thus we are confronted with a dilemma in that we seek to use language to delineate that which language cannot delineate. This will lead us to certain paradoxes. But if the paradoxes are read in the light of the limitations that are present in language, then the paradox is accounted for and, in an interesting twist, one overcomes the paradox.  

---

54 Dru Journal, entry 1054.

55 As we shall see freedom and the self's existence are, for SK, almost the same thing (Macquarrie, p. 177). And both are directly related to SK's view of truth. (Concept of Anxiety, p. 138).

56 But for SK the paradox will not be overcome by reason. The will, in the "happy passion" of faith, will be able to grasp that (the paradox) which thought could not grasp. The paradox is thus overcome in thought's willingness to relativize itself (be humble; Croxall pp. 72-73). See Papers X B79 quoted in Pojman 124. Also Cornelio Fabro, "Faith and Reason" in Kierkegaard's Dialectic" in A Kierkegaard Critique (ed.) Howard A. Johnson and Niels
Again, it will be helpful to develop SK’s thought by way of contrast with Hegel. We will thus begin with a discussion of Hegel’s view of language.

Rene Harvey, in an article titled "The Linguistic Basis of Truth for Hegel", has well documented Hegel’s position. For Hegel, language is inherently universal. It thus can never say the sensual specificity of immediacy. This tree, this pen, this book, etc. is never brought to language, for as soon as I attempt to say it, I have gone beyond it. Language thus transforms the intuitive, specific, sensual aspects of life into universality.

However, for Hegel, this inability of language to capture what it intends is not a true inability. Rather, it is the virtue of language. That which cannot be expressed is the irrational and untrue. Language is the irreducible, essential means of constituting universality and thus of Truth.


Harvey, p. 285.

Ibid, p. 287

Phenomenology of Spirit, paragraph 110.

Harvey, p. 286.
truthful; in it, we ourselves directly refute what we mean to say, and since the universal is the truth of sense-certainty and language expresses this truth alone, it is just not possible for us ever to say, or express in words, a sensuous being that we mean.\textsuperscript{61}

As Harvey states, for Hegel "it is the truth of truth to be utterable."\textsuperscript{62} Language acts like a tutor, in that it refuses to allow the untruth which is intended when one seeks to say what they find in sense experience.\textsuperscript{63} Language, in its very mode of being, negates the otherness of immediacy.

Thus, for Hegel, language is unequivocally positive. This does not mean that language only allows for truth. Both the untrue and the true are in language, and Hegel's system is an attempt to show the untruth of all untrue language. But anything (which is not really a true thing

\textsuperscript{61}Phenomenology of Spirit, paragraph 97 (adaptation of A. V. Miller's translation).

\textsuperscript{62}Harvey, p. 287.

\textsuperscript{63}It is interesting to contrast Hegel and SK on the role of "tutor." For SK, reason, like the law, is tutor by giving an unfulfillable standard which points one to grace. In Lutherine fashion, the law is viewed strictly in negative terms. But Hegel develops what may be called "the third use of the law." Here, in the Calvinistic line, the positive role of the law is extended. Bonhoffer (whom Geoffrey Kelly has shown in a 2 volume dissertation to be very influenced by SK) well outlines the debate over the third use of the law [Dietrich Bonhoffer, \textit{Ethics}, ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965)]. If this debate is extended to the discussion of "language as tutor," then a clear connection can be made between the older theological debates on the law, and the more modern debates on the role of language in theology. And SK and Hegel stand squarely at the head of the debate.
for Hegel), which cannot be expressed in language, is necessarily the untrue. Although that which can be expressed in language is not necessarily the true.

For Kierkegaard, like for Hegel, language cannot fully express that which is given in immediacy. But, unlike Hegel, Kierkegaard sees a more ambiguous relation between language and the immediate which it seeks to express. Hegel called immediacy the untrue and the otherness of immediate experience is ultimately identified with nothing. Language thus begins with the nothing of this otherness and negates it by the word. Then via a process that leads from word to sentence, to text, to intertextuality, and then all the way back to word, Hegel seeks to attain to truth.

But Kierkegaard asks:

How, then, is immediacy canceled? By mediacy, which cancels immediacy by pre-supposing it. What, then, is immediacy? It is reality itself [Realitêt]. What is mediacy? It is the word. How does the one cancel the other? By giving expression to it, for that which is given expression is always presupposed." 66

Here SK maintains Hegel's initial distinction between the universality of language and the otherness of that which is perceived in immediate sensate awareness. But SK identifies the object of immediacy with reality. Thus the "otherness"

64Johannes Climacus, p. 251. "As soon as I want to express immediacy in language, contradiction is present, for language is ideal."

65Harvey, p. 290.

66Johannes Climacus, p. 168.
is no longer nothing (as with Hegel), but it becomes the plenitude of presence which escapes the abstract universality of language.\textsuperscript{67}

By making "otherness" plenitude rather than absence (as with Hegel), SK undermines Hegel's claim to have a presuppositionless beginning. Thus he argues that mediation cancels immediacy by pre-supposing it. It is a canceling and a concealing of immediacy.

In a "pre-supposition" the referential role of language is maintained, while, for Hegel, a negation of the otherness of sensate immediacy involves a rejection of referentiality in favor of sense.\textsuperscript{68} Thus Hegel can laud language when it negates what we "mean" (here meaning is used of intention in immediacy, which involves referentiality) in order to say it (i.e. bring it to universality).\textsuperscript{69} While SK, instead, sees immediacy as both true and untrue.

\textsuperscript{67}This "otherness" is a nothing (to thought), which is yet a something. It is used of both the presence which distinguishes reality from ideality, and also the freedom (will) which encompasses both ideality (soul) and reality (one's body or one's being-in-the-world, to use a Heideggerian phrase). If one keeps in mind this view of otherness, with its contrast to Hegel on negativity, then the "nothing which is something" that SK refers to throughout the Concept of Anxiety becomes much more intelligible to the reader; although, paradoxically, it becomes intelligible in its unintelligibility.

\textsuperscript{68}Here we assume a difference between meaning-as-reference and meaning-as-sense such as that outlined by Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory (Fort Worth: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), p. 20.

\textsuperscript{69}Harvey, p. 287.
For SK, in immediacy,

"everything is true, but this truth is untruth
the very next moment, for in immediacy everything
is untrue. If consciousness can remain in
immediacy, then the question of truth is
cancelled."70

The truth of immediacy is its relation to presence. But it
relates in the moment.71 Thus the truth of the present
becomes untruth as one moves to the truth of the next
moment. If the self was wholly in time, and thus
characterized by immediacy only, then, like with an animal,
the question of truth would never arise. "If consciousness
can remain in immediacy, then the question of truth is
canceled."72 This is because the self would never see that
what was the truth has now become untruth. The self would
only know the presence of the moment. But the human person
also stands outside time. He or she is eternal.73 Thus
when the truth of one moment passes to the truth of the next
moment, the self can perceive that that which was truth is

70 Johannes Climacus, p. 167.

71 At this point it is sufficient to assume a common
sense notion of "moment." But SK uses the word in a double
sense (Colette, p. 56), to speak of the normal moment which
confronts every individual in his or her existence, and the
Moment of special revelation when eternity is present in
time. The dialectic of presence, absence, and moment will
prove important later when we discuss the God-man (Ch. 3).

72 Johannes Climacus, p. 167.

73 Sickness Unto Death, p. 14. For a discussion of this
dimension of the self see Mark C. Taylor, "Kierkegaard on
84-103.
now no longer the truth. It has become untruth.

Toward Consciousness

For the self, in so far as it stands in time, immediacy is the truth. But in so far as the self stands out of time (ex-sistere), immediacy is untruth. And mediation, as the negation of immediacy (untruth), is the truth.\textsuperscript{74} Thus when language negates what we mean, by attempting to bring it to universality, it both negates untruth (ref. Hegel) but it also negates truth. SK attempts to account for this paradox via his discussion of the self.

For SK the self is a unity of the eternal and the temporal. Here, the duplesity of eternal/temporal is a "negative unity" rather than a hierarchically ordered

\textsuperscript{74}Elrod develops the contrast between immediacy and mediation in a similar manner, but by way of contrast between finitude and infinitude rather than time and eternity. (pp. 43-53) It is helpful to note the contrast between these two polarities (finite/infinite and temporal/eternal). Mark Taylor (in "Kierkegaard on the Structure of Selfhood") argues that the polarity of temporal/eternal is qualitatively different from the other polarities which SK uses because the eternal must be used of the "third" (spirit) which is the synthesis of the other polar pairs. (Taylor, p. 87) But the parallel between Elrod's formulation and mine shows that the dynamic of the temporal/eternal polarity is similar to the dynamic that is found in at least one other of the duplesiums listed in the opening part of Sickness Unto Death (p. 13). I think a similar structure could also be exhibited in the case of freedom/necessity. If one keeps the structure in mind and develops the parallels, then it also becomes clear why SK formulated the polarity as freedom/necessity rather than possibility/necessity.
relation. Thus mediation (as the eternal grasp of the difference between moments) is not unequivocally higher than immediacy, as it is with Hegel. Each movement/moment (that of immediacy and mediation) grasps something which the other movement/moment misses. Mediation grasps the structures which transcend the immediate moment. It grasps ideality. But it does this by negating presence. And in that negation it calls presence "nothing" because the only being that it knows is that of thought. Immediacy, on the other hand, grasps otherness as presence. But it does not know the being of ideality. Rather, for immediacy, being is presence (otherness).

In both immediacy and mediation one is concerned with a relation between two. (Here, when SK speaks of relation, he means a relation between two fundamental aspects of the self.) But in immediacy the relation is only "dreaming" because the self that is in relation to the other (reality)

---

75 On the self as "negative unity" compare Sickness Unto Death, p. 13; Concept of Anxiety, p. 129; and Hegel's Logic s 116.

76 See Journeys to Selfhood, ch. 4.

77 Elrod, p. 46.

78 Because immediacy does not stand outside the moment, ideality is not posited as the other of otherness. Thus for immediacy, "ideality and reality are synonymous" (Elrod, p. 83). But here reality has priority, while for Hegel, in mediation, ideality has priority. In both cases, however, according to SK, the true contradiction is not made apparent. That only occurs in the "third" which is consciousness (Elrod, p. 52).
does not know itself as other from that to which it relates.\textsuperscript{79} It simply knows otherness as presence. Thus SK says "in immediacy there is no relation, for as soon as there is a relation, immediacy is canceled."\textsuperscript{80} By this he means that the "dreaming" relation is not an actual relation until the relation can be perceived as a relation.

At first it may seem that SK is confusing an epistemological with a metaphysical affirmation. Why is a relation actual only if it is known as a relation? In order to appreciate, however, the nature of SK’s affirmation, we must keep in mind the two uses of "being" which SK affirms in his distinction between ideality and reality.\textsuperscript{81}

From the perspective of mediation, the otherness of reality is nothing (Hegel). Thus its plenitude, which makes it other from that which is said in language, is converted into an absence which allows for a collapse of reality to ideality. For language, and thus for thought, only that which is utterable is real (i.e. the real is the ideal). Thus, for what could be called the "metaphysics of absence"\textsuperscript{82} (i.e. that view of being which calls the

\textsuperscript{79}Concept of Anxiety, pp. 41-44; Elrod, pp. 82-92.

\textsuperscript{80}Johannes Climacus, p. 167.

\textsuperscript{81}For a detailed discussion of the two meanings of being see Ch. 3, pp. 178-180; 209-213.

\textsuperscript{82}Kierkegaard’s distinction between immediacy and mediation, and the resultant distinction between what may be called a metaphysics of presence and a metaphysics of absence, would be very helpful in addressing the challenge
otherness of presence "nothing"), "in immediacy there is no relation." Since Kierkegaard is here writing in the person of a pseudonym that views all in terms of reflection (and thus mediation) the distinction (difference) which is something for immediacy is nothing for him.83

Only in reflection, then, does thought (language) first find "true" relation (i.e. a relation that is true for thought - but remember that for SK this truth is both truth and untruth). But this relation should not be identified with consciousness (as with Hegel).84

Consciousness is the contradiction that arises from the

posed by Jacques Derrida and deconstructionism to what may be called a traditional Christian metaphysics of presence. If we develop Hegel's position as a metaphysics of absence then Derrida can be viewed as in a direct line to Hegel--but with the key difference that Derrida denies closure. With Derrida the whole regressive justification of Hegel's system falls, and then the dialectical moves can seem like no more than playful leaps in the game of language. Kierkegaard himself recognized the Derridian implications of a denial of closure: e.g., "If anyone would take the trouble to collect and put together all the strange pixies and goblins who like busy clerks bring about movement in Hegelian logic ... a later age would perhaps be surprised to see what are regarded as discarded witticisms once played an important role in logic ... as masters of movement." (Concept of Anxiety, p. 12.) Or, in Lowrie's adaptation of a Danish play on words: "The lecture of the understanding may on this occasion be compared with the counting rhyme in which children delight: one-nis-ball, two-nis-ball, three-nis-ball, etc. up to nine-nis-balls, and tennis balls. Here it is, brought about quite naturally by the preceding." (Concept of Anxiety, p. 32.)


84Elrod, pp. 49-50.
collision of the two movements of mediation and immediacy. Thus:

"Reflection is the possibility of the relation; consciousness is the relation, the first form of which is contradiction. As a result ... reflection's categories are always dichotomous. For example, ideality and reality, soul and body, ... God and the world, etc. are categories of reflection. In reflection they touch each other in such a way that a relation becomes possible. The categories of consciousness, however, are trichotomous. ... Consciousness ... presupposes reflection."\(^85\)

In this passage we take an important step toward appreciating SK's anthropology. Up until now, we concentrated on the duplexity of ideality and reality. Reason/reflection was inadequate, according to SK, because there was a plenitude to reality which transcended ideality. This was the first part of SK's attack on reason.

But now, in the second phase of SK's attack, we find that reason/reflection is inadequate because it is but one of a duplexity which is united in a third; namely, in consciousness.\(^86\) Earlier we discussed reason's inability to grasp reality. Now we must discuss reason's inability to grasp consciousness.

For Kierkegaard consciousness is the self-awareness of spirit.\(^87\) And spirit is the depth of the human person.

\(^85\)Johannes Climacus, p. 169.

\(^86\)Elrod, p. 52.

\(^87\)This is in contrast to Hegel's discussion of consciousness, where it is only a first stage which is conscious of externality but not yet conscious of self. The
"Man is a synthesis of the psychical and the physical; however, a synthesis is unthinkable if the two are not united in a third. This third is spirit."\textsuperscript{88}

In \textit{Sickness Unto Death} Kierkegaard elaborates upon the nature of the synthesis, which the self is. In addition to viewing the duplicity as body and soul, SK also views it as infinite and finite, temporal and eternal, and freedom and necessity.\textsuperscript{89}

We have already spoken briefly of the self as a synthesis of the temporal and eternal when we discussed the relation between immediacy and mediation. And we shall return to this duplicity later. But the duplicity of infinitude and finitude must be passed over. Some aspects of that polarity, however, are included in the third one, which we will now consider.

\textbf{The Self and Freedom}

For SK, the self is a synthesis (relation) which is derived. But it is derived in the self's relating of the relation to itself. This is called freedom. And: "The self is freedom. But freedom is the dialectical aspect of distinction is especially apparent when the German word "Bewusstsein" is contrasted with the Danish "Bevisthed." See Elrod, pp. 50-51.

\textsuperscript{88}Concept of Anxiety, p.43.

\textsuperscript{89}Sickness Unto Death, p. 13.
the categories of possibility and necessity."

By this, SK means to say that the self is a "becoming" in which there is both an openness (possibility) and a closedness (necessity). Consciousness, as we have noted previously, is that "third" aspect of the self which is identified with spirit's self-awareness. Thus the becoming of the self is the self's awareness of the place of openness in which the self goes forth in the concretion of itself. And this going forth, which is to take place in self-awareness, is identified with will.

In summary, SK states:

"Generally speaking, consciousness - that is, self-consciousness - is decisive with regard to the self. The more consciousness, the more self; the more consciousness, the more will; the more will, the more self. A person who has no will at all is not a self; but the more will he has, the more self-consciousness he has also." If one attempts to apply to SK a classical, faculty anthropology, then this affirmation and identification of

90Sickness Unto Death, p. 29.

91It is the affirmation of openness that radically distinguishes SK's view of freedom from Hegel's. For SK necessity is but one of a duplicity that is united in freedom. Thus freedom could never be identified with necessity.

92Elrod discusses this in terms of the relation between the infinite reflection of imagination and the finite reflection in which the infinite reflection is related to the facticity of the existing subject. (pp. 48-49)

93Elrod, p. 80.

94Sickness Unto Death, p. 29.
will with self will seem arbitrary or even capricious. But we must instead recognize that Kierkegaard is radically reworking the traditional anthropology.\textsuperscript{95}

Mark Taylor notes SK's equation of spirit, freedom, self, and will. He then characterizes SK's anthropology as follows:

"The self is freedom. To put it another way, that which does not change within the self system is the fact of the self's freedom. It is the constant capacity of the self to relate itself (its ideal self, its possibilities, its infinitude) to itself (its real self, its necessity, its finitude). The eternal element of the self does not refer to an unchanging substratum or to a static substance, but designates the unchanging capacity of the self to act, to strive to actualize possibilities."\textsuperscript{96}

Here Taylor gives a strong interpretation of SK's meaning. The "third", whether it be referred to as freedom, self, spirit, will, or consciousness, is not a "static substance." It is not some amorphous substratum to which predicates cling as accidents.\textsuperscript{97} Rather it is the capacity for action; for becoming. And becoming involves a self-relation in which there is a polarity of possibility and necessity.

Freedom's Despair

Kierkegaard's meaning can be further clarified by

\textsuperscript{95}Kierkegaard on the structure of selfhood, pp. 88-91.
\textsuperscript{96}Ibid, p. 99
\textsuperscript{97}Ibid, p. 89.
considering the misrelations of the self. The misrelations are called "despair" and they arise when the self does not maintain a proper balance between the two poles of a dupl exity.  

For SK, both possibility and necessity are equally important.

"The self is κατὰ δύναμιν [potentially] just as possible as it is necessary, for it is indeed itself, but it has the task of becoming itself. Insofar as it is itself, it is necessary, and insofar as it has the task of becoming itself, it is a possibility."  

Possibility thus concerns the openness of the self; the self's future. And necessity concerns the fixedness or closedness of the self. It is the self's past. And in becoming, the self is like breathing (respiration). The inhale is movement away from necessity and actuality to the infinitude of possibility. And the exhale is the self's concretion of itself.

98 Ultimately, despair is the ground of misrelation rather than the misrelation itself. And it arises from the self's misrelation (or lack of relation) to the ground upon which the self is to rest. (Sickness Unto Death, p. 17) But despair can also be characterized in terms of misrelation of the self and self, so long as one recognizes that it is only a proximate characterization. (see Sickness Unto Death, pp. 29-42).

99 Sickness Unto Death, p. 35.

100 Macquarrie well develops the relation between possibility/necessity and future/past in terms of possibility and facticity. (pp. 196-202) For SK's discussion of this see Sickness Unto Death Part One, C.A.b. and Concept of Anxiety, Ch. III.

101 Sickness Unto Death, p. 40.
If the self, however, allows possibility to have priority over necessity, then the self runs away from itself. This is called "possibility's despair." 102 Here "what is missing is essentially the power to obey, to submit to the necessity in one's life, to what may be called one's limitations." 103 Everything seems possible to the self, but that is because the self has lost touch with itself. To be a doctor, an emperor, the pope, or maybe a cockroach (ala Kafka) are all equally possible to the self. But

"Possibility is like a child's invitation to a party; the child is willing at once, but the question now is whether the parents will give permission - and as it is with the parents, so it is with necessity." 104

In the despair of possibility the parents are forgotten. One does not even seek to kill them, as with Oedipus. Rather one makes believe that one never had any parents. The past is forgotten and one thinks as if the future was wholly open.

But, as with Palagius, 105 the falsity of this position

---

102 Ibid, p. 35.
103 Ibid, p. 36.
105 For SK's criticism of Palagius, see Concept of Anxiety, p. 34, 112. It is important to recognize that SK did not advocate a "liberum arbitrium" (as he is often accused). See also Ibid, p. 49, and p. 200, where SK argues: "Liberum arbitrium, which can equally well choose the good or the evil, is basically an abrogation of the concept of freedom and a despair of any explanation of it." For SK, necessity is just as necessary as possibility for any explanation. Palagius, on one side, is rejected and the
becomes apparent when the self is crushed against the hard rocks of necessity; when the parent uses the rod in disciplining (or punishing) the child. What one wills one does not, but rather the very thing that necessity wills, that one does.\textsuperscript{106} The self then seeks to live only in possibility, and it no longer concerns itself with the actualization of those possibilities. Then "the abyss swallows up the self."\textsuperscript{107}

On the other side is the despair of necessity. Here one’s "God is necessity." this is the position of the determinist or the fatalist. But

"the fatalist’s worship of God is at most an interjection, and essentially it is a muteness, a mute capitulation: he is unable to pray. To pray is also to breathe, and possibility is for the self what oxygen is for breathing."\textsuperscript{108}

One cannot even pray to one’s own God of necessity, because to pray requires an openness which the fatalist does not have. He simply is what he must be. And that is determined outside of his self.

Here the past wholly conditions the present and there is no true future. The future is closed, because it is later Augustine (or Calvin) is rejected on the other.

\textsuperscript{106}The bondage of the will theme (ref. Romans 7) is developed by SK throughout the Concept of Anxiety as well as his other works. It is also central to an appreciation of SK’s view of crisis and the inadequacy of reason.

\textsuperscript{107}Sickness Unto Death, p. 36.

\textsuperscript{108}Ibid, p. 40.
viewed simply as that (the implication) which is held in the past.

In such a view there is closure. And the self's task is identified with the discovery of the whole, which is already present. 109 This "whole" is called truth. And then one simply seeks that immanent movement by which truth becomes present to itself.

SK sees this exemplified in Hegel's philosophy. SK agrees that the content of freedom is truth but he seeks to qualify it in a radically different way from Hegel. To put it in his words:

"Viewed intellectually, the content of freedom is truth, and truth makes man free. For this reason, truth is the work of freedom, and in such a way that freedom constantly brings forth truth. Obviously, I am not thinking of the cleverness of the most recent philosophy, which maintains that the necessity of thought is also its freedom, and which therefore, when it speaks about the freedom of thought, speaks only of the immanent movement of eternal thought. Such cleverness can only serve to confuse and to make the communication between men more difficult." 110

Here, by truth, SK means the truth of the self. And this "makes men free" because it gives the balance between possibility and necessity, in which the self can rightly actualize itself. This truth is also the work of freedom because it is not wholly closed and determined. To put it in a more traditional, Christian terminology: Truth is the

109 See Macquarrie, p. 201. Here "the given takes over entirely" (p. 202)

110 Concept of Anxiety, p. 138.
work of God's sovereign will.

First, this Truth is God's Own Being.\textsuperscript{111} It is not only the work of God's will, but also it is God's will; Its form and content.\textsuperscript{112} And second, since man is in the image of God, this Truth is also the being of man.\textsuperscript{113} It is the form after which man's will is to be.\textsuperscript{114}

But man is not to simply acquiesce before Truth. Such acquiescence would involve knowing the truth, but not being the truth. But for SK "the decisive thing is not merely to know the truth but to be the truth."\textsuperscript{115} This means that the truth is to be actively willed. But in order to do this there must be an openness in the truth which allows for the will to be what it is to be in truth. The will must

\textsuperscript{111}Philosophical Fragments, p. 62.

\textsuperscript{112}SK speaks of faith "not as the content of a concept but as a form of the will" (Fear and Trembling, supplement, p. 249). This is a marginal note SK has made to the final paragraph of his "Eulogy on Abraham" (Ibid, p. 23), where he speaks of Abraham as the friend of God - like knowing like (in the form of their wills).

\textsuperscript{113}Philosophical Fragments, Ch. I. Also see Croxall, p. 76. And for the central place which the "image of God" theme plays in SK's writing, see Valter Linstrom, "Image of God" in Theological Concepts in Kierkegaard, pp. 37-50. Lindstrom goes so far as to say "Kierkegaard's authorship bears such a theological accent that in some way or other most of what he has to say reflects his image of God" (p. 37)


\textsuperscript{115}Training in Christianity, p. 201.
rightly balance possibility and necessity. And thus the image of God, which is the form after which the will is to be, must be willed in a right balance of openness and closedness. It must be willed in freedom. This is what SK means when he says that "the content of freedom is truth."

But in despair one is faced with a "catch 22." The Truth must be willed in freedom, which entails a right relation between possibility and necessity. But in despair one does not have the right-relation. Thus one cannot will truth. Freedom is needed to will the Truth. But the Truth is needed to will freedom. And one has neither.\textsuperscript{116}

For SK, this catch 22 is overcome in Jesus Christ. In the person of Christ, the conditions of willing the Truth are given in the Moment of special revelation. Freedom is the condition, and in grace this freedom is made present (ref. Rom 7-8).\textsuperscript{117}

It is important to recognize the Christian premises which underlie SK’s view of the will and Truth. Otherwise SK will be interpreted as advocating a subjectivism in which

\textsuperscript{116}Philosophical Fragments, p. 15. To be more accurate we should say that one has only an atom of freedom and truth. See Concept of Anxiety, pp. 85-90. Here SK distinguishes the "moment" which characterizes all experience, and in which there is an atom of eternity and thus freedom (p. 88), from the qualitatively different moment, in which the "fullness of time" is present as the condition of full freedom (p. 90, and see the moment as discussed in Philosophical Fragments, p. 62)

\textsuperscript{117}Ibid, Ch. I
truth is contingent upon the self's willing.\textsuperscript{118} But this is just what SK was fighting against when he rejected Hegel's identification of thought and being.\textsuperscript{119} Truth is indeed subjectivity. But this is only because man is in the image of God.\textsuperscript{120} Ultimately God is Truth.\textsuperscript{121} And the self whose subjectivity is not after God's will is for SK clearly untruth.\textsuperscript{122}

This is why SK rejects the "cleverness of the most recent philosophy, which maintains that the necessity of thought is also its freedom." For Hegel, necessity is the unity of possibility and actuality.\textsuperscript{123} Thus, as James

\textsuperscript{118}See Croxall, pp. 74-75; and Louis Depre, \textit{Kierkegaard as a Theologian} (New York: Sheed and Ward, n.d.), p. 183: "All that has been said about faith can be summarized in the thesis that subjectivity is the truth, and that faith in Christ is the deepest form of subjectivity. We have pointed out that this form of subjectivity is not to be confused with subjectivism, and that indeed it fosters fullest objectivity. For the act of faith begins in a divine revelation." And here the subjectivity that is discussed is not a cartesian subject that is contrasted with body or world or even reason but "the whole person," including reason. Macquarrie, pp. 81, 242.

\textsuperscript{119}Macquarrie, p. 30.

\textsuperscript{120}Macquarrie, p. 217: "For Kierkegaard authentic existence is attained in the moment before God, which is also the moment of self-knowledge; in the act of willing Christ which is also the act of willing oneself. 'I will only one thing, I will belong to Christ, I will be a Christian!'"

\textsuperscript{121}Philosophical Fragments, Ch. II, p. 46, p. 62

\textsuperscript{122}Philosophical Fragments, p. 13; Last Years Journal, p. 167.

\textsuperscript{123}Hegel's Logic, s 147.
Collins notes, "Hegel’s theory of becoming is based upon ‘pure’ necessity." And "the whole process of becoming takes place in the ideal region of essences." This movement is then identified as a movement of logic which is one with the immanent movement of God’s own being (Eternity). All is given. And when the self’s movement of interiority is one with this given process of eternity in its immanent unfolding then the self is said to be free. Freedom and necessity become one.

John Macquarrie well characterizes SK’s criticism of this position when he notes that such a position produces "a paralysis of genuine willing."

"There is no act of will that breaks into the future, but rather an attempt to find security in the routines and rituals of the past. ... the given takes over entirely ... a genuine future and genuine possibilities have been cut off, so that action is rendered impossible."

In the despair of possibility one flees to the future and has no past. But in the despair of necessity one flees to the past and has no future. In both cases genuine becoming is undermined.

---

124 Collins, p. 133.
125 Collins, pp. 126-7
126 See note 91.
127 Macquarrie, pp. 201-2.
Immanence and Transcendence

Another way to consider the two forms of despair, is to consider them in terms of transcendence and immanence. In the despair of possibility the self seeks to transcend itself. It ignores the givenness of the self; or the self's immanence. (Remember that for SK insofar as the self is itself, it is necessary.) Thus in possibility the self seeks to will not to be itself.\textsuperscript{128} But in the despair of necessity immanence takes precedence. The self deprecates transcendence in its deference to the past. (The future, in its openness, transcends the self. While the past, as the self's givenness, is immanent to itself.)\textsuperscript{129}

Hegel, as we have seen, attempts to bring all into the immanence of thought. That which is transcendent by its very nature, and which cannot be brought to immanence, is necessarily the untrue.\textsuperscript{130} Thus the process of thought (Logic) is for Hegel, the negation of the otherness of possibility. And this process continues until the whole is wholly present and all is immanent to thought. For SK, however, immanence is not of greater value than

\textsuperscript{128}Sickness Unto Death, p. 14; note the first of the two possible forms of despair. See also John Douglas Mullen, Kierkegaard's Philosophy (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1981), pp. 61-77.

\textsuperscript{129}Macquarrie, pp. 65-72; p. 229.

\textsuperscript{130}Harvey, pp. 285, 287.
transcendence and thus of possibility:

"Admittedly, thinkers say that actuality is annihilated possibility, but that is not entirely true; it is the consummated, the active possibility."

True freedom consists in a right-relating of possibility and necessity. Possibility is established and consummated as well as negated. Freedom is a "third" which transcends both the immanence of necessity and even the transcendence of possibility. As the ground of the synthesis it is thus a transcendence of the mutual exclusivity of the immanence and transcendence of the self. but it is not a noetic overcoming of the dialectic because reason itself is but one of the duplexity. Reason demands immanence. Instead, for SK, the ground is the will.

The Priority of the Will

We can now return to a discussion of language for a fuller appreciation of SK's attack on reason. Earlier we

---

131Sickness Unto Death, p. 15.


133See e.g. Concept of Irony, p. 236: "It is evident that ideality is already present in this desire [for ideality], if only as possibility, for intellectually the object of desire is present in desire, the latter being the stirring of the object in the desiring subject." Or Johannes Climacus, p. 166: "In any sphere of knowledge...all knowledge stands in a direct and immanent relation to its object and the knower, not in an inverse and transcendent relation to a third [e.g. the will]." Also Macquarrie pp. 23-4; 30.
saw that for SK language, as the medium of thought, can only say ideality. It could not give the reality which it meant when it spoke of immediacy. The contradiction of consciousness then arose when ideality was given for reality; when the self sought to say (the word) reality. SK’s attack on reason thus involved an attack on language’s inability to capture reality.\textsuperscript{134}

But now reason, via language, is faced with an additional task. It seeks to capture that transcendence which captures and unifies ideality and reality (the possibility and actuality of the self). Before, language was placed in a contradiction of being. That which was an ontological distinction for immediacy (the distinction between ideality and reality, where the "otherness" of reality was the presence of the distinction) was not one for mediation. And that which mediation could grasp (the distinction between moments) immediacy could not. But now language is placed in a double contradiction.

In seeking to grasp the will, language is thus transcended in a twofold sense. It is transcended by the otherness of reality (presence). But it is also transcended by the otherness of the will, which itself transcends and grasps the otherness of reality.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{134}See pp. 102-109.

\textsuperscript{135}In Ch. 3, we will also see a third transcendence, which combines the first two. This third is the presence of God, where God is that will which is the ground of the
Philosophy, according to SK, is a "religion of immanence." It seeks to grasp all in terms of reason. But the otherness of both reality and the will, cannot be brought to immanence. Thus philosophy must negate them. This negation however is not "necessary." It is only required if one chooses to be a philosopher. And since it is a choice, philosophy is viewed by SK as an instance of the despair of necessity.

This choice is a movement of the will, which is not based on reason. It is the grounding of reason as the basis. And SK calls this movement of the will

otherness of reality. e.g. see Concept of Anxiety, p. 86.

136 Croxall, p. 81.

137 Purity of Heart, pp. 117-118. It is a movement of the will; a leap. One is, however, "double-minded" in that because one moves the will to follow reason while at the same time needing to ground reason by a movement of the will which is not based on reason. In order for the "priority of reason" to eliminate this double-mindedness, it needs to find a way to make itself the ground of itself. According to SK, Hegel's philosophy is simply an expression of the attempt of reason to justify its status as primary. But this justification is, according to SK, rhetoric and not logic, because the conclusion is presupposed in the leap, and the method simply involves finding a way to justify the presupposed conclusion. Thus Hegel's dialectic is simply viewed as the attempt of double-mindedness (the thesis and anti-thesis) to overcome itself in such a way that reason is justified as the Ground. But as Mark Taylor notes, for SK, Hegel simply ends in the same double-mindedness with which he began [see Mark Taylor, "Self in/as Other" in Kierkegaardiana XIII (Kobenhaven, C.A. Reitzels Forlag, 1984)]. The double-mindedness is supremely expressed in the difference between identity and difference. (See also Journeys to Selfhood, Ch. 5)
"doubt." SK then concludes that doubt can never be conquered by reflection, because it is broader than reflection. Reflection is a movement of soul. But doubt is a movement of spirit. And spirit is the unity of both body and soul.

Instead, SK argues, doubt is conquered by another movement of the will; one which he calls "belief." To reason, and thus to philosophy, this conquering of doubt can only be like an arbitrary "leap." But it is only called "arbitrary" because it involves conditions which transcend the immanence of reason.

The will cannot give an account to reason because reason cannot grasp the will's distinctions. It cannot

138 Johannes Climacus, pp. 166-172; Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel, p. 309.

139 Johannes Climacus, p. 170.

140 Ibid, p. 169; Concept of Anxiety, p. 85, 91.

141 The priority of faith, and the inability of reflection to overcome doubt can even be traced back to Martensen, who is traditionally, for SK, the representative of the Philosopher's position. (Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel, p. 93). If we recognize that Martensen was himself critical of Hegel in matters of faith, then SK's attack on Martensen makes even clearer the view that SK attacks philosophy in general, and not just Hegel's philosophy. Hegel is always viewed by SK as the arch-example of the philosopher who makes claim to having any results (Socrates is the example of the "humble" philosopher).

142 For Kierkegaard, the paradox, when encountered in the happy passion of faith, is not absurd. The absurdity of faith disappears when one considers the object of faith (which is faith, because it is the form of God's will = the image of God) from the perspective of faith. See Kierkegaard Critique, p. 182.
grasp the difference between otherness-as-presence and otherness-as-absence. Nor can it grasp the difference between the transcendence of the will and the transcendence of reality. To put it in Pascal's words, "the heart has its reasons, of which the reason knows nothing."\textsuperscript{143} This is why the truth of the self, which is the form of the will, cannot be grasped philosophically.

Pojman himself sums up SK's criticism of reason when he notes that for SK:

"reason is not the essence of man, as the philosophers have thought, but a function of the passions, and must be integrated within the whole person to play a vital role in life."\textsuperscript{144}

For Aristotle and the Classical tradition, reason is the highest faculty of the self. Then it is appropriate to let reason's perspective dominate. And life is fulfilled in contemplation and knowledge. Here, Hegel can indeed be viewed as the consummation and fulfillment of philosophy. But:

"Kierkegaard denies that reason is the person's true self. ... A person is a unitary being, whose springs of actions lie deep within, bound up with the inclinations and passions. Elevation of reason where it does not belong produces deceptive

\textsuperscript{143}\textsuperscript{143}Pojman phrases SK's interpretation of Pascal's words to be: "Passion has reasons that the mind knows nothing of" (Pojman, p. 20). This phrasing is only correct if we recognize (as Pojman does not) that reason is itself a passion which is united in the passion of subjectivity. The "heart" of Pascal, would be the will for SK. And this involves the whole person (Macquarrie, p. 242).

\textsuperscript{144}\textsuperscript{144}Pojman, p. 33.
rationalizations."¹⁴⁵

Reason's Cross

But when we return to Pojman's criticism of SK, we must wonder whether he has really appreciated SK's attack on reason.

Pojman attempts to argue that "disinterestedness or impartiality is not necessarily opposed to subjectivity (passionate interestedness)."¹⁴⁶ Thus objectivity and subjectivity are not mutually exclusive (contra CD). Pojman distinguishes between neutrality and impartiality. The former involves "not taking sides, doing nothing to influence the outcome, remaining passive in the struggle." This is the opposite of interest (and thus of subjectivity). But impartiality "involves one in the conflict in that it calls for a judgment in favor of the party which is in the right, based on objective criteria."¹⁴⁷ Impartiality Pojman argues, does not contradict the interestedness of subjectivity.

To illustrate his notion of impartiality Pojman uses the analogy of a referee in a football game. Reason is like a referee,

¹⁴⁵Ibid, p. 34.
¹⁴⁶Pojman, p. 48.
¹⁴⁷Ibid
"Who, though knowing that his wife has bet their life savings on the underdog, still manages to call what any reasonable spectator would judge to be a fair game. He does not let his wants or self-interest enter into the judgments he makes." ¹⁴⁸

Pojman notes that for SK the referee's position is either impossible or undesirable. But Pojman argues that one can be impartial and passionate (thus it is not impossible) and that one should seek to have belief on the best evidence available (thus it is not undesirable). The "rational or impartial believer" is just as passionately concerned with willing the good as SK's believer, only he "believes that reason can and ought to play an important role in guiding us in these matters." ¹⁴⁹ He thus concludes:

"It seems that Kierkegaard fails to take sufficiently into account the possibility that one can be both objective (impartial) and subjective (passionately interested) at the same time. Herein, I believe, is his greatest weakness, a weakness that mars an otherwise insightful understanding of religious existence." ¹⁵⁰

But note that this "weakness" is rooted in the cognitive disjunct principle. And the nature of that principle seems to undermine the thesis that SK is a philosopher. Could it be that what is a weakness by the canons of the philosopher may be strength by another canon? Pojman recognizes that the cognitive disjunct thesis may

¹⁴⁸Ibid, p. 48-49
¹⁴⁹Ibid, p. 49.
¹⁵⁰Ibid, p. 50.
undermine his thesis that SK is a philosopher. But he responds by stating that CD is very much a part of SK's "practical reason" and "given the logic of the situation, the rational thing to do is to become a believer with one's might."\textsuperscript{151}

At this point, however, Pojman is very weak. He does not seem to recognize that to base belief on "the rational thing to do" involves a rejection of CD. It is to say that the objective course, involving disinterested reason, leads to rejection of reason in favor of the passions alone. Only then can one pursue truth through subjectivity.

SK, however, says something very different. He says that reason should not be the basis because it is inadequate for judging the appropriateness of the truth. It is a blind referee, or, even worse, it is a corrupt referee who is rooting for a particular team; namely, for that team which will give it what it wants. Thus one needs to expel the referee from the game, or rather let the referee play on one of the teams.

Let us now move from the figurative expression to a more careful analysis of the referee analogy. Pojman attempts to reconcile objectivity and subjectivity by viewing reason as an arbitrator of the passion's interest. On this view the passions are like the teams that play in a game and the referee is an arbitrator who does not allow his

\textsuperscript{151}\textit{Ibid}, p. 49.
interest to interfere with what he identifies as the "objective" state of affairs. Here the objective state of affairs is the way things occur in actuality; presumably, the interest of the opposing teams must each be compromised by the truth which stands as the arbitrator. And the truth is mediated by reason (the referee). The anthropology that is implicit in this analogy is very similar to that of Aristotle, who Pojman contrasted to SK. Reason is viewed as that faculty which mediates truth. The will should thus be directed by reason.

But for SK reason is one of the passions which are united in the self as will. It expresses an interest of its own; namely, a concern with immanence and ideality. Thus to give it priority in judgment; to let it be referee, implies a leap in which one of the passions is a priori given priority over the others. Reason is not impartial. It favors ideality over actuality; immanence over transcendence; closure over openness.

---

152 e.g. In Philosophical Fragments, SK speaks of the understanding as a passion. (p. 37). And like any other passion, it wills the object which is both the fulfillment and downfall of the passion. e.g. In hunger one wills food, which both fulfills and negates hunger. In the same way the God-man is the fulfillment and negation of reason. When we see this, then when Macquarrie suggests "that existential philosophy must recognize more clearly than it has done the intellectual drive in man," (p. 89) we must view SK as outside the "existentialist" camp. SK thoroughly recognized the drive of the intellect as a primordial passion of the self. And he allows it considerable scope. But in ultimate matters, SK demands that it be united with the other passions in the unitary perspective of maximal subjectivity.
In addition, to give priority to reason is for SK tantamount to acting in disunity. Maximized subjectivity, maximized passion, is the state of unity in which all the passions (including reason) are united by the will in their full intensity. This is the attitude of subjectivity. But in objectivity one gives weight to only one passion (that of reason) and it is allowed to negate the interests of other passions.\(^\text{153}\) (e.g. the passion for transcendence or otherness which is a thwarting of reason’s concern for immanence). Thus one acts with only a part of one’s self. In this sense, CD necessarily holds because the attitude of subjectivity involves the self as a whole, whereas that of objectivity involves only an aspect of the self.

On this reading of SK, subjectivity does not exclude reason. On the contrary, the interest of reason is one of the passions that are united in the self.\(^\text{154}\) But it is not united as Pojman would unite objectivity and subjectivity.

\(^{153}\)And in the attitude of objectivity one does not truly have disinterest. Insofar as the self is a self, "a perfectly disinterested will is a chimera." (Concept of Anxiety, supplement, p. 236). Only duplicitous categories of reflection can avoid "interest." But the duplicity is a "negative unity." To be a self is to have a relation, and the "in between" (note the etymology of "interest") of the self is its interest. Even in objectivity, in so far as reason has an object, there is the "in between" of interest. When reason reigns, then it is allowed to replace its object (which is itself) and its interest, for the object of the unified will. Since the true object of the self is to be God, when reason reigns it is allowed to replace God with itself (it's own image). For SK, this is the supreme expression of idolatry and sin.

\(^{154}\)Philosophical Fragments, p. 27.
The problem here is one of whole and part. Pojman's unity of reason with the other passions involves an atomistic analogy in which each part does its function as if it were a whole. The whole is then viewed as an aggregate of its parts. But for SK, the self can only know the truth from a perspective in which it is truly a whole. Here reason is not one faculty that does its thing alone, but rather it is an aspect of the self which is truly unified with the passions in the unitary interest of maximal "subjectivity." Pojman works with a more traditional, Cartesian, faculty anthropology. SK, on the other hand, seeks to, in a more biblical sense, view the self as a whole. His dialectical, existential anthropology seeks to overcome the faculty anthropology in the same way, as for Hegel, a higher category would overcome the limitations of a lower category. Viewed in this way the cognitive disjunct thesis is a way of

155Only the one who is "born again" in faith, can understand the truth. "This matter is unthinkable to one who is not reborn." (Philosophical Fragments, p. 20) But to the "single individual"; i.e. to the one whose passions are all united in maximal subjectivity, "the absurd is not absurd." (see Croxall, p. 78; SK Papers X B79).

156This is continually apparent by the way Pojman contrasts the knowing subject with the passions, etc. e.g. Pojman's critique at the end of Ch. 2; all of his 3rd chapter, etc.

157Macquarrie, pp. 81, 125, 242.

158David Swenson, Something about Kierkegaard, ed. Lillian Marvin Swenson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1941), Ch. III. Note the role of the "existential dialectic."
affirming that the philosopher’s perspective, as the perspective of objectivity, is an inadequate perspective. It is transcended in the higher perspective which is concerned with the self as a whole; i.e. with subjectivity or the subjective attitude.

Here a method very similar to Hegel’s is used to reach the opposite conclusion of Hegel. For Hegel religion was a lower position which viewed truth in inappropriate figurative categories. Philosophy was the higher perspective in which the truth of religion was made fully explicit. Kierkegaard, on the other side, argues that from the philosopher’s perspective one is involved in inescapable contradiction (paradox). This shows the inappropriateness of that perspective. Only in the perspective of religion is this contradiction overcome, because only in religion can one do justice to both the immanence and transcendence of the Absolute.

In summary: for Kierkegaard, objectivity involves working from the perspective of a faculty anthropology in which one moves into particular faculties or elements and then considers the truth from that perspective. But then one views the truth from only a part of the self. However, one can only know the truth; one can only make an affirmation with respect to the truth, from the perspective of the whole self.

\[^{159}\text{Kierkegaard’s Relation to Hegel, p. 353.}\]
But this is not yet SK's strongest critique of objectivity, although it does play a major role in his evaluation of the inadequacy of the philosophical perspective. Earlier we noted that there were two main ways in which SK seeks to falsify objectivity. The first was a critique of rationality in general. This is what we have considered thus far. The second critique involves an evaluation of the relation between objectivity and the content of the Christian Faith. And we shall now move to this part of his critique.
CH 3: THE TRUTH OF SUBJECTIVITY

Thus far we have considered a very philosophical falsification of reason. But it seems that reason is allowed to say, and know, in its falsification of itself, much more than it should be able to say. There is a good bit positive in SK's attempt to say that the philosopher cannot say anything. And does not that mean that SK goes beyond the Socratic? And if that is so, then we must ask what enables him to say as much as he does?

In this chapter, we shall show that seemingly philosophical affirmations are grounded in dogmatic assumptions. For SK it is the revelation which is given in Jesus Christ that allows for a "knowledge" of truth. But this knowledge is not attained unto philosophically. Nor is it grasped by reason alone. Rather, in the perspective of faith, there is a resurrection of reason such that the paradox of faith is appreciated as the wisdom of God. As long as one views the truth from faith's perspective, the absurd is no longer absurd. But as soon as one moves to the philosopher's perspective, which attempts to grasp all in terms of thought, then reason is again apostate and truth can only appear as the contradiction of paradox.
The Thought Project

We could summarize the results of the last chapter by stating that reason is inadequate for the grasping of truth. It demands ideality, immanence, and closure. But truth also involves reality, transcendence, and openness. Thus any perspective which allows reason to govern (i.e. the philosopher's perspective) will, in its turn, falsify significant dimensions of truth. Instead, maximal subjectivity is the attitude appropriate for the grasping of truth. In it all the passions of selfhood are united. One "wills one thing."

But we are still left with two problems. First, how can the self attain to the maximal subjectivity, which is requisite for an appropriate relation to the truth?¹ And

¹This question is what SK would view as the fundamental task of the ethical sphere of existence. "Maximal subjectivity" is the "ideal self" which is given to the concretely existing self as the task which is to be realized. In the light of that task, one then takes up the question of the way (the "how") in which that task is to be realized. And here, as we have extensively shown in Ch 2, "maximal subjectivity" should not be confused with a "subjectivism" which involves a capricious creation of the ideal which is to be realized (contra Sartre). See Regin Picuter, "Sartre's Concept of Freedom considered in the Light of Kierkegaard's thought" in A Kierkegaard Critique ed. by Howard A. Johnson and Niels Thulstrup (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), pp. 130-140. Also note The Mind of Kierkegaard, Ch. 3. There Collins outlines a parallel which SK recognized between "maximal subjectivity" and Fichte's "creative self." Both are the selfhood of freedom. But "Kierkegaard points out that his use of the Fichtean term Setzung or positing (used of the self's ethical task as "posing" itself) does not imply an original and independent autocreation, for it supposes a given reality in
second, where and how does one find the truth, once one has attained to maximal subjectivity?\textsuperscript{2} If one unifies the passions and yet does not find that object which is the fulfillment of the maximal subjectivity, then that gap between desired object and desiring subject could only be present as the subject's intensest suffering - the unfulfilled longing of an empty will.\textsuperscript{3}

SK attempts to present the answer to both questions by way of a "thought project" which he develops in \textit{Philosophical Fragments}.\textsuperscript{4}

the choosing agent. What is presupposed is the natural being of the individual, taken as a person of a given physical and psychic sort and with certain social relations. The \textit{given self} about which ethical choice is concerned also includes the entire range of aesthetic development of personality. Yet all these factors are transformed as the convergence of fundamental moral choice: the individual is responsible for making himself what he is in the order of freedom." (Ibid, p. 83, my emphasis).

\textsuperscript{2}This is the \textit{religious} question, which "concerns the relationship of the individual to Christianity. To put it quite simply: How may I, Johannes Climacus [a single individual], participate in the happiness promised by Christianity?" \textit{Concluding Unscientific Postscript}, p. 20. This is the "subjective problem," also defined as the question of "the relation of the subject to the truth of Christianity." Ibid, book two.

\textsuperscript{3}On the relation between the stages and suffering, and the difficulty which suffering brings to the "subjective problem" see David F. Swenson, \textit{Something About Kierkegaard} ed. by Lillian Marvin Swenson (Minneapolis: Augsberg Publishing House, 1941), pp. 133-137. Also see this essay, pp. 186-199.

\textsuperscript{4}Two notes should be kept in mind, when considering the thought project as a singular answering of the duplex questioning. In one sense the ethical sphere can be understood as a way of answering both questions. If God is viewed as the ground of the nature of the ideal self, then
The Socratic/Platonic way unto truth was by way of immanence.\(^5\) By way of reflection upon the longing for the self-relation which is given as the task of the ethical can also be viewed as a God-relation by virtue of God's status as Ground. But here one only mediately relates to the absolute. "The ethicist receives an ideal self, embedded in concrete historical situations, from the hand of God, the human self is always recognized as a derivative self, and the obligation of realizing in the concrete this true or ideal self is recognized as an obligation which places a man in contact with the divine. But for Kierkegaard the subjective mode of constituting the relationship to God is decisive for the religious sphere, and he does not recognize the attitude described above as religious. The ethicist has no other relation to God than that which comes through accepting his duty as from Him, he has no other relation to God than that which is universal to all men, and universal as a common public tie which binds them together." Swenson, p. 131. But if one views the "subjective problem" of finding the truth, as a questioning of an "absolute relation to the absolute" (ref. Fear and Trembling, problema II) then the ethical task does not encompass the two. The "thought project" is thus religious not ethical.

Second, we should keep in mind the way the ethical task and the "subjective problem" have been developed out of the criticism of reason in Chapter 2. A recognition of the inadequacy of reason led to the concern with "maximal subjectivity" and the relation to truth. But Hermann Diem notes that while this concern is indeed significant, "it does not touch upon the crucial point." The problem is not primarily the logical one, which considers the inadequacies of reason and logic. But rather, the crucial problem is sin and the way in which it is overcome. (Diem's Kierkegaard, pp. 81-82) This is dogmatic and not philosophical. Thus it is only in a qualified way that we can view the "thought project." We must also view it as an attempt to answer the dogmatic problem of sin. The dogmatic nature of SK's concern will be developed in the next section of this chapter. But there we will concentrate on the dogmatic presupposition of the God-man, rather than the dogmatic presupposition of sin. For more on this distinction, see the conclusion of this essay, pp. 236-246.

\(^5\)Kierkegaard does not actually identify the way of immanence as Socratic/Platonic. In Philosophical Fragments, he simply calls it "Socratic," but uses it as representative of Hellenism in general. i.e. "Socrates elaborates on this idea, and in it the Greek pathos is in fact concentrated."
(ibid, p. 9). But this seems to contradict SK's earlier view of Socrates. In The Concept of Irony Socrates is distinguished from the "sorrowless Palagianism so characteristic of Hellenism" by the ironic nature of his doctrine of recollection. (Concept of Irony, pp. 96-98). And Socrates and Plato are contrasted as follows with respect to the doctrine of recollection: "The Platonic approach would be to reinforce existence with the edifying thought that mankind is not driven into the world empty-handed, through recollection to come to oneself in an awareness of the abundance of the human endowment. The Socratic approach, on the other hand, is to get the whole of actuality disaffirmed, and then refer mankind to a recollection that recedes further and further toward a noble family which no one can remember." Then SK states that Socrates does actually abandon his thesis, but he replaces it with another equally ironic. (ibid, p. 97) "Socrates advances a knowledge which ultimately cancels itself." (ibid, p. 98) This apparent disparity between SK's early and later commentary on Socrates has prompted the contention that SK radically alters his view of Socrates. E.g. Winfield Nagley in "Kierkegaard's Early and Later View of Socratic Irony" (in Thought V. 55, No. 218, pp. 271-282) argues that SK's later view allowed for a positivity in Socrates that enables a greater appreciation of the ethical. While this does enable an appreciation of e.g. the role SK gives to Socrates in Philosophical Fragments, it does not acknowledge the positive role SK continually gives to the negativity of the ironic. And the "ethical" may be confused by the "borderline ethical" role which SK gives to irony in the Postscript. (Postscript, pp. 448-951). A better approach would be to view the equation between Socrates and irony as continuous throughout SK's writings (Thus even at the end of his authorship SK would still place Socratic existence in the ironic) "Socrates did not merely use irony, but was so completely dedicated to irony that he himself succumbed to it." (Concept of Irony, Appendix, Theses VI). But a change can be viewed in SK's understanding of irony. In his thesis, SK argued that "As philosophy begins with doubt, so also that life which may be called worthy of man begins with irony." But later SK rejected the thesis that philosophy begins with doubt (Johannes Climacus, De Omnibus Dubitantum Est). Likewise he rejected the thesis that life begins with irony. Rather, philosophy begins with wonder (Philosophical Fragments, Supplement, p. 266). This is an immediacy to the object of concern. And life begins with a different kind of wonder; namely, a "second immediacy." In Philosophical Fragments SK develops the implications of this new beginning of life. If
we extend the implications of the parallel between doubt and wonder, and irony and second immediacy, then we see why Socratic and Platonic recollection are not distinguished in Philosophical Fragments. In the "new beginning," one allows for a historical point of departure for truth. This is what both Socrates and Plato criticized in Protagoras. (Concept of Ironic, p. 96). In this essay we will call the way of recollection the Socratic/Platonic in order to emphasize that the issue is not negativity vs. positivity (as it would be in the contrast between Socrates and Plato) but rather the "truth being taught" (transcendence) vs. recollection (immanence).

6SK calls upon that form of the argument that is presented by Meno as a challenge to Socrates (see Plato's Meno, 80 d-e). But the reader should also note the reference to Plato's other dialogues, especially that of Protagoras. For it is there that the most significant contrasts are developed between recollection and a historical point of departure for Truth (e.g. see SK's discussion of Protagoras in his Concept of Ironic, p. 89-98). In Meno, the doctrine is simply given by way of myth ("religion") and Socrates assumes that the reader will recognize it as the truth once it is heard. Speaking of those who tell the myth ("I have heard from men and women who understand the truths of religion..."), Socrates says "What they say is this - see whether you think they are speaking the truth..." (Meno 81 a-b) Here one is, via a mystical intuition, simply to recognize the truth as truth. (What could be called the intuitive theory of recollection). Admittedly, Socrates uses a mathematical illustration to exhibit that truth (and the mathematical proof is developed dialectically), but here the proof is simply a lower form which is to lead to the intuition (direct recollection). Ref. Republic, books VI and VII. It is interesting to note that SK does not even mention Theatetus and The Sophist. Francis Cornford sees these as the most significant for an appreciation of Plato's theory of knowledge and they involve a more dialectical rather than intuitive doctrine of recollection. [Francis M. Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc. 1957)] SK probably emphasized the more intuitive dialogues at this point, because he was emphasizing immanence vs. transcendence, rather than method. This emphasis may also account for SK's identification of recollection with Socrates rather than Plato. But in this case Socrates simply gives the more general form of that doctrine which is found in Plato and, later, Hegel.
This conclusion arises from the recognition that

"a person cannot possibly seek what he knows, and, just as impossibly, he cannot seek what he does not know, for what he knows he cannot seek, since he knows it, and what he does not know he cannot seek, because, after all, he does not even know what he is supposed to seek."

Thus "all learning and seeking are but recollection." And knowledge arises by the immanent dialectical movement in which the implicitly present becomes explicit to thought.

Since the longing and the object of longing are both immanent, the self holds within itself the conditions of its own satisfaction.

On this view the teacher does not and cannot actually "give birth" to any knowledge. All the teacher can do is serve as a midwife, who provides the insignificant occasion for the delivery of that which is already present in the womb.

Here "self-knowledge is God-knowledge." Thus it

---

7Philosophical Fragments, p. 9.

8Ibid.

9Here we give the more dialectical rather than intuitive form of the doctrine of recollection.

10 When the emphasis is on longing and satisfaction then the doctrine of recollection takes on its ethical form and its concern is with virtue. When the emphasis is on seeking and knowing, then the doctrine takes on its more directly philosophical form and its concern is with truth. Both forms are found in Plato. SK unites the two in his question of a historical point of departure.

11Philosophical Fragments, p. 10. On this theme SK refers to Theaetetus, 149. But an even more interesting example is found in Socrates discussion of the "creature" that has been brought forth by his midwife activity. (Theaetetus, 160-161). If one is just as likely to give
does not matter whether I have learned the truth from Socrates, Einstein, or the garbage man, "because the truth in which I rest was in me and emerged from me." ¹³

Hegel, of course, worked with a modified form of the Socratic/Platonic doctrine of recollection.¹⁴ For Hegel the historical point of departure likewise served as a midwife, so that the implicitly present might come forth in its explicitness. But the otherness of the historical provided a necessary negativity which was needed to precipitate the immanent dialectical movement. In this way, externality is given an essential role. But that role is only positive by way of the negation of the negativity that imposes the otherness of externality. Thus externality is viewed as but the externality of interiority. And the historical occasion's essentiality is simply the ideality of

birth to a monster as to the truth, then SK's early contention that Socratic irony does not allow for any positivity becomes quite tenable, even in the light of the doctrine of recollection.

¹²Philosophical Fragments, p. 11.


¹⁴E.g. "As [spirit's] fulfillment consists in perfectly knowing what it is, in knowing its substance, this knowing is its withdrawal into itself in which it abandons its outer existence and gives its existential shape over to recollection...But recollection, the inwardizing of that experience, has preserved it and is the inner being, and in fact the higher form of the substance." [A.V. Miller trans. Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), paragraph 808.] For further commentary on the doctrine of recollection in Hegel see Journeys to Selfhood, pp. 88-90.
interiority. From the perspective of the Whole, one recognizes that the particularity of the historical is nothing, and all unfolds via the immanent movement of thought.¹⁵

SK, however, poses the question: what if the historical point of departure is to be truly essential, not as an ultimate nothingness (as with Hegel) but as a positive, decisive moment in which "the eternal, previously non-existent, comes into existence in that moment."¹⁶ The remainder of Philosophical Fragments is an evaluation of the implications that arise from the assumption of a significant, historical point of departure. SK returns to the "Socratic difficulty:"

"How is one able to seek the truth, since it is indeed equally impossible whether one has it or one does not. The Socratic line of thought in effect annulled the disjunction, since it appeared that basically every one human being possesses the truth."¹⁷

But now, in the light of the new assumption, the Socratic

¹⁵This paragraph can be viewed as a summary of Hegel's conclusion to the phenomenology of spirit. From this perspective (that of pure thought) one begins the Logic and witnesses to God's thoughts before he created the world and any finite spirit. In the Logic one begins over again, but now it is a "presuppositionless beginning" (although SK would identify the perspective of pure thought as the presupposition). And the whole of the phenomenology is simply viewed as a prolegomena, which can be put aside. (I am indebted to the unpublished lectures of H.T. Engelhardt, Jr. for this understanding of the relation between the Phenomenology and the Logic.)

¹⁶Philosophical Fragments, p. 13.

¹⁷Ibid.
difficulty imposes itself with new vigor. And one must conclude that the learner is not even a seeker. Since the truth is in no way within the learner, there is not even the prompting of the implicit truth, which stood as a longing whose negativity effected the transition to an explicit status. Instead, the learner "has to be defined as being outside the truth." He is "untruth." 

In such a context, the teacher must be much more than a midwife. The teacher must actually bring the truth to the learner. But he must bring the truth in a way that the learner knows the truth as truth. The problem is to recognize what is truth. Note the etymology of "re-cognize": when truth was already implicitly present, then it could be "re-cognized" because its status as implicit provided the initial cognization, which provided the condition of the re-cognization. But when the truth truly comes from outside the self, then the initial condition of recognition is not present. Thus the teacher must provide

---

18 If one maintains that man is a seeker, then "the thesis that virtue can be taught must be understood in one of two ways: either it signifies an original void in man gradually supplemented through teaching, and which is a contradiction since something absolutely foreign to man can never be assimilated; or it is the expression of an inward determination of virtue developing gradually under a succession of teaching, and hence presupposing its presence originally." (Concept of Irony, p. 96) The only way to overcome the dilemma is to no longer maintain that man is a seeker.

19 Philosophical Fragments, p. 13.
the condition as well as the truth.\textsuperscript{20}

In the light of the previous chapter's discussion, we can see that maximal subjectivity, as the unitive perspective of selfhood, is the condition of an appreciation of the truth as truth.\textsuperscript{21} Combining this affirmation with the implications of a "historical point of departure" for the learning of truth, we find that the teacher must effect a transformation of the learner such that the learner is brought to maximal subjectivity.\textsuperscript{22} (i.e. The teacher must

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid, p. 14.

\textsuperscript{21}See pp. 131-138.

\textsuperscript{22}Here we see expressed in terms of reflection, the centrality of the doctrine of grace. The self does not attain to itself, but is given to itself by the teacher who is the condition of the condition. Subjectivity here is the opposite of subjectivism. Rather it refers to united selfhood as the condition of appreciating truth as truth. In a very early journal entry (1834) SK already recognizes the dynamic of grace and human capacity to seek and receive that grace: "it seems to me that the Catholic-Protestant issue could be brought to a head by asking whether the choice whereby man receives divine grace is prepared by the activity of the Holy Spirit or whether it has its foundation solely in man. The Protestants have certainly declared themselves for the former position in assuming that all human nature is incompetent and must first be transformed so to speak. According to Dr. Mohler (to whom I especially refer) the issue for Catholics is not so clearly defined. He says (Clausen's and Henlenberg's Tideskrift, II, 1, p. 137): 'The divine call which is issued to men for the sake of Christ expresses itself not only in external invitation through proclamation of the gospel but also in the powers in man.' Shall we conclude from this that man, according to Catholic doctrine, cannot receive the grace (which is offered to him) but must first be inwardly prepared to receive it through the awakening of his powers - and thus they presumably cannot be charged with Palagianism? But in other places Mohler does not seem to want to admit this. On the whole, I think that the resolution of this question by both sides would lead to better understanding of each
give the condition.)

Thus, in addressing the question "how does the learner attain to maximal subjectivity?", we can only answer by connecting the question with the second one which asked where and how one attains to that truth, which is the satisfaction of the unitive perspective of selfhood. The two questions must be asked together. But then the two questions are transformed into one; namely, one is led to asking about the relation between the teacher and the learner. How does the teacher effect the transformation of the learner such that the learner is brought to recognize

other." (Hong Journals, Vol. 2 entry 1463) Later in his writings, SK attempts to reconcile the Protestant and Catholic by showing "how" grace (who is the God-man himself) awakens the latent powers in man (i.e. brings him to maximal subjectivity). But the "how" is not other than the "what", which is grace himself. (see Valer Lindstrom, "The problem of Objectivity and Subjectivity in Kierkegaard," pp. 234-235). Thus SK never abandons the Protestant position which affirms that man can do nothing until he is transformed. Grace brings the self to the place of freedom, but not in a way that violates that freedom. Ultimately, the difficulties involved in this debate are identified with that very paradox which is a manifestation of grace itself (Hong Journal, Vol. 2, entry 1501). The balance in SK's view of grace accounts for the fact that both Protestants and Catholics have embraced him.

They must be asked together, because both questions require as their condition the presence of that truth which prompts the questioning. This theme is elaborated upon in greater detail in the following section on dogmatics.

This is a form of what SK calls the "subjective problem." See Postscript, p. 20.
the teacher's truth as truth? But in order to speak of the relation one must know the nature of the two that relate. Thus the question of the relation is a questioning which requires as its condition the duplex questioning into the nature of both the learner and the teacher.

The truth is thus a function of the learner, the teacher, and the relation. And it is approached via a dialectical movement which moves between the duplex questioning of learner and teacher, and the unitive questioning of relation. The duplexity of duplexity and unity is itself united in the perspective which recognizes the truth question to be but a single asking.

---

25 Here the "subjective problem" is formulated in terms of the ethical task (see note 1). The "how" asks for the way of self-realization, given the conditions of the thought-project.

26 Under the duplex questioning, learner and teacher stand as a "negative unity." Here the emphasis is upon the "absolute difference between God and man." (Postscript, p. 195). One must note that "man is a particular existing being...whose task cannot be to think sub specie aeterni...while God is infinite and eternal." (ibid) In this duplex questioning the context of the problem of the relation between the two (problema II in Fear and Trembling) is established so that one can appreciate the nature of the answer (the paradox of the God man). It would prove helpful to bring together the second "problema" of Fear and Trembling and the "subjective problem" of the Postscript.

27 The problem of the "single asking" is centrally related to SK's category "the single individual." It is the question of the individual before God (the relation between teacher and learner). For more on the dynamic between subjectivity, God, and the "single individual" see Lindstrom, p. 237.
Dogmatics

We shall need to carefully develop the meaning which is implied in SK's formulation of "a historical point of departure for truth." We shall need to discuss the nature of the truth, develop the way in which it effects maximal subjectivity, and show how this relation differs from the Hegelian, "immanent" dialectic. (SK advocates an "existential dialectic" which attempts to show the "qualitative transition" which is exhibited in the attitude of maximal subjectivity. In this way, he attempts to account for the positivity in his seemingly negative account of reason.\textsuperscript{28}) But before we develop these ideas it will prove helpful to characterize the nature of SK's discourse.

At the very outset of \textit{Philosophical Fragments} stands the following "propositio":

"The question is asked by one who in his ignorance does not even know what provided the occasion for his questioning in this way."\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{28}See this essay, pp. 180-183.

\textsuperscript{29}Philosophical Fragments, p. 9. In the first draft this "propositio" was instead termed the "1st position." It referred to its status as a first formulation of the position that was expressed in the original subtitle; namely, "the Apologetical Presuppositions of Dogmatics or Thought-Approximations to Faith." This was in contrast to the "2nd position" which later became the Postscript (see Hong "Historical Introduction", p. xvii). The distinction between the first and second positions is meant to distinguish between the level of consciousness exhibited in the two works. In Fragments, the writer is writing under the condition of the God-man (the presupposition of dogmatics), although he does not recognize this fact ("his
The question to which this proposition refers is, namely, whether the truth can be truly learned; i.e. whether there can be the learning of the truth. (the "thought project")

But why would one ask such a question? What would prompt the formulation of the thought project?

About a third of the way through *Philosophical Fragments* the reader learns that the "thought project" or "poem" formulated by developing the implications of the "what if..." is not a thought project or poem at all, because it is of such a nature that no one could come up with it by himself. Thus, in the person of the pseudonym Johannes Climacus, SK states:

"forgive me my curious mistaken notion of having composed it myself. It was a mistaken notion, and the poem was so different from every human poem that it was no poem at all but the wonder."  

By wonder SK means "an immediate category [which] involves no reflection upon itself." Or, to it put in the words of ignorance). He does have intimations of it, however, in his recognition that he is inadequate for the thought-project's formulation. (p. 36) In contrast, Postscript is written by one who, while still not a Christian (see the Appendix of Postscript), has come to recognize that the presence of the God-man is the occasion for his questioning. The movement of SK's thought thus exhibits a movement in which the fundamental thesis (expressed in the original subtitle) is further and further clarified. We have attempted to reduplicate this movement in the present chapter.

---

30 *Philosophical Fragments*, p. 36.

31 *Philosophical Fragments*, p. 36.

32 Johannes Climacus, p. 145.
Cornelius Verhoeven, "I pause in wonder because a thing is as it is, at this moment, and not different. It is precisely the emerging "thusness" of the thing that provokes wonder." 33

As an immediate category, wonder involves an actual relation with that other before which it "pauses." In fact SK sees the pause of this wonder as the only legitimate beginning for a philosophy with any positive content. 34 Thus, when we return to the "propositio" which states that the questioner (Johannes Climacus) is ignorant of the occasion for his questioning, we understand that Philosophical Fragments involves as its condition the presence of the truth which it hypothetically questions. Without that condition it could not occur to man to even pose the thought project.

Kierkegaard is arguing that the conditional "what if", with its implications, is a questioning which is based on an immediate relation (wonder) to that condition (the Truth's) which is posited as a hypothesis in the thought project. As we shall see shortly, this relation (wonder) is for SK a "second immediacy" which is identified with "faith." 35 It


34Johannes Climacus, Supplement, p. 266.

35On faith and wonder see e.g. Philosophical Fragments, pp. 65-66.
is a contemporaneity with the God-man.36

In other words, SK's discussion of truth is from the perspective of faith. Thus it does not proceed via an immanent, presuppositionless, questioning. It begins with the concrete content of faith, and extends the implications of that content into the "realm" of philosophy.37

This point becomes even clearer when we discover that the original subtitle of Philosophical Fragments was "the Apologetical Presupposition of Dogmatics or Thought-Approximations to Faith."38

As Per Lonning notes, for SK "dogmatics presupposes revelation."39 SK says himself that "Jesus Christ's death and sacrifice is, of course, as a dogma, a historical event."40 The dogma is the concrete event of Jesus Christ and dogmatics is reflection, from the perspective of faith, upon the concrete content which is present.41 Thus, "SK's

36The theme of contemporaneity and its relation to faith and the God-man, is a central motif of Training in Christianity.

37Point of View, p. 42.

38Philosophical Fragments, Historical Introduction, p. xvii.


40Niels Thulstrup, "Dogma and Dogmatics," part I, p. 84.

41The "concrete content" is the universally human (truth). (DRU Journal, entry. 283) But it is given in the particular, which is not "just" a particular. Thus
desired dream is to allow all of modern exegesis and
dogmatics to run their course in the situation of
contemporaneity."\textsuperscript{42}

When SK characterizes the "historical point of
departure" for the learning of truth as the "Apologetical
Presupposition of Dogmatics" he is thus making the concrete
presence of the God-man the condition of any "apologetic."\textsuperscript{43}
In other words, the only legitimate apologetic must proceed
from the perspective which has immediately present the
teacher which gives the condition. And for SK this is God.
Apologetics cannot proceed from "natural reason" or any
other supposed "place of meeting."\textsuperscript{44}

If we recognize this, then we need not point to SK's

\\textsuperscript{42} Lonning, p. 94.

\textsuperscript{43} Note the question which follows SK's title page of
Philosophical Fragments (p. 3): "Better well hanged than
ill wed." (Shakespeare) In the light of SK's original
subtitle it is obvious that this refers to the relation
between philosophy and dogmatics. It is an "ill" wedding
that takes place when one seeks to use a philosophical
apologetic to bring one to Christianity. Thus SK's work can
be interpreted as the work of the hangman who destroys one
of the ill fated couple; namely, "away from speculation" or
hang philosophy.

\textsuperscript{44} Here we see that SK's intent in Philosophical
Fragments and in the Postscript runs in complete opposition
to the SK of Pojman's thesis. See Pojman, pp. ix-xi.
In Johannes Climacus, SK seeks to show how the real embarrassment is to that approach which claims to be presuppositionless. Niels Thulstrup well develops the theme in "Beginning of Philosophy" in Bibliotheca Kierkegaardiana Edenda Curaverunt Vol. 3 Concepts and Alternatives in Kierkegaard (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Boghardel, 1980), pp. 60-75. The problem of a presuppositionless beginning in philosophy is approached by way of Descartes's thesis that all should begin with doubt (negativity). But SK notes that two theses are here juxtaposed: (1) Modern philosophy begins with doubt (2) Philosophy must begin with doubt. The first is a historical thesis, the second concerns the essential nature of philosophy. In attempting to reconcile the two one comes to the question: What of that philosophy, which took place before modern philosophy? If it was indeed philosophy, then it must not have begun with doubt, and this contradicts thesis 2. SK's argument is considerably more intricate, but via the paradox, SK concludes that one can never get anywhere if one begins with doubt. One ends with the same negativity with which one began. Thulstrup argues that SK solves the problem by positing a historical beginning to philosophy in Philosophical Fragments and the Postscript (ibid., p. 69) But this does not account for (1) the fact that SK abandoned Johannes Climacus (it was posthumously published) and (2) SK does not explicitly develop the historical point of departure as a beginning of philosophy. Rather it is the beginning of virtue. And, as we have seen, it is the beginning of dogmatics. One thus better accounts for SK's development by arguing that SK accepted the thesis that philosophy must begin with doubt. The historical thesis and essential thesis of philosophy's beginning can be reconciled if one distinguishes between the essential beginning as ontological status and as epistemological status. Philosophy always began with doubt, but ancient philosophy did not recognize its own beginning. The essential beginning that was always there became explicit to thought in/as modern philosophy. Thulstrup is right, however, when he argues that for SK "doubt cannot stop itself." It cannot be stopped by a logical conclusion (ibid., p. 74). Thus philosophy begins and ends in the emptiness of nothing. In Johannes Climacus, SK does seem to point to a redefining of philosophy so that it may be based on wonder. But he does not develop it. As soon as he seeks to develop it (Philosophical Fragments), he finds that it is no longer philosophy but dogmatics. Thus "Johannes Climacus" (De Omnibus Dubitantum est) can be viewed as SK's last attempt to redefine philosophy so that it can contain any positive content (i.e. be a legitimate pursuit). After that, SK's mottoes were "better well hanged than ill wed"
further develop the implications of the "thought project," we will find that much of SK's argumentation is far from conclusive.\textsuperscript{46} For example, he will argue that the teacher must bring the condition. But no human can bring the condition. Thus the teacher must be God.\textsuperscript{47} But why is it that no human could give the condition? Or if not a human, why couldn't e.g. the state give the condition? Hegel could very well develop alternatives to SK's formulation of a "historical point of departure" for learning the truth.

But SK was not presenting a rigid argument. By extending the implications of the thought project, he was extending the implications of the concrete God-man that he believed to be present. As SK says of his writing, he was simply transforming Christian categories into categories of reflection.\textsuperscript{48} He was writing from the perspective of faith.

We find here that SK is doing the reverse of what he saw as having occurred in "Christendom." As we saw in Chapter 2\textsuperscript{49}, the tragedy of Christendom was that Christianity was altered so as to conform to the categories

(Philosophical Fragments, p. 3) or "away with speculation!"

\textsuperscript{46}i.e. It is not conclusive in terms of the rigor of logical argumentation. Its canon is thus not that of pure thought or of "Modern Philosophy." It is not conclusive in terms of "technical reason." See Paul Tillich, \textit{Systematic Theology} Vol. 1, p. 72.

\textsuperscript{47}Philosophical Fragments, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{48}Point of View, p. 42.

\textsuperscript{49}See pp. 87-88.
of philosophy. As a result, Christianity becomes a stepping stone which was used to bring one to the perspective of pure thought.

For SK the pure thought perspective was a false presupposition. And the task he saw himself faced with, was to bring Christianity back to its true presupposition; namely, back to Jesus Christ. Thus SK sought to alter philosophy in such a way that it could be used as a stepping stone to Christ.

Since, however, philosophy is that approach which proceeds from the priority of reason, the only way the true presupposition can be present to the false perspective, is as a judgment and overthrowing of that perspective. Thus when philosophy is altered by transforming Christian relations into reflective categories, the resultant can only stand as a paradox which resists the penetration of reason. This paradox is to effect an overthrowing of the false perspective. Then, from the whole self, the paradox is positively viewed as the God-man, rather than as paradox.

In summary, SK's discourse is a dogmatic which has been

---

50 Postscript, p. 279.

51 See Journeys to Selfhood, Ch. 4 on Paradox; esp. 133 and pp. 134-139.

52 Point of View, p. 42.

53 Note the parallel between this view of paradox and the modern discussion of parable. E.g. John Dominic Crossan, The Dark Interval, (Texas: Argus Communications, 1975).
disguised in categories of reflection. To the degree that it presents itself as philosophical (i.e. as categories of reflection) it is a "deception".\textsuperscript{54} Thus the positivity in SK's critique of reason is rooted not in the immanence of selfhood, but rather in the fundamental presupposition of SK's faith.\textsuperscript{55}

With this in mind, let us now return to SK's "thought project."

The Unknown

Thus far we have seen that if learning the truth is to truly have a historical point of departure, then the teacher must be more than a midwife. He must bring the truth in such a way that he gives the condition. However, to give the condition would involve transforming the learner. "But no human being is capable of doing this; if it is to take place, it must be done by the god himself."\textsuperscript{56}

Since the learner has neither the truth nor the condition, the learner could not, of himself, will the

\textsuperscript{54}In Chapter I, Part II of The Point of View, SK carefully develops the nature of the deception. Basically the deception consists in presenting his position as if it is speculative, when it is actually dogmatic. Thus he is like an undercover spy. See Dru Journal; entry 791.

\textsuperscript{55}Note how this answers the dilemma which was formulated at the beginning of this chapter; namely, how can there be so much positive in SK's falsification of reason. The positivity is due to the dogmatic presupposition and not the philosophical.

\textsuperscript{56}Philosophical Fragments, p. 15.
truth.  Thus the god, as teacher, is likewise a saviour and deliverer. He saves the learner from the untruth in which he stood. And likewise the god is a reconciler because he effects a renewed relation between the learner and the truth; the learner is reconciled to the truth of himself.

By "the god" SK, at this point in the argument, simply means "the unknown". Now, as we have already shown, this unknown is indeed the God-man of Christianity, because the treatise is a dogmatic discourse. But it is developed in the person of one, Johannes Climacus, who does not yet know the name of the "Other" who is present (recall the "propositio"). Hence when the learner is said to receive the truth with its condition from the god, it is the same as saying it is received from the unknown.

The learner thus does not know where the truth comes from. It simply "comes." When this coming happens, a

57Ibid, p. 16.


59Philosophical Fragments, p. 17.

60Ibid.

61Ibid, p. 39. For a discussion of SK's use of "Gnuden" (the god) and its status as "nothing more than a name we assign to the unknown" see J. Heywood Thomas, "Paradox" in Bibliotheca Kierkegaardiana, Vol. 3, p. 206.
change is effected in the learner such that he is changed from untruth to truth. This change, or transformation, can be called "conversion". It signifies a "new birth"; one in which the learner "owes no human being anything, but owes that divine teacher everything."\textsuperscript{62}

The moment in which the learner learns the truth must be unique among moments. Like others it is short and temporal, passing to the past in the next moment; but unlike others, it is decisive. It must be filled with the eternal. Thus it can be referred to as "the fullness of time."\textsuperscript{63}

Now the key question to ask is whether such a moment is really thinkable. Can this thought project be elaborated upon in a way, which does not violate consistent, coherent thought?

In the early part of Phil. Frag. SK poses the question of the thinkability of the thought project, but he does not give an answer. Instead he states:

"We shall not be in a hurry with the answer, for someone who because of prolonged pondering never comes up with an answer is not the only one who fails to answer - so too the one who admittedly manifests a marvelous quickness in answering but not the desirable slowness in considering the difficulty before explaining it."\textsuperscript{64}

The parameters of the question must more carefully be

\textsuperscript{62}Philosophical Fragments, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{63}Ibid, p. 18. For a more detailed discussion of moment and the fullness of time see SK's Concept of Anxiety, pp. 81-90. Also Taylor's Journeys to Selfhood, pp. 122-130.

\textsuperscript{64}Philosophical Fragments, p. 20.
developed. But SK does believe that at this stage in the argument, one can ask "who ought to ask the question [of the thinkability of the thought project]?" 65

One who is not reborn could not answer the question because he would not be in a position to evaluate the transition from untruth. Thus, according to SK, only the "reborn" can be in a position to evaluate whether the thought project is thinkable. 66

Here again we see SK's dogmatic premise. But now he goes so far as to argue that one who is not reborn (i.e. does not have faith) cannot even appreciate the nature of discourse on the thought project. Rather the discourse is addressed from the perspective of faith to the single individual who likewise stands before faith's presupposition (the God-man). Sk's role is then to develop the implications of the presence of the God-man.

But we must backspace one step. Thus far in SK's argument we have not yet come to the place where the teacher is identified as the God-man. The teacher is simply viewed as the god (unknown) who gives the truth and the condition in a significant moment called "the fullness of time."

65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
In "A Poetical Venture" (Ch. II) SK begins to consider the nature of that unknown which is identified with the teacher. He develops his discussion by way of contrast with the Socratic.

Socrates was also a teacher. But:

"In accomplishing his task, he satisfied the claims within himself just as much as he satisfied the claims other people might have on him. Understood in this way - and this was indeed the Socratic understanding - the teacher stands in a reciprocal relation, in as much as life and its situations are the occasion for him to become a teacher and he in turn the occasion for others to learn something. His relation, therefore, is at all times marked by autoplay just as much as by sympathy." 67

Or, to put it in the words of Howard and Edna Hong, "the teacher is also a learner and the learner is also a teacher." 68 The reciprocal relation is thus one of need; each allows the other to be the insignificant occasion for the recollection of Truth. But in both cases the decisive movement is the immanent one by which the implicit is made explicit. Ultimately neither the teacher nor learner needs the other because both contain within themselves the conditions for self-fulfillment. Relatively, each uses the other as a means by which the self is brought to itself.

Under the conditions of the Socratic, such a reciprocal

67 Ibid, p. 23.

relation must even characterize the relation of the god to man. Hegel makes this aspect explicit in his philosophy of religion. As Mark Taylor notes, for Hegel, God needs the world and man just as much as man needs God, for it is by man, as the externalization of God's interiority, that God comes to a knowledge of himself. And that self knowledge involves the negation of the otherness of man from God. Thus the relation between man and God is one in which the otherness of the other is negated, so that it may be appropriated as the truth of itself.

The "thought project" which SK develops, however, leads to a very different understanding of God. In the case of a god who has both the truth and the condition, there is no

---

69 Journeys to Selfhood, p. 116. One could also, equally argue that man's need of God is simply an expression of man's need to attain to the truth of himself. "God" is simply man's projection of the fullness of himself into externality. (Peter Singer, Hegel, p. 63). Taylor's emphasis is that of the "right wing" Hegelians, Singer's is of the "left wing" Hegelians. But both are expressions of the Socratic/Platonic.

70 Journeys to Selfhood, p. 114: "Man appears as God, and God appears as man. The incarnation involves the divinization of the human and the humanization of the divine, or, expressed in other terms, the infinitizing of the finite and the finitizing of the infinite...Hegel writes, 'we call the consciousness of reconciliation, the consciousness of sublation, of the nullity of the opposition, the consciousness that this opposition is not the truth, but that rather the truth consists in reaching unity through the negation of this opposition." But note what SK has to say of this "reconciliation" (see this essay, pp. 95-99) Taylor elaborates on the relation between self and other in his "self in/as other" in Kierkegaardian XIII (Kobenhaven: C. A. Reitzels Forlay, 1984), pp. 63-71.
need for the pupil. The god already understands himself. 71
But what then brings the god to move himself to the learner
who is untruth? SK's answer to this is "love." 72 Only the
kenotic, self-giving of love can explain that eternal
resolution which is expressed in the significant moment
which is called "the fullness of time."

"Out of love, therefore, the god must be eternally
resolved in this way, but just as his love is the
basis, so also must love be the goal, for it would
indeed be a contradiction for the god to have a
basis of movement and a goal that do not
 correspond to this." 73

God-Man

It is from this affirmation of love as both basis and
goal, that SK is able to identify the unknown as the God-
man. 74

71 Philosophical Fragments, p. 24.
72 Ibid, p. 25.
73 Ibid. Here SK simply brings together two well
established theological theses; namely, (1) God is both the
Ground and End of creation, and (2) God is love. Love
becomes the motivation (God's free self-motivation) of
creation. And it also becomes that unto which creation
(esp. man) is to be brought.

74 Note the development in Philosophical Fragments:
First the teacher is developed as the significant other.
Then as the unknown (the god). And now as the God-man. The
dialectic of this development will be soon identified as
existential. And its logic will be seen as the logos of the
content (the God-man). Thus the next step will involve an
identification of the "how" with the "what." (Linstrom, pp.
234-235). This movement has parallels to the Hegelian
development in which the dialectic becomes explicit to
When love is the goal, then the teacher seeks to bring the learner into a relation of equality, "for only in love is the different made equal, and only in equality or in unity is there understanding." Thus, for SK, the teacher's goal is a mutual understanding between the teacher and learner. By "understanding" however SK does not mean the cold, closed, detached understanding of immanence. This becomes clear when SK models the relation between teacher and learner on a king and a lowly maiden whom he loves. The king seeks to win the maiden to love but knows that if he comes in his royal splendor, then the maiden will be overwhelmed and the boldness and freedom of her love will be destroyed by her utter capitulation before the king. The maiden could never be truly happy in his presence because she will always see herself as ugly and wholly incommensurable with the king's royalty. The only way for a true love to take place - one in which the maiden and the

itself as the whole. But there are two key differences: First, the logos of SK's existential dialectic is contingent upon the presence of the concrete other. And second, that logos is not accessible to pure thought. It is only accessible to the concretely existing individual. Thus, as the reader considers the development of SK's "thought project", he should not judge it in terms of thought, but rather in terms of its motivation to act; specifically, to that particular act, which SK identifies with faith. Because our essay is concerned with the movement away from speculation and not also the move away from the poetic, it only inadequately can express SK's dialectic (which, for SK, is not really "his" but rather the presence of the God-man).

75 Philosophical Fragments, p. 25.

76 Ibid, pp. 26-34.
king both understand each other and the love between them—is if the king disrobes himself of his royalty and comes to the maiden as a lowly servant. From that station, the king could teach the maiden without overwhelming her.\textsuperscript{77} He could then gradually bring her to the place where their love could be expressed.

Since the teacher is the god and the learner is man, the only way for the teacher to teach the learner, would be if the teacher came as a man. In this self-emptying, the god would make present the conditions for the learner to come in freedom — and only in freedom is love truly love.

Here SK combines a metaphysical argument with a religious argument based on the concept of love. Metaphysically, the learner requires that the truth come in the moment. Since the god is eternal, the god must make himself other than he is if he is to exist in time. Thus the god must become man.\textsuperscript{78} Religiously, the learner would

\textsuperscript{77}The way of education will be the paradox.

\textsuperscript{78}The metaphysical argument is the one that is almost always appealed to when SK’s view of the reason behind the incarnation is discussed. E.g. Journeys to Selfhood, p. 129; Collins, p. 225. Another form of this argument says that the individual needs the universal, but it must be given as a particular, thus... Or, the individual needs the infinite/eternal, but it must be given as the finite, thus... But the metaphysical form alone does not sufficiently distinguish SK’s argument from Hegel’s (Journey’s to Selfhood, p. 117.) The "Thought Project" leads to the distinction, only when the universal-particular (the God-man) is distinguished as the other who is not metaphysically assimilatable; i.e. the mediator cannot be mediated. This is in stark contrast to Hegel, who chastised religion for viewing the God-man as an individual. For
be overwhelmed by the god if the god manifested himself as god. Then the learner would simply acquiesce before the truth in such a way that all freedom would be eliminated from the transformation. Just as a robber would be overwhelmed by the authority of the king who made himself present in all his power, so the learner would simply accept by virtue of the god's authority. But for SK this would not be true love. Thus the god must become man. 79

Note that although the "argument" is put in a form which seems to move from the concept of love to the actuality of the incarnation, SK actually moves in a reverse manner. This is his "deception." He actually begins with the incarnation and the presence of the God-man, and moves from that to an understanding of the nature of love. Here the God-man, as the revelation of the nature of love and selfhood, is primary; and the learner's concept of love and selfhood is the untruth, which is overthrown in the light of the God-man's presence. 80

By proceeding in this reverse fashion, SK is able to

Hegel, Christ Jesus is no more God than anyone else. When we see SK's position as a reaction against a metaphysical assimilation which mediates opposites, then the religious argument is given much greater prominence.

79 Note that the religious argument moves from abstract speculative categories to concrete personal categories.

80 Recently Eberhard Juengel has strongly argued that this should be the direction of a Christian understanding of love. *God as the Mystery of the World* (tr.) Darrell Guder (Michigan: William B. Erdmans Publishing Co., 1983).
present the implications of the dogmatic presupposition.
But the logic of the movement is not that of pure thought.
Rather it is the unfolding of the condition which SK
believes to be given by the teacher.81 Here SK is clearly
seen as the father of the Barthian affirmation that faith
proceeds on the basis of that logic which is prescribed by
its own content.82

When we recognize this aspect of his thought, then we
can see that SK attempts to root his understanding of the
free character of love in the incarnation itself. He is
asking why God did not manifest himself in a way that simply
imposed upon the learner the truth. Why did God come as an
humble servant? Through the logic of that event he
concludes that God willed for the learner, namely, man, to

---

81Here the condition is not just maximal subjectivity,
but also the logic of that dialectic that brings one to
maximal subjectivity. And the movement is similar to what
Hegel would call the "regressive justification." But here
the Christian presupposition grounds the justification and
it is of the whole person; not just of thought.

82Although the late Barth sought to disassociate
himself from Kierkegaard (In the "early" Barth, the
reference to, and acknowledgement of, Kierkegaard's position
is ample), the parallels and indebtedness of Barth to SK is
apparent throughout the Dogmatics. Consider for example
Barth on Philosophy (CD 1.1, p. 6), method or the "how" (p.
8), Dogma (p. 11), the presupposition of dogmatics (p. 12),
the role of faith in dogmatics (p. 17-23), the role of
prolegomena (as preliminary understanding, which is later
clarified; p. 36), faith and proclamation as action (p. 60),
dogmatics is guided by its own canon (p. 72), etc. One
could go through the first volume of Barth's Church
Dogmatics and show his debt to SK on virtually every page.
come to the truth in freedom.83

If we recall that SK views the self as a unity of possibility and necessity,84 then the truth, if it is to be embraced as the truth of the self, can only be a truth that is actively chosen as well as passively accepted. The self must will the truth.

Paradox

We have already seen that the maximal subjectivity in which the self is fully unified is the condition of receiving the truth. But the teacher is the condition of the condition.

Now we are in a position to see how the teacher brings the self unto that condition. The teacher himself is the teaching.85 This is God. But if the teacher gives himself

83Thus SK's affirmation of freedom should be viewed as a conclusion he derives from the Christian presupposition rather than a "palagianism" which he imposes on an "orthodox" doctrine of grace. See note 22.

84Sickness Unto Death, pp. 13; 35-42.

85Philosophical Fragments, p. 55: "The god's presence is not incidental to his teaching but is essential. The presence of the god in human form - indeed, in the lowly form of a servant - is precisely the teaching, and the god himself must provide the condition; otherwise the learner is unable to understand anything." The reader should continue to note the development. The identification of the teacher with the teaching, and the giving of the condition, allows for the transition from the "what" to the "how." One should note how the older qualifications (i.e. "unknown" and "other") are combined with the clarifications (love and God-man) to produce the paradox which moves the development.
directly - i.e. makes himself immediately present - then the learner would be wholly overwhelmed. To put it in traditional terms, God is a consuming fire. In addition, the learner’s freedom would be violated because there would be no openness in the acceptance of the truth. Thus the teacher, as God, must give himself, as the teaching, in a way that allows the learner an openness in the acceptance of the teaching.

The problem, however, is that the learner does not even have the condition for a recognition of the teaching as the truth. Thus the teacher, in the giving of the truth, must give the condition. And this condition is that maximal subjectivity in which the learner is free to will the truth. The teaching must be such that it effects the transformation to maximal subjectivity without violating the freedom of that subjectivity.

For SK, the God-man accomplishes the required task by standing as a paradox to every false position. The absurdity of the paradox stands as a judgment. This is the judgment of truth upon untruth.86 When the learner

---

86 Karl Barth well captures SK’s meaning when he speaks of "the paradox of faith as the eternal 'No' of the law." [The Epistle to the Romans (tr.) Edwyn C. Hoskyns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 116. The parallel becomes even clearer when we keep in mind SK’s equation of the Jewish Law (discussed in Romans) and reason. This was an equation which SK got from Hamann (and one could even say, from Paul; ref. Romans 2:12-16). See Stephen N. Dunning, "Kierkegaard’s 'Hegelian'. Response to Hamann." Thought Vol. 55 No. 218 (Sept. 1980), pp. 259-270.
perceives that absurdity as a judgment of himself, then he is confronted with a decisive choice: The learner can reject the paradox and maintain his own position (offence), or the learner can give up his position in favor of the paradox (faith).\textsuperscript{87} In the case of faith, the logic of the paradox will be allowed to direct the learner to the position of maximal subjectivity. And from that position, as the condition of the truth, the learner will be able to understand the paradox as the God-man who is concretely present.\textsuperscript{88} Then the absurd will no longer be absurd.\textsuperscript{89} And from that perspective one will recognize that the God-man was directing one all along.

The nature of this movement can be more clearly seen if we consider the way in which the false positions are falsified by the concretely present God-man.

\textsuperscript{87}On the difference between faith and offence see Training in Christianity, esp. part II, S1.

\textsuperscript{88}Ibid, part II, S7.

\textsuperscript{89}Hong Journal, Vol. 1, entry 10: "The absurd is not the absurd or absurdities without any distinction (wherefore Johannes de Silentio [the pseudonym of Fear and Trembling]: "How many of our age understand what the absurd is?"). The absurd is a category, and the most developed thought is required to define the Christian absurd accurately and with conceptual correctness. The absurd is a category, the negative criterion, of the divine or of the relationship to the divine. When the believer has faith, the absurd is not the absurd - faith transforms it, but in every weak moment it is again more or less absurd to him. The passion of faith is the only thing which masters the absurd - if not, then faith is not faith in the strict sense, but a kind of knowledge. The absurd terminates negatively before the sphere of faith."
Let us first consider immediacy. As we recall from Ch. 2, in immediacy the self is present in the moment to that other, which is the object of its concern. Here the being of the other is its presence.

SK further elaborates upon this mode of knowledge when he discusses "the moment" (as distinguished from "the fullness of time"), which is ever present to the concretely existing self.\(^{90}\) He develops "the moment" in the context of

\(^{90}\) The following discussion is taken from the Concept of Anxiety rather than Philosophical Fragments. But the two works were published at the same time, and deal with the same fundamental issue; namely, that freedom which is the truth of subjectivity. As Reidar Thomte puts it, "Philosophical Fragments defines the ontological ground of freedom and its realm, whereas The Concept of Anxiety...consider[s] the anthropological aspects of freedom." (Concept of Anxiety, VIII). But the ontological and anthropological interpenetrate. Thus themes in Concept of Anxiety (e.g. time) can be used to help understand the central motif of Philosophical Fragments. Ultimately the contrast between the ontological and anthropological breaks down anyway because it is a distinction for mediation. As we shall see in the conclusion to this essay, a more important way of distinguishing the two works would be to say that Philosophical Fragments begins with the dogmatic issue of the God-man, while the Concept of Anxiety begins with the dogmatic issue of Sin (although it claims to lead up to the dogmatic issue rather than begin with it).

We should also emphasize that the everpresent moment should be carefully distinguished from the moment of special revelation. Mark Taylor has failed to do that in e.g. "Kierkegaard in the Structure of Selfhood." Thus he concludes that the moment is "the situation in which the individual is confronted with a choice, it is the moment of decision." (p. 100) But is this decision the fundamental one for or against selfhood, or simply a decision for or against this or that thing, which will further condition future decisions? Taylor calls on passages where SK is referring to the fullness of time as if they referred to the moment which is the place of all people's decisions. But we should note, Taylor does imply a distinction between moment and Moment in Journeys to Selfhood, p. 130.
a discussion of time. 91 For SK time is not one with temporality. 92 Time is "infinite succession." 93 But if it is so viewed, then it cannot be defined as the present, the past, and the future. This latter distinction, in order to be rightly appreciated, involves a relation between time and eternity. Otherwise there is just a flowing. 94 This is because "infinite flowing" is just that, a flowing, a movement. It does not involve distinction. But to speak of a present as distinct from past and future involves a break in the flowing. It involves a "now" which is present and different from past and future. SK characterizes that "now" as an "atom of eternity". 95 It is the place where time and eternity touch in time. And it is called the moment.

"The moment is that ambiguity in which time and eternity touch each other, and with this the concept of temporality is posited, whereby eternity constantly persuades time. As a result, the above-mentioned division acquires its significance: the present time, the past time, the future time." 96

This moment is not the fullness of time, however, because it is only an "atom of eternity" that intersects with the

91Concept of Anxiety, pp. 81-90.
92Ibid, p. 85.
93Ibid.
94Ibid, p. 87.
95Ibid, p. 88.
96Ibid, p. 89.
flowing of time.\textsuperscript{97} 

This atom of eternity is the otherness of presence, before which the self pauses in the wonder of its immediacy.\textsuperscript{98} But the self only stands in a fraction of itself.

When immediacy is confronted with the God-man, it can only see man. When, however, that man is affirmed to be not only present as an atom of eternity but also as the fullness of time, then immediacy is confronted with a difference that it cannot grasp. For it, truth is the present. And that is everything. But when it is told that its truth is not the whole, then its view of the moment as everything is falsified.\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{97}Ibid, p. 90.

\textsuperscript{98}This "presence" is even identified with God: "The present is the eternal, or rather, the eternal is the present, and the present is full. In this sense the Latin said of the deity that he is praesens (praesentes dii [The presence of the gods])." Ibid, p. 86. But God is known as only an atom of who he is in truth. This atom is the atom of eternity which confronts the "infinite succession" of time as the "now" of decision. (See Mark Taylor, "Kierkegaard on the Structure of Selfhood," p. 100).

\textsuperscript{99}SK explicitly develops this idea in Training in Christianity, when he speaks of the God-man as a "sign of contradiction." "A sign is the negation of immediacy, or a second state of being, differing from the first. It is not thereby affirmed that the sign is not something immediate, but that what it is as a sign is not immediate, in other words, that as a sign it is not the immediate thing it is." (p. 124) SK then continues: "A sign of contradiction [the God-man] is one which draws attention to itself, and then, when attention is fixed upon it, shows that it contains a contradiction." (p. 125) This contradiction is the falsification of the direct perspective. It leads to the "double reflection" in which one must choose between offence
In mediation, on the other hand, being is ideality, and the eternal is grasped as the whole of which the "present" is but an atom. Thus that which escaped and overthrew immediacy is now grasped. But when mediation is confronted with a particular that claims it is the universal by virtue of its very particularity, then mediation is likewise overthrown. Mediation cannot grasp the historical as historical. 100

In both cases the conditions of the thought project are no longer met. In immediacy every moment is viewed as the decisive moment. But then the distinction between moment

and faith. (p. 126) As a sign, Jesus is a falsification of immediacy, because that is what a sign is by nature. (Note the parallel between this discussion of sign and the previous discussion of language (ideality) as the negation of reality; see pp. 102-109) But he is also a falsification of mediation because the sign is contradictory.

SK’s development of the "sign" has tremendous implications for modern discussion of the role of sign in linguistics and its falsification (ref. Derrida).

100Mark Taylor has well shown that this is the fundamental problem for Hegel (Journeys to Selfhood, p. 117) "The believer sets himself over against the object of belief, that is the God-man, whom he regards as 'an exclusive individual man, not representing all individuals, but as one from whom all are closed off!' This, for Hegel, is the inadequacy of the religious perspective. One should then move to the philosopher’s perspective in which the separation is overcome. "The truth revealed by the Mediation asserts the absolute otherness of God from man. (ibid, p. 131) Thus one can never negate the particularity, as if it were "nothing." It is essential. That is why SK insists on using the word sign. This word assumes a reference to presence (SK would strongly resist Derrida’s elimination of presence). Thus particularity is the telos, which is intended. Thomas, in "Paradox," makes the same argument (p. 197). Note esp. Thomas’ thesis that the thinker’s passion explores the bounds of sense in the paradox. (p. 203)
and fullness of time is lost. And in mediation one must view the particularity of the moment as nothing. But then one loses the historical as a point of departure. Thus for both, the God-man can only be perceived as a paradox.

What perspective then is able to appreciate the God-man as the truth? As the historically significant point of departure for learning? Before we answer this we must pause for an interlude; namely, for "the interlude" of Philosophical Fragments.

Interlude

In the interlude SK discusses the nature of the historical. He begins by asking "how is that changed which comes into existence or what is the change of coming into existence?"\textsuperscript{101} In all other change the existence of what is changed is presupposed. And the change is one of essence. But this is not so in the case of "coming into existence."

When something comes into existence there is a transition from "not be" to "be." But the "not be" is yet something, otherwise it would not be it, which comes into existence. Thus it is both being and non-being. Its being is essence, yet its non-being is its lack of existence. Thus in becoming (or "coming into existence") there is a

\textsuperscript{101}Philosophical Fragments, p. 73.
transition such that an essence which is not, comes into existence.

SK characterizes that which both is and is not as "possibility". And that which it comes to be, when it becomes, is "actuality." Coming into existence is thus the transition from possibility to actuality.

It is useful at this point to note the uses of "being" in this discussion. To speak of possibility as both being and non-being at the same time must either involve two uses of the word "being" or a rejection of the principle of noncontradiction. SK however clearly affirmed the principle of noncontradiction. Thus there must be a duplex use of the word "being."

This duplex use has earlier been discussed when we contrasted immediacy and mediation. From the perspective of immediacy, possibility is non-being because it does not

---

102Note that although the argument here is developed ontologically, the categories (e.g. becoming, possibility, actuality, etc.) are anthropological (ref. Ch. 2 of this essay). One should thus not disassociate SK's discussion of history and "coming into existence" from his discussion of subjectivity and the dimensions of selfhood. Mark Taylor, Journeys to Selfhood, pp. 124-129.

103Anton Hugl: "The Principle of Contradiction" in Bibliotheca Kierkegaardian Edenda Curverunt Vol. 3 Concepts and Alternatives in Kierkegaard (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Boghardel, 1980), pp. 272-280. But note the problem: "Because the principle of contradiction is valid only in the realm of becoming and not in that of being, it can be misused in two ways: one may apply it precisely where it is not valid and eliminate it where it is valid." (p. 279).

104pp. 110-113.
manifest the presence of actuality. While from the perspective of mediation possibility is being, because reality is ideality (or possibility).

In an evaluation of becoming, SK must thus call on both the perspective of immediacy and that of mediation. Otherwise the character of the transition from possibility to actuality can only appear under the paradox of simultaneously predicating and denying "being."

J. Heywood Thomas refers to this as the "paradox of metaphysical thinking."105 "This is the recognition of the sheer contingency of history which makes the relation between logic and reality something quite other than mediation."106 And, we could also add, quite other than immediacy. There must be a unity of mediation and immediacy such that the character of history can be appreciated for what it is. And this unity is found in the actualization of possibility - that transition which is act. It is to that unity that the God-man leads, when he is viewed as the judgment upon the inferior positions.

Existential Dialectic

The logic of the movement to the unitive perspective of


selfhood is presented in what SK refers to as an "existential dialectic." David Swenson develops the nature of SK's dialectic, as the instrument by which a wise man comes to a knowledge of what he does and does not know about that which is essential to the thinker as an existing human being.107

"The existential dialectic bears qua dialectic the stamp of its origin as a philosophical term in the dramatic dialogue. It is, namely, a mutual confrontation of opposites in their logically developed consequences. As existential, it seeks to mediate a clarification of the issues of life, paving the way for a decisive personal commitment, a fundamental and therefore passionate choice."108

When Swenson speaks of "logically developed consequences," however, he should not be interpreted as meaning that an immanent logic of thought directs the dialectic. Swenson contrasts SK's dialectic with Hegel's, noting that "for Kierkegaard the realm of the logical is not subject to any form of evolution, transition, or movement." For Kierkegaard "the transition-category is historical, not logical."109 Its mediation of the confrontation of opposites is thus not contemplative. Rather "the existential dialectic is relevant to an individual who confronts the future as an active participant in life."110

109Ibid, p. 78.
110Ibid.
Its concern is to exhibit the conditions which are dialectically united with the openness of possibility in the self's free decision. Through the existential dialectic the parameters of the self's decision and act are made explicit. The dialectic thus serves an "earnestness," which confronts the moment with a view to action rather than contemplation.

When we come back to the God-man as the content of concern, then we can see that the logic of the existential dialectic is simply the collision of contradictories that is effected by the paradoxical quality of the God-man. The "paradox is the passion of thought." It is the ground of the only legitimate movement.

The paradox, which ultimately is the God-man, brings one to the deeper and deeper levels of existence. At the most shallow level of selfhood the God-man is manifest as one sort of paradox, which prompts a movement to a deeper

---

111 Ibid, pp. 80-82.

112 Purity of Heart, p. 179: "Earnestness: to listen in order to act, this is the highest thing of all, and, God be praised, every man is capable of it if he so wills."

113 See Thomas, p. 207.

114 Philosophical Fragments, p. 37.

115 Valter Lindstrom, in "The Problem of Objectivity and Subjectivity in Kierkegaard," develops the parallel between existential dialectic and Christian dogma (as the God-man who is the content of faith), p. 232. In this dogma, which is the paradox, the movement is grounded.

level. Once the leap (or transition) is made to the next level, then the God-man is manifest as a different paradox. Again the absurdity prompts a new transition etc. until one attains to maximal subjectivity. From that perspective all the lower dimensions of selfhood are present. 117

Swenson has shown that the existential dialectic brought one to an earnestness which approached the moment with a view to action. This observation confirms the conclusion arrived at in the interlude of Philosophical Fragments. There act is exhibited as the movement which unites the duplexity of immediacy and mediation. 118

Act

Act is the actualization of a possibility. 119 In such an actualization the essence, which is "being" to mediation, is established as actuality. And since it is the otherness of actuality, which distinguishes the actual from the possible, the "being" of immediacy is likewise established in the transition from possibility to actuality. The "being" of act, as the transition of coming into existence, is thus the unity of immediacy and mediation.

117 T. H. Croxall, in Kierkegaard Studies (pp. 118-133), notes the development of paradox through the different spheres of existence.

118 Linstrom, pp. 233-234.

119 Philosophical Fragments, p. 74.
But the end of the paradox is not the unity which is given in act. Rather the view to action (earnestness) is the perspective of maximal subjectivity. And this is simply the condition for receiving the truth. All paradox prior to the God-man, including that of mediation and immediacy, is only a relative expression of the Absolute Paradox, which is the truth itself.\textsuperscript{120} The condition (maximal subjectivity) must thus not be confused with the end.\textsuperscript{121}

In the perspective of maximal subjectivity (the condition), reason, as but an aspect of the self, has given up itself. It sacrifices itself before the God-man who stands as the self’s context of concern. This content, from the perspective of reason, is an absurdity which is a negation of reason’s perspective.\textsuperscript{122} And through reason’s death, a "double reflection" is forced whereby the self attains to its true perspective as the condition of truth.\textsuperscript{123}

The negation of reason here corresponds to the negation

\textsuperscript{120}J. Heywood Thomas, "Paradox," pp. 192-219.

\textsuperscript{121}Although means and end will be united as the "how" and "what" are seen to be one. But here logos is distinguished from telos much as traditional Trinitarian thought distinguishes Father from Son. But note that the logos of maximal subjectivity is simply its participation in the logos of the God-man; and this is what structures the movement. See Lindstrom pp. 234-235 and Purity of Heart, p. 201.

\textsuperscript{122}Note Hoffeling’s view, discussed in Thomas p. 195.

\textsuperscript{123}Training in Christianity, part II, s 1-7.
of possibility, which occurs in the transition from possibility to actuality. SK states that:

"All coming into existence is a suffering (Liden),...namely, that the possible (not merely the possible that is excluded but even the possible that is accepted) turns out to be nothing the moment it becomes actual, for possibility is annihilated by actuality." 124

But when a given possibility is actualized, then, although it is annihilated qua possibility, it is yet established as actuality. Actualization thus both annihilates and establishes possibility. 125

In the same way that possibility "suffers," so reason suffers in the act which unites immediacy and mediacy. But likewise reason is also established in act. As with possibility, reason is both negated (cross) and established (resurrection).

In Kierkegaardian scholarship there has been considerable debate over whether SK's paradox is "contra rationem" 126 or "supra rationem." Both positions seem to be present in SK's writing. However, scholarship has not found

124Philosophical Fragments, p. 74.

125Note the parallel to the annihilation (sacrifice) and establishment of Isaac by Abraham in Fear and Trembling. The structure of the individual's movement in act and Abraham's movement in his relation to Isaac is a perfect analogy of proportionality. Both are grounded in the Godman, but one is developed ontologically/anthropologically while the other is developed ethically. The analogy would also prove central in discussing the relation between "absurd" and "paradox." Note Hong Journal, Vol. 1, entry 11.

126Thomas, p. 215.
a way to consistently advocate both. If, however, we extend
the implications of the analogy, which is found in "the
actualization of possibility," then we can see how "the
vexed question"\textsuperscript{127} can indeed be resolved.

Suffering

Before we develop the resolution of the contra
rationem/supra rationem debate, it will prove helpful to
develop an excursus on SK's view of suffering.

The importance of the concept in SK's thought is well
expressed by Howard and Edna Hong when they give it 76 pages
worth of journal and paper entries in their English
compilation.\textsuperscript{128} (Compare this to 19 pages on paradox, 23
pages on faith, 5 pages on absurd, and 6 pages on anxiety)
No other topic, of the roughly 200 listed, is given greater
weight. Kierkegaard himself says in a journal entry that
"suffering combat" "is what Christianity is
intrinsically."\textsuperscript{129} And, in another place, SK states that
the two theses of Christianity are "A. Because you are a
sufferer, therefore God loves you." and "B. Because you

\textsuperscript{127}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{128}Hong Journal, Vol. 4, pp. 366-442.

\textsuperscript{129}Ibid, p. 412.
love God, therefore you must suffer." He even states that suffering is the mark or sign of the God-relationship (which is God's love).

John Elrod sums up the importance of the theme when he says:

"Both Kierkegaard and his pseudonyms understand suffering to be not simply accidentally related to the individual's quest for self-realization but essential to its attainment." However, one must be careful to distinguish what SK means by the term. "What is commonly understood by suffering is one thing, the kind of suffering which means that a man has to do with God is something else." What then is that suffering which is essential to the "God-relation"?

SK develops the essentiality of suffering by way of contrast with the view of suffering held by immediacy (the aesthetic). For aesthetic pathos, suffering is misfortune. And, as such, it is accidental to one's existence. From this perspective "body" is likewise accidental, and one's true existence is spirit. Just as the

---

130Ibid, p. 412. (Note that this essay involves reflection on the same scriptural passages, which are central in Training in Christianity).

131Ibid, pp. 417, 419.


133Hong Journal, p. 433 (entry 4713).

134Postscript, p. 386-467.
body is like a prison or weight which can drag down the individual, so suffering is something which comes from without.\textsuperscript{135}

Since, however, suffering is viewed as something alien to the self, it cannot be understood. Thus "the immediate individual never comes to any understanding with misfortune ... he despairs, because he cannot grasp suffering."\textsuperscript{136} This inability of the immediate individual, to grasp misfortune can, however, be a means by which he is brought to a higher sphere:

"he despairs, by which his immediacy ceases to function, and the transition to another understanding of misfortune is rendered possible, that is, his despair may lead him to a comprehension of the suffering, and an understanding of it that grasps not only this or that misfortune, but essentially arrives at an understanding of the role of suffering in life."\textsuperscript{137}

In that higher sphere, the individual will come to realize that what one thinks is good (the fortunate) may not necessarily be the good. In fact, one could have everything that immediacy desires - wealth, a huge house, good health, a beautiful woman - and yet be the most wretched of all, simply because one does not realize that the good, which is truly the good, is to be in the truth - and that is very

\textsuperscript{135}Postscript, p. 398. Note the atomistic nature of this analogy.

\textsuperscript{136}Ibid, 388.

\textsuperscript{137}Ibid.
different from "fortune."\textsuperscript{138}

When one identifies fortune with the good then one assumes that there is a "direct relation to God."\textsuperscript{139} By this SK means that one identifies one's own knowledge of the good with that which is actually the good. This, in turn, assumes that the individual knows what is best for himself. In other words, the immediate individual assumes that one is in the truth, and thus that the immanent desires are the legitimate ones, and their satisfaction is the state of blessedness or the good. Suffering, viewed as misfortune, is evil.\textsuperscript{140}

Religiously, however, one is "thankfully related to God."\textsuperscript{141} In such a God-relation one "cannot know with certainty whether misfortune is an evil" or whether "good fortune is a good." This is because (ref. "proposito") one does not know what is best for oneself. One is untruth and requires that the truth and condition be given from the "other" who is God. And it may be that through suffering one is brought to that maximal subjectivity which is the

\textsuperscript{138}Ibid, p. 392.

\textsuperscript{139}Ibid, p. 399.

\textsuperscript{140} Climacus, Anti-Climacus, and the Problem of Suffering, p. 309. Note the similarity of the aesthete (the "immediate" individual) to the liberation theologian. SK's critique here would be very relevant in addressing the inductive method in theology; i.e. actual need is not necessarily perceived need.

\textsuperscript{141} Postscript, p. 399.
condition of receiving the true blessedness (the truth).

SK goes on to argue that not only "may" suffering have a positive role, it in fact does have such a role. And, even further, SK argues that "to exist essentially is inwardness, and action in inwardness is suffering...suffering is the highest action in inwardness."\textsuperscript{142} The task of religious address is then "essentially the task of uplift through suffering."\textsuperscript{143} Reflection is "directed upon the suffering and not away from it."\textsuperscript{144} Suffering is essential to selfhood.

Here suffering is not just a means which brings one to an external end - although it can serve as such. For example, to the aesthete suffering, perceived as misfortune,

\textsuperscript{142}Ibid, p. 388. Note also: "He learned from what he suffered. This was said of Christ himself - and yet if anyone should be exempted from this, it certainly should be he who knew all things. This method is the method of inwardness." (Hong Journal, Vol. 2, entry 2110.) Also "inwardness is earnestness" (Ibid, entry 2112) and "For one who is willing to obey in action what he understands in thought, the dialectical difficulty in being a real Christian is to find the point of rest between rest and unrest...Now Christianity. Here again the collision is between inwardness and expression ... Christianity requires of me the inwardness of my being willing to give up everything for its sake. But if I keep Christianity as inwardness within me, in a certain sense I never do really give up anything." (Ibid, entry 2119) The problem here is to understand the relation between the suffering of inwardness and the external expression of that interiority. i.e. How does one suffer even if he has a nice house, wife, etc.? The answer is found in the example of Christ. His learning was by suffering. But now Christ is the way of inwardness. Here we move to SK's understanding of the cross.

\textsuperscript{143}Postscript, p. 390.

\textsuperscript{144}Ibid, p. 397.
was a surd which invalidated the immediate mode of existence. It thus served as a means which prompted a transition to a deeper mode. But when SK argues for the essentiality of suffering, then he is saying that it is not just a means. When one gets to the deepest mode, then one finds that suffering is the very character or nature of existence. Religiously the goal is not to overcome suffering but rather "to be glad in the midst of suffering."\textsuperscript{145} "Suffering is an essential ingredient of the highest life."\textsuperscript{146}

In order to fully appreciate what initially may seem a very pessimistic view of life, it is important to keep in mind two very important parameters which define the context of SK's discourse. First, the writing with which we have been concerned (Concluding Unscientific Postscript) was written in the person of a pseudonym named Johannes Climacus ("John the climber"). At the end of the Postscript there is an Appendix which states:

\begin{quote}
"The undersigned, Johannes Climacus, who has written this book, does not give himself out to be a Christian; he is completely taken up with the thought how difficult it must be to be a Christian; but still less is he one who, having been a Christian, has ceased to be such by going further. He is a humorist; content with his situation at this moment, hoping that something higher may be granted him, he feels himself singularly fortunate, if the worst must come to worst, in being born precisely in the speculative,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{145}Ibid, p. 392.

\textsuperscript{146}Ibid, p. 394.
theocentric century."\textsuperscript{147}

Here humor stands on the borderline of the religious.\textsuperscript{148} It is however qualitatively different. Humor recognizes the incongruities of existence; the incommensurable.\textsuperscript{149} This is why Johannes feels himself fortunate to be born in the era of Hegel. There is plenty of material (incommensurability) for the humorist to call on (ref. "the comedy of Christendom."). But, unlike the Christian, the humorist does not translate his intellectual apprehension of the incommensurable into existential appropriation. As Mark Taylor notes:

"The humorist is unable to enter the Christian stage of existence because of his persistent belief that man retains the possibility of relating to the eternal through recollection. As long as one is convinced that the "bridge of immanence and recollection has not been burned behind him"(SV VII, 259), he cannot appreciate the decisive significance of an historical point of departure for the eternal blessedness of an existing individual."\textsuperscript{150}

When this observation is combined with the previous reflection on dogmatics, which showed that the presence of the God-man was the condition of the "thought project," then we see that Johannes Climacus (the author of both

\textsuperscript{147}Ibid, p. 545.
\textsuperscript{148}Ibid, p. 448.
\textsuperscript{150}Ibid, pp. 223-224.
Philosophical Fragments and the Postscript) is an individual who stands before the God-man, but has not yet fully appreciated that the character of his discourse is directed by the "other" who stands as the historical point of departure.

Thus "when humor uses Christian terminology it is not Christianity, but a pagan speculation which has acquired a knowledge of the Christian ideas." 151 The humorist's very life is an expression of the contradiction that what he says is both directed and not directed by the concretely present God-man. The humorist "knows the right thing and yet shows that he does not know it." 152

The humorist speaks from the perspective of reason ("pagan reflection," "immanence and recollection"). And the pathos which is either satisfied (happiness) or thwarted (suffering) is the pathos of reason. The humorist has not yet attained to that perspective of maximal subjectivity whereby reason's pathos is relativized.

It is for this reason that Johannes Climacus views essential existence as suffering. He speaks from the perspective of a reason which recognizes, in the light of the God-man, that its own pathos is sacrificed in maximal subjectivity. The paradox, however, is that this suffering

151 Ibid, p. 223.
is religiously to be happiness; "happiness in suffering."

From a higher perspective, however, - namely, the perspective of faith - one realizes that the humorist's "essential suffering" is simply the suffering of the perspective that seeks to maintain the priority of reason. When the self identifies itself with the philosopher's perspective ("pagan speculation"), then the God-man can only be perceived as an overthrowing of "the wish and will" of the self (a technical definition of suffering);\textsuperscript{153} i.e. the God-man is manifest as the suffering of the humorist. Thus for Johannes Climacus "suffering is the essential expression for existential pathos," where "existential pathos" is the mode of existence of maximal subjectivity.\textsuperscript{154}

From the perspective of faith, by way of contrast, the essential suffering is the suffering of love. This is the suffering which the God-man suffers. It occurs when the beloved of the God-man rejects the way of life (John 14:6) in favor of the slavery and bondage of untruth.\textsuperscript{155} This is a suffering which is not hurt by a thwarting of the self. Rather it is hurt by the unwillingness of the other to come forth into the joy of freedom. At the level of the believer, this suffering (that of love) is manifest as the

\textsuperscript{153}e.g. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, (tr.) Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis; the Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1956), p. 129.

\textsuperscript{154}Postscript, p. 396

\textsuperscript{155}Philosophical Fragments, p. 30.
"compassion for one's neighbor." 156 And it is "a whole musical tone deeper" than the suffering of Johannes Climacus.157

John Elrod well summarizes the contrast between Johannes Climacus (the humorist) and Anti-Climacus (the Christian):

"Climacus' ontology emphasizes...an atomistic understanding of selfhood, while his ethics specifies self-knowledge as the highest good. Anti-Climacus' ontology, however, is clearly social in its scope, and his ethics places loving one's neighbor as one loves oneself as the highest good. It is in those tensions within their respective ontologies and ethics that we find suffering's differing colors and hues in two of Kierkegaard's key writings."158

If we recall the last chapter's (ch. 2) contrast between the atomism of Pojman (the priority of reason) and the biblical holism of SK's understanding of maximal subjectivity, then we can see that Johannes Climacus' "essential suffering" is the suffering of a "part" which seeks to maintain its priority. It is the suffering of reason; the thwarting of that "highest good" which is self-knowledge (ref. Elrod).

This was the first of the parameters that defined the nature of the discourse on suffering in the Postscript. The second parameter involves the introduction which Johannes

156Climacus, Anti-Climacus, and the Problem of Suffering, p. 314.


158Climacus, Anti-Climacus, and the Problem of Suffering, p. 318.
Climacus gives to his discussion of suffering.\footnote{Postscript, pp. 386-388.} In that introduction the dogmatic character of the argument is made clear and one finds that even though the suffering is that of reason's pathos, there is yet a profound knowing in the humorist's "not knowing."

Climacus begins by recalling the result of a previous argument. Namely, "existential pathos," as the pathos of unified selfhood, is \textit{action}.\footnote{Ibid, p. 386.} And the task of this pathos was "posited as consisting in the simultaneous maintenance of an absolute relationship to the absolute telos, and a relative relationship to relative ends."\footnote{Ibid.} Here the absolute telos is the God-man and it is to this that the self should be absolutely related in the unity of its selfhood (the maximal subjectivity, which is the condition of truth). There are, however, many relative ends. And one of them is reason's end; namely, that good which is self-knowledge.

For SK, when the task of existential pathos is fulfilled then both the absolute and the relative are each, in their kind, satisfied.\footnote{Ibid.} Thus, by direct implication, reason attains to its self-knowledge and is fulfilled. But this is a state of blessedness, which is only proleptically
and thus momentarily present on this side of heaven.

In this life the self can be given the way of truth by way of the presence of the God-man. But when the truth becomes present as the condition of the condition, one does not yet attain to fullness. To a degree, the self is still "untruth." As such it is "absolutely committed to relative ends." Thus,

"the individual begins, not indeed by relating himself at one and the same time absolutely to the absolute telos and relatively to relative end, since through being fast in the immediate [the position of untruth] he is precisely the opposite situation; but he begins by exercising himself in the absolute relationship through renunciation...In order that the individual may sustain an absolute relationship to the absolute telos he must first have exercised himself in the renunciation of relative ends, and only then can there be a question of the ideal task; the simultaneous maintenance of an absolute relationship to the absolute and a relative relationship to the relative."\(^{163}\)

It is from this preliminary deliberation that Johannes Climacus launches into his discussion of suffering. The renunciation of relative ends is thus the proximate task which governs the discussion. This is why "the religious address has essentially the task of uplifting through suffering." (Sk's emphasis).\(^{164}\) Through the suffering of renunciation one is uplifted to the perspective of maximal subjectivity. This then stands as the condition in which one can maintain a proper relation to both the absolute and

\(^{163}\)Ibid.

\(^{164}\)Ibid, p. 390.
relative ends.

In the light of this preliminary deliberation we find that much of that suffering mentioned by Johannes Climacus as essential is due to the proleptic nature of the deliberation's position. Renunciation, expressed as suffering, is required as the way whereby one ultimately attains to a fulfillment in which what has been renounced will be again returned, but in its rightful place as a relative end. Then the suffering will be overcome.

However, while the proximate nature of the task accounts for some of what Johannes terms suffering, it does not account for all.\textsuperscript{165} We must keep in mind the first parameter, which identified the perspective of Johannes Climacus as a humorist who gives priority to reason and self-knowledge. To that perspective existential pathos, as essential selfhood, must always be manifest as a suffering. This is because "existential pathos is action."\textsuperscript{166} And action is always a suffering of reason.

\textsuperscript{165}Here we disagree with Edward Geismer [Lectures on the Religious Thought of Soren Kierkegaard (n.p.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937), p. 67] who sees the "renunciation" as the only reason behind the essentiality of suffering.

\textsuperscript{166}Postscript, p. 386.
Contra and Supra Rationem:
The Death and Resurrection of Reason

We are now prepared to return to that debate which we were considering before our excursus on suffering. We noted that there has been a rather extensive discussion over whether, for SK, the paradox involved a negation of reason altogether (contra rationem) or a transcendence of reason (supra rationem).

For example, J. Heywood Thomas argues that "amongst Kierkegaard scholars there is something of a consensus that the paradox is above reason".167 "[It] is thus supra rationem" (Thomas' emphasis).168 According to Thomas, for SK, Jesus Christ, as the paradox, "is that very fact which human thought cannot contain".169 But once the condition is given, there is an objective structure which is accessible to reason.170 The God-man is beyond reason but not contrary to reason.

Louis Pojman, on the other hand, argued that the whole purpose of the paradox was to overthrow reason. It is thus Contra-rationem. It served as a means whereby objectivity

168 Ibid, p. 216.
169 Ibid., p. 207.
is falsified and a way is made for subjectivity. To varying degrees, E. Geismer, K. Barth, and W. Barrett also advocate the contra rationem interpretation of SK. Jerry Gill, however, points out the weakness in both of the above positions. The problem with the contra rationem position is that it does not do justice to the pseudonymous authorship. Nor does it recognize the importance of indirect communication. And, as Thomas notes, there are many passages which seem to indicate a more positive relation between understanding and faith.

However, on the other hand, in speaking of Thomas' position, Gill states:

> While this reading is more sophisticated than the first (i.e. the contra rationem position), it has two serious difficulties attendant to it. One pertains to its tendency to "smooth over" the radical irrationalist tone of the philosophical writings. The full notions of the paradox and absurdity is not taken seriously. Another difficulty is that this interpretation leaves one with the impression that this more balanced posture is to be found in the texts in question, and strictly speaking it is not.

In conclusion, Gill argues that SK is "neither irrationalist nor suprarationalist in character." Gill then aligns

---

171 See Ch. 1.


173 Ibid., p. 38.

174 Ibid, p. 42. Note the reference to Thomas.

175 Ibid., p. 39.

176 Ibid., p. 41.
himself with, among others, Louis Mackey. He argues that SK’s position is "ironic in character." 177

The problem with Gill and Mackey, however, is that they also "smooth over" passages in SK’s writing which seem to go against their position. SK was not just a poet. He also referred to himself as a dialectician. And his My Point of View as an Author outlined the religious and dogmatic nature of his writing.

Thus instead of Gill’s "neither/nor" we should recognize that SK advocated both contra rationem and supra rationem. For the most part all Kierkegaard scholars have recognized the presence of both types of affirmations. The problem has been, however, that a way has not been found for reconciling the two. Thus one or another position has been taken, and a way is sought to "explain away" those passages which don’t support the given interpretation. If, however, careful attention is paid to SK’s discussion of act and suffering, then the way is made for the sought for reconciliation - not a Hegelian reconciliation, but rather a reconciliation in faith and act (or faith as act).

As we have already seen, for Johannes Climacus, "the essential expression for existential pathos, which is the pathos of action should be suffering." 178 And the suffering, which is here spoken of, is that of reason (the faculty

177Ibid, p. 42. Note the reference to Mackey.
178Postscript , p. 387.
whose pathos directs the humorist).\textsuperscript{179} Self-knowledge, as the end of reason, is renounced in favor of the absolute telos (the God-man) which is manifest as the negation of reason's claim to priority. And action, whose pathos is maximized subjectivity (existential pathos), by its very nature, likewise involves a negation of reason qua reason. This is because reason qua reason resides in possibility. And action involves a negation of possibility. Otherwise it would never move past immediacy and mediation.

By "action" here SK does not mean the "outward activity" which immediacy calls action.\textsuperscript{180} Nor does he mean thought's grasp of the outward activity, which mediation calls action. Rather, he means the "action in inwardness" that is concerned with "the relationship of the individual to himself before God."\textsuperscript{181} This is the "becoming" which involves the transition from possibility to actuality.

In this becoming the cross of reason is manifest. It is seen in the inability of reason to grasp the content of concern (ref. ch. 2 and the discussion of the "metaphysical

\textsuperscript{179}This is not the only suffering. In the Postscript SK develops suffering from its most shallow form (misfortune), to the essential suffering of act, on to guilt (which is at the level of will rather than just reason), and finally to the suffering of love which takes place in freedom. (pp. 386-493 and Training). Note that the deepest suffering (that of love) must involve each of the lower dimensions (Postscript, p. 493-494).

\textsuperscript{180}Postscript, p. 387.

\textsuperscript{181}Ibid, p. 388, 391.
paradox" which is seen in the equivocal uses of "being"). And it is also seen in the negation of possibility which must take place in any actualization of that possibility.

The manifestation of this cross and suffering of reason is what accounts for the contra rationem character of many of SK's affirmations. The cross means the death of reason. And SK does not back peddle on affirming that death. "Whoever after having been dead awakens to the same life was merely in a trance,"\textsuperscript{182} And thus not dead. Reason can never simply "awaken" since its death is real. It can never return as the philosopher's reason.

"But whoever being dead awakens to life in a new sphere, was and is and remains truly dead."\textsuperscript{183} Reason remains dead as the separate faculty of reason which characterized but an atomistic part of the self. But it is raised to new life in the sphere of maximal subjectivity. This is the existential pathos of act. In this new sphere reason is an aspect of the unitary whole of selfhood. It is the actuality which has been established in the actualization of possibility. And it is here that we find the supra rationem character of SK's position.\textsuperscript{184}

\textsuperscript{182}Ibid, p. 400.

\textsuperscript{183}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{184}Note again the parallel between reason that is sacrificed and established by the will in act, and Isaac who is sacrificed and established by Abraham in the act of obedience. SK even plays on the etymology of Isaac (meaning "laughter"). Abraham's willingness to sacrifice is the
The resurrection of reason can be viewed as twofold. First, it is raised in that act which established possibility as actuality. But second, it is also raised in the very transition which takes place in the actualization. Here reason rests in that Other (the God-man) whose presence was the condition of the condition.

Contemporaneity

We must continually keep in mind that the act to which SK refers is not just any act. Although much of what is said of the cross and resurrection of reason is applicable to act in general, SK distinguishes act in general from the act of faith, just as he distinguishes the moment from the fullness of time.

In order to fully appreciate SK’s understanding of the act of faith, we must consider maximal subjectivity not only by itself (as we have primarily done in the last section), suffering of inwardness, and his receiving back Isaac is the restoration of "laughter" by God. In Fear and Trembling SK explicitly discusses the way God makes possible that which was impossible for Abraham. If we continue to extend the parallel between Abraham and the will, and Isaac and reason, then the Abraham story can also be viewed as SK’s answer to the bondage of the will. The will (Abraham) seeks to establish a possibility (reason; Isaac) but finds that in terms of its own capacity it is impossible (bondage of the will; Rom. 7). But then God makes possible by Jesus Christ (the paradox) - i.e. "by virtue of the absurd" - that which was impossible (Rom. 8). Then, in the realm of faith, reason is again established by God (the absurd is no longer the absurd).
but also in its relation to the God-man whose Logos was the logic which stood as the condition of the condition.

In the introduction to this chapter, we noted that SK's view of truth was a function of three factors: the learner, the teacher, and the relation between them. Thus far we have developed individually each of the three factors. Summarizing: We first considered, by way of contrast with Socratic immanence, the possibility of a historical point of departure for learning the truth. The conditions of this possibility are what led to our appreciation of the three factors involved. In the section on Dogmatics we then posited the actuality of the possibility as the condition of a questioning into its possibility. This identified SK's discourse as the discourse of faith, i.e. as religious discourse. Next, we moved to a discussion of the teacher and showed the development of the concept. We moved from simply knowing the teacher as other (the unknown) to knowing the teacher as loving and then, by way of paradox, to knowing the teacher as the God-man. This then led to a deeper view of paradox.

185Note the similarity of structure to that of the Ontological Argument. In that argument one begins with the understanding one has of God (the being than which none greater can be conceived) and then shows that God's actuality is the condition of questioning into his possibility. (See Karl Barth, *Fides Quarens Intellectum* and Charles Hartschorne, *Anselm's Discovery*). In the same way, for SK, the presence of the God-man is the condition of questioning (the thought project). It is to this, which SK is drawing attention when he discusses the arguments for God's existence in CH III of Philosophical Fragments.
In an "interlude" we considered the nature of historical becoming. This consideration provided a transition from the historical God-man (the teacher) to a consideration of the learner. The transition was explicitly developed by way of an "existential dialectic," which was presented as the logic of the move to maximal subjectivity. Then, in terms of act, suffering, and the death and resurrection of reason, we considered the learner.

In all our discourse thus far we have not considered the three factors (teacher, learner, and relation) together—although throughout our discussion such a consideration was implicitly present. In this section we now seek to move to a singular asking of the truth question.

We are faced with a central problem in our attempt to present this "singular asking." For SK, to ask in a unitive way the question of truth (i.e. ask from the perspective of maximal subjectivity) is one thing, and to talk about the asking is another. The self transcends language. Any attempt to express the self's unitive asking by way of language, such as we do here, involves an attempt which must present a language which exhibits a recognition of its own limitations. Otherwise the asking will be falsified by way of its reduction to a discourse on asking.\(^{186}\)

\(^{186}\)In the last chapter we discussed the limitations of language for grasping reality. (pp. 102-109) And recently, we recapitulated that discussion in terms of the "sign" (notes 99, 100). Now we refer to the role of language not just in terms of "capturing" its object but also in terms of
Victor Frankel has presented a useful analogy for discussing the type of reduction that takes place when language seeks to express that which transcends its grasp.\textsuperscript{187} In what he calls a "law of dimensional anthropology" Frankel notes that when a higher dimensionality is presented in the sphere of a lower dimensionality, then a unitive content of concern may become paradoxically present in its reductive form \textsuperscript{188}. Consider the following figure:

When the cylinder is presented in a two dimensional sphere, then its unitary content can only be exhibited by way of a discursive discourse that juxtaposes seemingly contradictory assertions. From one 2D perspective a cylinder is a circle; from another, it is a square. Discursively, one must then

\hspace{1cm}

its referential function, which is intended in discourse. SK outlines the reduction of language in the context of his discussion of essential suffering: "The reality of the suffering is therefore not identical with the truth of its expression, although the real sufferer will always express himself truly. But it is not here a question of expression, because discourse itself, language being a more abstract medium than existence, is always to some extent abbreviated." (Postscript, p. 398, emphasis added.)


\textsuperscript{188}Ibid, p. 55.
say that to a two dimensional perspective, a cylinder is a square-circle. By way of atomistic parts, the whole Gestalt is specified.

But note that the Gestalt is not fully defined by the discursive specification. It is only characterized. For example, the following figure could likewise be called a square-circle from a 2D perspective:

And from the discourse alone ("square-circle") there is not enough information to distinguish the two.

This brings us to Frankel's second "law of dimensional anthropology." Consider the following illustration:

Here three different objects of concern are perceived as the same when they are reflected to a lower dimensional sphere.

Now, in the case of these three figures, the ambiguity could be eliminated by a discursive presentation of the figure. Figure A would be a square-circle; B a triangular-circle; C a round-circle (or a circular-circle). In the discursive presentation one would rotate perspective. From

189 Ibid.
the perspective of plane XZ they are all "circle." But from
the plane ZY the distinguishing characteristics of each
figure can be ascertained. Thus, in the discursive knowing,
one shifts from perspective to perspective in one's grasp of
the object of concern.

Using this dimensional model as a heuristic, we can now
return to our discussion of the "singular asking" into the
truth question. The language of textuality, which we use
here in our discourse, is like a lower dimensional plane.
When the "singular asking" is expressed, it must then be
broken down and presented discursively. If we view the
atomistic parts united in the discursive presentation as
"steps" which can be univocally followed, and if we confuse
the sequencing of the presentation with the movement of
time, then the "singular asking" will be falsified.

Instead there should be indicators in the textual
discourse that identify the inadequacy and thus the
limitation of the discursive development. These then will
be checks, built into the language, which falsify any
attempt to assume that the characterization is a univocal
definition.

It is by contradictory assertions that such a check is
built into the presentation. For example, consider again
SK's discussion of "being" when he talks of "coming into
existence."\textsuperscript{190} Possibility is characterized as that being

\textsuperscript{190}Philosophical Fragments, Interlude.
which is yet non-being. If one views the statement in univocal terms then it can only be contradiction. But if one recognizes that the word "being" necessarily has a twofold meaning, due to the twofold perspective from which language is developed (sense and reference), then the paradoxical assertion has the quality of a qualifying communication.\textsuperscript{191} It is much like saying "I put my money in a bank, but it is not on the side of a river." Recognizing that "bank" can mean the place in which money is put, and also the side of a river (river bank), one eliminates an equivocal meaning via the paradoxical expression; e.g. "I put my money in the bank but it is not in a bank." In the

\textsuperscript{191}A development of this understanding of ambiguity in language has the potential of strongly answering positivist criticism of non-univocal expression. For example, the contradictory nature of the predication of being is exhibited in Bertrand Russell's discussion of the problems surrounding the theory of descriptions [Bertrand Russell, \textit{A History of Western Philosophy} (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), p. 831.] In positivism, in order to avoid contradiction (asserting and denying existence of the same thing), one had to conclude that one cannot say "Scott exists." But this, of course, goes against a common sense use of the word "exist," and even against the etymology ("to stand out"). Thus existentialists took over the word and gave it a very different meaning, saying that it can only be used of people and that rocks, etc. do not really exist. For them "Scott exists" is the only truly legitimate use of the word. (Macquarrie sees SK as using "existence" in the narrow sense to only apply in the case of people (\textit{Existentialism}, p. 65) But SK shows this false in \textit{Philosophical Fragments}, p. 40. There the existence of a stone, etc., is discussed.) The problem in both cases (with the Positivists and the Existentialists) is that "existence was by no means a univocal expression." (Macquarrie, p. 62). SK's discussion, when developed, can enable scholarship to distinguish the use of "being" by way of a distinction of the perspective of selfhood (immediacy, mediation, or faith).
case of the "bank" the paradoxical expression is normally unnecessary, because the difference between equivocal uses of the word does not transcend the expressive capacity of language. But this is not the case with the difference in the meanings of "being."

Recognizing paradox as a way by which the limitation of discursive language is acknowledged from the perspective of that language itself, we can now move on to a characterization of the singular asking of the truth question. This will serve as a summary of this chapter.

Let us begin by noting the dogmatic presupposition of SK's thought project. The presence of the God-man is the condition of the discourse. But, according to SK, the God-man could not be directly present. If he was, freedom would be violated. Thus the God-man is initially given in a way that he can be grasped immanently; i.e. he is given in a way that his presence does not overpower the learner.

But since immanence cannot grasp the God-man, the content which is directly communicated can only be a paradox. This paradox can then be responded to in two ways: One can reject it as absurd (offence) or one can accept it. If it is accepted, then the paradox serves as a logic by

---

192 Here we mention the "religious" reason why the God-Man cannot be directly present. (See pp. 166-171) But we could also develop our discussion in terms of the "metaphysical" reason. This is the traditional approach to the problem in Kierkegaardian scholarship, but it does not allow for the greatest appreciation of SK's discourse (religious and not philosophical).
which false positions are overthrown and one is led to a leap into the perspective which is appropriate to viewing the truth (maximal subjectivity).

But the following "contradiction" confronts the reader: As the dogmatic presupposition, the God-man's presence was required. But, in order to safeguard freedom, that same presence was denied. How can it be both present and absent? How can it be the condition of the condition as well as the truth of which maximal subjectivity is the condition of knowing?

SK's argument is summarized as follows: directly present one finds the paradox which prompts the transition. But when one follows the logic of the paradox, then one discovers that that paradox is simply the immediate actuality (first immediacy) of the concretely existing God-man. When one arrives at the perspective of maximal subjectivity, which is the act of existential pathos, then there is a second immediacy in which God's presence is discerned. And it is discerned not in the essence of a

193 The dialectic of this contradiction is carefully developed by SK in Training in Christianity.

194 SK develops this theme in terms of the relation between the immediate contemporary of the historical Jesus and the secondary follower. There the "report" of the God-man is paralleled with the first immediacy of the immediate contemporary. What is directly given, however, is "the sign of contradiction" which prompts the double reflection that leads to the second immediacy of faith. See Philosophical Fragments, pp 55-71; 86-88; 89-110; and Training pp. 124-127.

195 See Fear and Trembling, p. 82.
possibility, but rather in the very "coming to be" of act. Normally "presence" is the otherness of actuality—that actuality which, as reality, is juxtaposed with the ideality of possibility. Now, however, in the second immediacy, presence is to the relation between possibility and actuality, and reality is perceived as that which encompasses all.

From this "second immediacy" the atomism which was necessitated by the division between ideality and reality is overcome, and the self can be itself in unity rather than in the discursive alternation of objective and subjective attitudes.

Now one can appreciate SK's meaning when he speaks of existential pathos as the self's relating of itself to itself before God. The self-self relation is the unity of act, and its status "before God" involves its contemporaneity to God (the God-man as the "coming to be", or existence, of God; i.e. essence is existence). God is the "other" to whom the self relates in a concretely present "communicating." This communication is the freedom of

196 "Every time the believer makes this fact the object of faith, makes it historical for himself, he repeats the dialectical qualifications of coming into existence." Philosophical Fragments, p. 88.

197 Postscript, p. 391; Sickens Unto Death, p. 13.

198 On freedom as "communicating" and the demonic (unfreedom) as "inclosing reserve," see The Concept of Anxiety, pp. 123-136. Note the contrast: "In the demonic ... Freedom is posited as unfreedom, because freedom is
faith.

In summary: the paradox is directly communicated.\textsuperscript{199} Once it is "taken in" and allowed to direct subjectivity, then a transformation is effected which brings one to the living God who is there.\textsuperscript{200} But each of the moments in the "journey to selfhood" are not sequentially followed. They

lost. ... The demonic is unfreedom that wants to close itself off ... The demonic inclosing reserve ... and the unfreely disclosed." (p. 123). "The demonic does not close itself up with something, but closes itself within itself, and in this lies what is profound about existence, precisely that unfreedom makes itself a prisoner. Freedom is always communicating ... Unfreedom becomes more and more inclosed and does not want communication. ... Inclosing reserve is precisely muteness. Language, the word, is precisely what saves, what saves the individual from the empty abstraction of inclosing reserve." (p.124) Note the positive role given to language here. In communicating language, still abstract, does not attempt to grasp all. Rather it intends to give the self to another. It cannot fully give the self, because of its limitations, but in the presence of the other (contemporaneity) the self can give itself in the immediacy of its communicating. Thus language is not separated from the one who is speaking. This is why the one who receives the report of the God-man (the language) must receive it in contemporaneity with the living God who is speaking." Just as the historical becomes the occasion for the contemporary to become a follower - by receiving the condition, please note, from the god himself (for otherwise we speak Socratically) - So the report of the contemporaries becomes the occasion for everyone coming later to become a follower -by receiving the condition, please note, from God himself." (Philosophical Fragments, p.100; see also p. 69.). The "monologue" of Hegel's use of language is distinguished from the dialogue of faith. (Concept of Anxiety, p. 128).

\textsuperscript{199}Note: The paradox not the God-man is directly communicated. The God-man is given directly not as God-man but as paradox. Then the logic of the paradox, if accepted, leads one to the second immediacy in which one finds a contemporaneity with the concretely present God-man.

\textsuperscript{200}"Look, there he stands - the god. Where? There. Can you not see him?" (Philosophical Fragments, p. 32)
are simply a discursive presentation of that single happening (the asking of the "single individual") which occurs in the "fullness of time."

"In the fullness of time, spirit is revealed to spirit through the contemporary encounter between God and self brought about when the individual overleaps spiritless Christendom to meet the God-man face to face...[there] contraries are brought together in the passion of free resolution."\(^{201}\)

The Final Judgment

We are now in a position to return to Pojman's theses and evaluate whether he has succeeded in showing that SK is a philosopher. In our second chapter we considered, via a contrast of the priority of reason vs. the priority of will, whether it was appropriate to view reason and philosophical argumentation as the basis upon which the will should be moved. We concluded that, for SK, reason was inadequate as a basis because it could not grasp several dimensions of truth. Thus it was inappropriate to view objectivity as the necessary basis of subjectivity. The latter was broader than the former.

There was, however, more to Pojman's thesis than that which we evaluated in the second chapter. His additional assertions can be summarized as follows:

1. For SK, the truth is a historical proposition; namely,

\(^{201}\)Journeys to Selfhood, p. 139.
God became man. 202

2. In the act of believing, the mind assents to a proposition, making it "properly basic" in its foundational system. 203

3. This view of belief is a "volitionalism" which does not recognize that belief is acquired passively, as something which happens to us, rather than actively, as something we will. 204

4. For SK, the essential paradox is the proposition on the God-man. Its purpose is to generate maximal subjectivity, which is a means to the highest truth. It is thus a means to the means. 205

5. Because the paradox is a means, one should not care whether or not it can be verified. Thus for SK, objective inquiry is inappropriate because it misses the intent of the paradox. Historical inquiry is both unnecessary and undesirable. 206

6. SK’s argument fails, however, because, in addition to assuming an untenable volitionalism, its premise allows for any paradox that is absurd (e.g. God became a rattlesnake). It thus leads to a reductio ad absurdum

202Pojman, pp. 57,105,136.
204Ibid, p. 103-117.
205Ibid, pp.73-75.
206Ibid, pp. 35-47.
of the Christian faith (i.e. one denies the God-man once one has accepted him, in order to intensify the absurdity). But this is "bad psychology" because paradox is not needed for the generation of maximal passion.207

Right at the beginning we see the weakness of Pojman's argument. For SK truth is not a proposition. In fact, it cannot even be expressed in language. And this fact accounts for the difficulty commentators have had in ascertaining SK's meaning.

For SK truth has a threefold meaning:

1. Truth is God himself, the teacher who is one with the teaching.208

2. Truth is subjectivity; it is the truth of man, created in the image of God. It is given to man as the truth of himself in that moment which is the fullness of time.209

3. Truth is the relation between God and man. It is that freedom which is the "communicating" that takes place in the absolute relation to the Absolute, and which

208Philosophical Fragments, p. 55.
209This motif is central in both the Postscript and Training in Christianity.
characterizes that very relation.\textsuperscript{210} The three meanings are given from the three perspectives of selfhood:

1. Immediacy, which grasps being as \textit{reference}, and truth as a correspondence to actuality.

2. Mediation, which grasps meaning as \textit{sense}, and truth as the coherence of ideality.

3. Act, which grasps being as \textit{event} (becoming), and truth as the relation between ideality (possibility) and

\textsuperscript{210} This relation is event, and thus cannot be expressed in a language which is abstracted from the context of contemporaneity. Because of the inability to express the relation in positive terms, it is often characterized by way of the via negativa. Then the otherness of the other from the other (the over-and-againstness of the communicating) is expressed as "the infinite qualitative difference between God and man" or "the absolute difference between God and man." (Postscript, p. 195) But, as Robert Roberts notes in his critique of Alastair Hannay, this should not be interpreted as a univocal expression. It is not spoken by a logical positivist. Rather, one should see it as a religious expression highlighting the "absolute relation to the Absolute" (ref. Fear and Trembling); i.e. "rather than read Kierkegaard in the light of the philosophical tradition, a more fruitful strategy for interpreting him might be to re-interpret the philosophical vocabulary in terms of the Christian tradition" (Robert C. Roberts, "A Critique of Alastair Hannay’s Interpretation of the" Philosophical Fragments.") Then one can take seriously SK’s own commentary, when he says that the "absolute difference" refers to man as "a particular existing being ... while God is infinite and eternal." And how the infinite and eternal can be a particular which relates to the particular man (absolute relation to the Absolute) is the absolute paradox in relation to which "the only understanding possible is that it cannot be understood." (Postscript, p. 195) When we recognize the religious character of SK’s discourse, then accusations such as Louis Mackey, which argue that SK’s Christology is totally unorthodox (A Kind of Poet, p. 242), are seen to be unfounded. Rather, with Thomas, we should see SK in the line of Athanasius and Augustine (Thomas, p. 199)
actuality.

But these three are one, in the second immediacy of faith. There one is contemporary with the God-man.

Thus belief is not simply an assent to a proposition which is made "properly basic." It is an act of the whole person, in the fullness of that person’s freedom. Pojman completely misses the mark when he criticizes SK for his "volitionalism." SK was not advocating an arbitrary acceptance of a proposition, simply because it is absurd. He was not grounding belief in a liberum arbitrium.

As we have seen, SK grounded faith in the dogmatic presupposition of the concretely present and existing God-man. This was even the condition of posing that "thought project" which is central to both Philosophical Fragments and the Postscript (the two works which are given priority in Pojman’s argument). Thus SK would not disagree when Pojman argues that faith is something that happens to someone. But it is not just passive. If it was then it would not involve the whole person, because that person is a

---

211 The implications of SK’s category "the Single Individual" (The unity of the three perspectives of selfhood) cannot be explored here. But e.g. an overview of Paul Ricoeur’s attempt to bring together reference, sense, and event (Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning (Fort Worth: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976)) shows how extensive those implications may be. SK’s contribution to hermeneutics has yet to be documented; even, yet to be discovered. Once it is outlined, however, the contribution may prove to be as powerful (or more so) than that of Schleiermacher, after he was brought to light by Dilthey.
unity of both possibility and necessity. And that would mean that it could not be the truth of that person.

Thus, for SK, belief involves both the active and the passive; it is both willed freely and it happens to one. SK will even go so far as to say that God does all (grace) yet man does something (otherwise it would not be in freedom that man comes to God).\textsuperscript{212} Reason cannot penetrate this paradoxical formulation of the truth. But that simply shows the inadequacy of reason. The paradox is rooted in a threefold transcendence of reason. Namely:

1. The \textit{presence} of actuality which distinguishes it from ideality
2. The \textit{will}, which grasps both reason and the presence of actuality.
3. The \textit{God-man}, who grasps the will.

Since reason, cannot appreciate the distinctions of transcendence, it must simply give up itself before the paradox.

What Pojman advocates - namely, that belief must be passive only, or it is immoral\textsuperscript{213} - would be termed by SK the "despair of necessity."\textsuperscript{214} It fails to do justice to the multi-dimensionality of selfhood. It does not recognize the role which possibility is to play, nor does it

\textsuperscript{212}Hong Journal, vol. 2, entry 1469.

\textsuperscript{213}Pojman, pp. 103 - 107.

\textsuperscript{214}Sickens Unto Death, pp. 37-42.
acknowledge the presence of the God-man.

When we recognize that it is with the concrete God-man and not the "proposition" that SK is concerned, then Pojman's view on the purpose of truth becomes untenable. Pojman says the purpose of truth is to generate maximal passion by contradicting reason. And here "passion" and reason are viewed as mutually exclusive, because Pojman does not identify reason as a passion (as does SK). Thus, for Pojman, the role of truth is to negate one faculty of the self (reason) so that another, different faculty can direct selfhood. Thus truth is made a means to an end.

Because Pojman has simply identified the paradox, as truth, with means, he is not able to appreciate the relation between maximal subjectivity and the "highest truth." This brought him to the assertion that there are three contradictory epistemologies corresponding to three views on the relation between maximal subjectivity and highest truth.215

But for SK that truth which led to maximal subjectivity is not other from the "highest truth" which is both the end and fulfillment of maximal subjectivity.216 Pojman's

215Pojman, Ch. 3.

216The "highest truth," which is the ultimate end, stands as a paradox to a false position (e.g. the philosopher's position). From that false position's perspective the means is other from the end because one does not yet stand in the unitive perspective of the single individual. Instead one knows in the discursive movement which unites the perspectives of alternative viewpoints.
problem was that he stayed within a discursive evaluation which separated the condition (or ground) of maximal subjectivity from the telos (end or conclusion) of that very subjectivity. For SK, however, the God-man, who is the truth (John 14:6), is never just a means to an end. He is the end himself.

Pojman falls into his misunderstanding because he, in accord with an older faculty anthropology, roots both knowledge and act in a discursive movement which allows objectivity to precede subjectivity. He relates the concept of truth to the cognitive dimension of man, and thinks that

From that false position one could divide means and end so that it would seem that "once faith takes you to the point of maximal passion, it ceases to function as faith. What results is a state (an achievement) of maximal passion which must be differentiated from the activity (faith) that brought one there." (Pojman, p.141). But from the true perspective (that of faith) one recognizes that in the good there is "a unity of state and transition." (Concept of Anxiety, p. 113). The paradox (means), which brought one to the God-man, is none other than the incognito of the God-man himself. (Training, pp. 127-132.) F. Russell Sullivan, Jr. gives a much more profound discussion of the relation between means and end, but he still does not sufficiently distinguish the difference between true and false perspective. While it is, in a sense, legitimate to say that "aesthetic individuals (a false perspective) can approach faith no other way than as viewing it as a means to remedy that need," it would be illegitimate to conclude that it is appropriate to view faith and paradox (the content) as merely a means. (F. Russell Sullivan, Jr., Faith and Reason in Kierkegaard (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, Inc. 1978), p. 96.) It is necessary that the false position view it as such. But in the leap (which cannot be explained in terms of necessary reasons) one moves to the truth of subjectivity, which attains to the unity of state and transition. This state is none other than the very "coming into existence" of the God-man. (Philosophical Fragments, p. 88.)
SK seeks to negate that dimension via his contrast between objectivity and subjectivity. Thus Pojman thinks SK places an "emphasis on the good over the true." 217

But SK does not contrast the good and the true. From the highest perspective (faith) one recognizes that the two are one in the God-man. Paradox is thus not merely a means to an end. It rather is the expression for the end, as perceived by an individual who stands within the philosophical position (which is, for SK, an inadequate position for appreciating the truth).

In the philosophical perspective one attempts to grasp the truth by reason. But since the truth involves transcendence, reason grasps the truth as that which contradicts immanence (as well as affirming it, as a dimension of itself). This contradiction is one form of the paradox’s manifestation. But it is not simply a statement of reason’s inadequacy – as if reason was wholly eliminated in favor of mutually exclusive "passions." Since the truth concerns the transition which takes place in freedom, the paradox seeks to negate reason so as to force the double reflection, which allows subjectivity the second immediacy.

This negation of reason corresponds in part to the negation of possibility which occurs in the transition from possibility to actuality. It is the "suffering" which characterizes all "coming into existence." This suffering,

---

217 Pojman, p. 7.
however, does not imply simply an "irrationalism" or "subjectivism" (the contra rationem position). As we noted earlier, belief does not involve the absolute negation of knowledge. Rather, it involves the negation of doubt. Thus there is a sense in which faith establishes reason, just as there is a sense in which actualization establishes possibility. But possibility is not established as possibility. It is established as actuality. And reason is not established as reason. It is established as action. And this action corresponds to the transition (the leap) of "coming into existence." Since faith is the expression for the leap which is "in truth" (i.e. takes place in the second immediacy) we can say that faith is both the establishment and negation of reason.

Alastair McKinnon, in speaking of the passages that indicate the "contra-rationem" position, argues that "such passages clearly suggest that SK understands that real belief involves the revision of our conceptions and that the many expressions of "irrationalism" found in the pseudonymous works are to be read as reflecting his assessment of the needs of his time." (Alastair McKinnon, "Irrational" in Bibliotheca Kierkegaardiana Edenda Curaverunt vol. 3. Concepts and Alternatives in Kierkegaard (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Boghandel, 1980), p. 127.) But this does not sufficiently recognize the validity in the "charge" of irrationalism (the contra-rationem position). However, one should also recognize the establishment of reason in act. McKinnon is thus right in viewing the "irrational" as SK's corrective on his time; i.e. as a condemnation of the falsity of Hegelianism. To maintain a proper balance we must thus pay attention to both the "not" and the "simply" in the proposition: SK does not simply imply an irrationalism. We are safe, however, if we reject "subjectivism" categorically. (Lindstrom, p. 233.)

See Johannes Climacus, pp. 166-170.
The discourse appropriate to this ambiguous affirmation and denial of reason can thus not be that discourse which is directed by reason. Philosophy is inappropriate. Rather, the appropriate discourse is the one that is guided by a contemporaneity with the fundamental content of faith, which is the God-man who is the truth. This is dogmatics.

From the dogmatic perspective one sees the utter bankruptcy of Pojman’s affirmation of objective historiography. Pojman wants to argue that one disproves that Jesus is the God-man if one can "prove" that he does not exist or that he was evil. Further, he demands that "morally," one must objectively evaluate the truth. Only after it is "verified" can one legitimately move the will. Thus, according to Pojman, objectivity and not paradox is needed for maximal subjectivity.

But SK would respond by asking: How could one show that Jesus did not exist or that his acts were evil? For SK, the individual who is in need of the Moment is untruth. He thus does not possess the criteria needed for an evaluation.

This brings us to the heart of SK’s rejection of the objective attitude. It is in the Postscript that SK states that "the objective problem consists of an inquiry into the

---

220 Pojman, pp. 44-45.
221 Ibid, pp. 103 -117.
222 Ibid, p. 125.
truth of Christianity."\textsuperscript{223} But his rejection of the attitude must be read in the light of what he has said in \textit{Phil. Frag.}, for the \textit{Postscript} is just that, a postscript to the \textit{Fragments} (even though it is over 5 times longer). \textsuperscript{224}

Only on Socratic assumptions could the objective attitude be maintained. In order to test that truth - which is the truth of one's self; namely, subjectivity - one would need to either already possess the truth (and then judge the revealed truth to see if it conforms to the possessed truth), or one would need to possess the condition (or capacity) for receiving the truth (and then the truth would be apprehended as that which fulfills the condition one has present within one's self). But the whole point of SK's "thought project", which he later identified with Christianity,\textsuperscript{225} is that the learner was neither the truth nor had the condition to learn the truth. In fact, the learner was untruth in such a way that the condition was due to one's willful rejection of the truth.\textsuperscript{226} The learner is moving away from the truth.

\textsuperscript{223}Postscript, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{224}See Thomas, p. 208 on the importance of reading the Postscript in continuity with Philosophical Fragments.

\textsuperscript{225}Postscript, p. 18: "the historical costume (of the thought project) is Christianity."

\textsuperscript{226}Philosophical Fragments, p. 15. SK develops the conditions of this position (i.e. sin) in The Concept of Anxiety and the Sickens Unto Death.
Thus in order to objectively inquire into the truth of Christianity, one would need, by the very attitude, to deny the truth of Christianity. One would need to assume that one is not untruth; that one can in fact judge the truth. Even further, since the objective attitude is the philosopher's position, one would judge the truth on the basis of reason. And since reason demands immanence, if the truth is such that it cannot be wholly immanent while yet being itself, then reason will view the truth as contradiction ("paradox") and negate it. Since, for SK, the truth is necessarily transcendent, approaching the truth via the objective attitude involves an a priori rejection of the truth.

And SK has in fact one further objection. Since the truth is God himself, any attitude which seeks to judge the truth, is an attitude which judges God. One demands that God conform to one's own image, and because he does not, one finds God wanting and rejects him. For Kierkegaard, this attitude is what led to the crucifixion of Jesus. Thus to maintain the objective attitude is to participate in the trial of Jesus. And SK argues that Jesus did not have a fair trial. Rather, he was unjustly condemned.227

Instead, one should seek to submit oneself to God's

227 In being a faithful witness to Christ, the believer will likewise be condemned. The world is offended. Soren Kierkegaard, Attack on Christendom (tr.) Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 279.
judgment. One should seek for the way in which one is to relate oneself to God, given that one is the way God says one is. This is what SK calls the "subjective problem." It concerns the relation of the individual to Christianity, rather than the relation of Christianity to the individual. In the objective attitude the individual is the primary term. Whereas in the subjective attitude, Christianity (as the way, which is Jesus Christ) is the primary term (John 14:6).

In Conclusion: "Away from speculation!"  

228 Postscript, p. 20.

229 Point of View, p. 74.
"What, exactly, have the errors of exegesis and philosophy done in order to confuse Christianity, and how have they confused Christianity? Quite briefly and categorically, they have simply forced back the sphere of paradox-religion into the sphere of aesthetics...If the sphere of paradox-religion is abolished, or explained away in aesthetics, an apostle becomes neither more nor less than a genius, and then - good night, Christianity! Esprit and the spirit, revelation and originality, a call from God and genius, all end by meaning more or less the same thing."¹

Genius or Apostle?

Was Kierkegaard a genius or an apostle? Are his thoughts the expression of a penetrating originality which, perhaps more than a century ahead of its time, is only today beginning to be assimilated?² Or is his thought and life the manifestation of an unassimilatable paradox, which is grounded in the incommensurability of God and man?³

Kierkegaard says he speaks without the authority of an apostle,⁴ but yet he sees his life as an offering for others, and views the process of his own education as a


²I.e. genius. Ibid, p. 92.

³I.e. apostle. Ibid, p. 93.

⁴My Point of View as an Author, p. 75.
message, bearing witness to the truth of Christianity.\(^5\) Like the apostle he is "sent into the town with a letter,"\(^6\) but, unlike the apostle, he has much to do with the content, because the content is the expression of his own "becoming a Christian." The letter is his self. Kierkegaard believed that the corpus of his authorship, which explained the Providential guidance by which he was "educated" to the faith, was God's education of Christendom. Kierkegaard's life was thus the message. But, of course, it was not "message" in the sense in which Christ was. Jesus Christ was the Truth. SK's life, on the other hand, was untruth, which, by the hand of truth, was brought to the Truth. In this case Kierkegaard's own existence was like a tutor, which helps bring one to Christ.

In considering SK's life, the reader is allowed to listen in upon the process by which God educates him and brings him to faith. There one can see the learner (SK), the relation, and, indirectly, the teacher. But if one is not simply "objectively" concerned with the life of SK; if one comes to a study of his person with a view to one's own task of existing; then one must turn from looking at Kierkegaard's education to looking toward the Educator. One must come to the teacher as a pupil and not simply as a

\(^5\)Ibid.

\(^6\)Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle, p. 106.
judge who determines whether the educational process is properly conducted. This involves a shift from considering SK as the content of concern, to considering SK's content of concern.

One finds here a parallel between law, reason, and the life of Kierkegaard (or any "Christian," who is truly a Christian). As Paul outlines in Galatians, the law is a tutor, which is to bring one to Christ. Its purpose is to exhibit the sinfulness of the sinner and, thereby, to bring one past the law to grace. In the law's rigorous demand, it negates itself. Likewise, as Hamann oft illustrated, reason is to be a tutor. It demands ideality in a radical way (ref. Socrates), but this is to exhibit the impotence of reason. Only then does one move to that freedom which is found in grace. As with the Law, so also reason falsifies itself so that one may fix one's eyes on that One Concern that is worthy of the united will.

---

7Galatians 3:24.

8Stephen N. Dunning, "Kierkegaard's 'Hegelian' Response to Hamann," Thought vol. 55 no. 218 (Sept. 1980), pp. 259-270. Note esp. pp. 266-267: "the analogy between a Pauline understanding of the Law and the reason of the enlightenment is a constant theme in Hamann's writing. Kierkegaard has taken this idea over from Hamann, developed it into a philosophical thesis, and then criticized Hamann for failing to develop it in the same way." How "philosophical" SK's development truly is, is open for debate. SK's presentation is arguably more religious than philosophical; Paul himself parallels reason and Law in Romans 2. But Dunning is clearly on target in noting the importance of the parallel between reason and Law in both Hamann and SK. As to the appreciation SK has of the role of reason - this depends on SK's view of the "third use of the Law."
In the same way, Kierkegaard saw his own life as a demand. In attempting to understand that passion, which motivated his actions; in attempting to appreciate the providential mode of SK's education; in seeking to find the unity which ties together the various pseudonyms and discourses; the reader is confronted with an unfulfillable task - so long as he concentrates on SK and not on SK's object of concern. To this extent one must agree with Henning Fenger when he argues that Kierkegaard sought to falsify his own life. However, the falsification is not the final word. It must be understood analogous to that of Law and Reason. Law is fulfilled in Christ, reason in faith, and, one finds the unity of SK's writing, by looking to his content of concern; namely, the God-man.

This brings us to our first, and principle suggestion for Kierkegaardian scholarship. Namely, Kierkegaard can best be understood by approaching his writings with the intent to better understand the content of Christian faith. As a symbol seeks to bring one to the truth in which it participates, so SK seeks to bring one not to himself but to the God-man. He seeks to negate himself so that the learner may stand alone before the truth which both questions and answers the very being of that learner. But, lest we be accused of too highly exalting SK or too greatly negating

---

his own value as a person, let us return to our initial question: Is SK a genius or an apostle? In order to answer this we must consider the nature of both.

The genius is one who does not have "decisive authority."\textsuperscript{10} His doctrine must be submitted to criticism and judgment of men. "A genius may be a century ahead of his time, and therefore appear to be a paradox, but ultimately the race will assimilate what was once a paradox in such a way that it is no longer a paradox."\textsuperscript{11} In other words, the paradox of genius is due to an otherness that can eventually be overcome by the categories of immanence. It is an assimilatable otherness.\textsuperscript{12} The genius thus deals with an "immanent teleology":

"It develops itself, and while developing itself this self-development projects itself as its work. ... Genius lives in itself; and, humorously, might live withdrawn and self-satisfied, without for that reason taking its gifts in vain, so long as it develops itself earnestly and industriously, following its own genius, regardless of whether others profit by it or not."\textsuperscript{13}

It is both modest and proud. Like the nightingale, it is modest in that it does not require anyone to listen. But it is proud in that it does not care.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{10}Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle, p. 94.
\textsuperscript{11}Ibid, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid, p. 97-98.
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid, p. 107.
\textsuperscript{14}Ibid.
On the other hand, the word of the Apostle is rooted in an authority which is "the other;"\textsuperscript{15} i.e. that transcendence which cannot be overcome by the teleological movement of immanence. This authority is rooted in God and it exhibits the "eternal, essential, qualitative difference which cannot, at risk of presumption, be allowed to disappear in the blasphemous thought that, though certainly different in the transitory movement of time ... the difference will, in eternity, vanish in an essential identity."\textsuperscript{16}

Here the decisive thing is not what is said but who said it.\textsuperscript{17} But the "who" of importance is ultimately not the person of the apostle but the God who sends him. For "the doctrine communicated to him is not a task which he is given to ponder over, it is not given him for his own sake. ... Just as a man, sent into the town with a letter, has nothing to do with its contents, but has only to deliver it."\textsuperscript{18}

So the apostle is one who is "sent" "in order to enlighten men or in order to help them along the right road."\textsuperscript{19}

Now, as we look at the life and writing of SK, we find that he was both a genius and an apostle. He was inclosed in himself and, like the Nightingale, was both modest and proud in his attempt to work out those ideas which gripped

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid, pp. 97.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid, pp. 98-99.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid, p. 96.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid, p. 105-106

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid, p. 108
his person. Like the genius, SK’s model is the poet, in that he was only concerned with his own production.²⁰ He wrote not for others, but for himself.²¹

But he also became increasingly concerned with bringing others to the Christian faith until, at the end of his life, he felt himself to be called, in prophetic manner, to speak directly to the people of his day; calling them away from speculation and poetry toward becoming a Christian. Here he was "sent" in his "attack upon Christendom."²²

Thus in the movement of his life we see a transition from the paradox of genius to the paradox of the apostle. Recapitulating: in his early life, SK was concerned with his relation to himself. He indirectly communicated as one having no authority. And the move away from speculation and the poetic was expressed in that poetic production whereby SK himself was educated by Providence. But SK gradually moved to a rejection of indirect communication until, at the end of his life, he no longer focused himself on his own production.²³ Rather, he turned to the people of his day, and in a direct call cried out "away from speculation!"

²⁰On the relation between genius and poet see Ibid.

²¹I.e. this was his mode of self education. See Point of View, p. 75.


²³On SK’s move away from indirect communication see Lowrie’s introduction to Training in Christianity.
"Away from the poetic!"

To the degree that the paradox is that of genius, SK’s writing is assimilatable, and scholarship should rightly focus its intent upon overcoming the otherness (alien nature) of that writing. This will be the appropriate attitude to the pseudonymous productions. But to the degree that SK’s words were rooted in the Authority of God, to that same degree the words cannot be judged. They must simply be heard as a call to action. How to maintain an appropriate attitude to the paradoxical in SK’s writing is thus one of the key issues which confronts Kierkegaardian scholarship. It is not easy to distinguish the paradox of genius from that of faith. To be trained in proper discernment, is to be trained in Christianity. And SK sought to show just how difficult a task that is.

Dogmatics, Speculation, and the Poetic

Although ultimately one cannot know Kierkegaard as Kierkegaard apart from knowing the content of his concern; penultimately, one can distinguish between a Kierkegaardian scholarship which focuses on SK with the intent of knowing SK, and a Kierkegaardian scholarship which focuses with the intent of knowing SK’s content of concern. Here we shall focus on understanding SK as SK. But before we do, it will be helpful to consider the relation between the
presupposition(s) of dogmatics, and the twofold "away from...", which we outlined in the introduction of our essay.

The second chapter of this essay sought to falsify the objective attitude by showing that reason, the faculty of objectivity, was insufficient for grasping the full dimensionality of selfhood. But we ended that chapter by stating that this was not yet the strongest critique of objectivity.

Then, in the third chapter, we developed the implications of the dogmatic presupposition of the God-man. These implications were exposited by way of a "thought project" which asked about Christianity in categories of reflection. The "thought project" was viewed as an answer to the ignorance of reason that was posited in the second chapter; namely, one found that the truth which could not be obtained because of reason's inadequacy, was now made available by way of a teacher that gave the truth in a historically decisive moment.

At the end of the third chapter we came to that criticism of objectivity which is for SK the most decisive. Objectivity was seen as the attitude which refused to submit to God. It thus expressed a rebelliousness in which one seeks to assert one's own untruth as a judgment against
This involved not just ignorance but rather a willful defiance. It was sin.

For SK "sin" is a much deeper qualification of evil than "ignorance." Thus the answer to sin must be much deeper than the answer to ignorance. Concomitant with the two qualifications of evil, there are likewise two qualifications of the existing individual. There is the individual who perceives the fundamental evil of one's life as ignorance. That person's existence is qualified as a search for truth - Truth being the answer to ignorance; namely, knowledge. And there is the individual whose evil is sin. That person's existence is likewise qualified as a search for truth - but Truth here is the answer to sin; namely, atonement.

In our essay we have considered that mode of existence, which is qualified by ignorance and seeks knowledge. We followed the death and resurrection of reason, and saw how, in the dogmatic presupposition of the God-man, the condition is given for self-fulfillment. But we have not fully appreciated the nature of that fulfillment, because we have not developed it as an answer to the deeper evil of existence; namely, sin. Only at the end of our essay - at the very limit of our discussion - did we move to a mention

---

24Note the parallel between this and the act of SK's own father. See this essay, p. 247-248.

25Sickness Unto Death, pp. 87-96.
of the deeper qualification. It was, however, just a mention. And it is not yet clear what sin is.

David Swenson argues that

"The whole voluminous Kierkegaardian literature bears a more of less direct relation to the problem of sin, which Kierkegaard regards as central for every religious view of life, and as the starting point for the Christian Consciousness.

The consciousness of sin is the most concrete expression of the subjective self, its most intimate apprehension and evaluation of itself. It is the deepest self-consciousness of which the human mind is capable."26

And Herman Diem notes that

"Kierkegaard takes the field against Hegel within the realm of logic and demonstrates that movement, the process of becoming, cannot be effected in that realm. ... This argument is however only preliminary. It remains in force, but for Kierkegaard it does not touch upon the crucial point ... because he came to recognize more and more clearly that the problem of the transition from non being to being is the problem of sin."27

With these two quotes, however, we are confronted with a significant difficulty. We have identified the God-man as the fundamental starting point. This was the dogmatic presupposition. But Swenson and Diem point to "the consciousness of sin" as "the starting point for the Christian consciousness."

Kierkegaard himself gives support to the contention of Swenson and Diem when he says of dogmatics that "it does not deny the position of sin; on the contrary, it presupposes it

26Something About Kierkegaard, p. 139.

27Herman Diem, Kierkegaard: An Introduction, pp. 81-82.
and explains it by presupposing hereditary sin. ... Dogmatics must not explain hereditary sin but rather explain it by presupposing it."28 SK then goes on to say that sin is explained by bringing out the implications of the presupposition.29 This is then the task of The Sickness Unto Death. There he discusses sin as a "position," stating:

"I steadfastly hold to the Christian teaching that sin is a position - yet not as if it could be comprehended, but as a paradox that must be believed. In my opinion this teaching is sound. If all attempts to comprehend can just be shown to be self-contradictory, then the matter will fall into proper perspective, then it will be clear that whether one will believe or not must be left to faith."30

Here it seems that the fundamental paradox is sin. And the task of dogmatics is to work out the implications of that presupposition of faith. Swenson even seems to imply that the fundamental role of the existential dialectic is to bring to consciousness sin, in terms of its deepest qualification (i.e. to develop the movement from suffering, to guilt, to sin.)31

How do we reconcile the two views of dogmatics? The answer is quite directly provided by J. Heywood Thomas when, citing Teisen, he notes that SK's "essential theology"

28The Concept of Anxiety, pp. 19-20.
30Sickness Unto Death, p. 98.
31Something About Kierkegaard, p. 88.
involves not one, but two fundamental presuppositions. He identifies them as "the doctrines of paradox and sin."\textsuperscript{32} But it would be better to say they are the dogmas of the God-man and sin, because "doctrine" seems to imply an ideality\textsuperscript{33} and sin can be viewed as paradox.\textsuperscript{34}

In our essay we considered only one of the dogmatic presuppositions, and developed it by way of the move "away from speculation." This gave a first approximation to dogmatics. And, as we now see, it is an approximation that gives the dogmatic movement in terms of a shallow level of consciousness (i.e. as an answer to ignorance).

But another movement needs to now be developed; namely, that away from the poetic. And the appropriate point of departure for that would be the dogmatic issue of hereditary sin.

The two movements - that away from the poetic and that away from speculation - are not simply accidentally related to the two dogmatic presuppositions. One could not just as easily develop the move away from speculation by working out the presupposition of sin. Nor could one develop the move away from the poetic, by developing the implications of the presupposition of the God-man. Why is the move away from

\textsuperscript{32}Thomas, "Paradox," p. 199.


\textsuperscript{34}Sickness Unto Death, p. 98.
speculation connected with the presupposition of the Godman, and the move away from the poetic with that of sin? To fully develop an answer to this question, we would need to have exhibited both movements, and have shown their place within the singular movement of "becoming a Christian." We have not done this, and thus our answer can only be suggestive; namely, it outlines a direction for further Kierkegaardian scholarship.

For SK, speculation and philosophy are concerned with the given; with necessity. They can even be viewed as a form of the "despair of necessity." They seek to give up any openness in selfhood for the fixedness of "the truth." Truth is the "what" that is sought, and "reason," with its immanent dialectic, is the "how." SK would argue, there is a certain legitimacy to reason's interest. The "what," which it seeks (that paradox which is the passion of thought), is indeed "the truth" - that is, if it is rightly sought. But reason seeks to attain to that Truth by its own effort (the "how" of philosophy). And it views the Truth as no more than the answer to itself. Reason is not sufficiently relativized.

In this context, the appropriate movement is one away from the false "how." I.e. "away from speculation!" And one can develop this by showing that the "what" is given in the God-man, who is both the "how" and the "what;" both the
way and the truth (John 14:6).\textsuperscript{35} Thus the move away from philosophy is developed by unfolding the presupposition of the God-man.

On the other side, for SK, the poetic is concerned with openness; with possibility. It can be viewed as a form of the "despair of possibility." It seeks to avoid the constraints of necessity (the way things are) so that it may poetically consider its content ("poetic license"). But, in another sense, the poetic can be said to arise because of the rigor of necessity. One is crushed on the rocks of necessity, and a suffering arises in the inability of an individual to make actual that telos which directs the passions. Here the suffering makes one a poet.\textsuperscript{36} And one stays in possibility because one is prohibited from going forth into actuality. But the poet comes to regard that suffering in positive terms, as the point of departure of the poetic existence.

When one begins with the dogmatic presupposition of sin, then the suffering, which is positively appropriated by the poet, is dialectically qualified as sin. One moves from suffering, to guilt, to sin.\textsuperscript{37} But as with the dogmatic


\textsuperscript{37}Something About Kierkegaard, pp. 140-142.
movement of the God-man, the final place at which one arrives is seen at the end to be the presupposition which directed the whole movement. When the point of departure is seen as sin, then, implied in the very notion of sin, one must conclude: "away from the poetic!"

Note the contrast between the two movements. In the move away from speculation, one begins with affirming the satisfaction of reason (its self-fulfillment, which is its happiness) and moves away from that to the essentiality of suffering.\textsuperscript{38} While in the move away from the poetic, one begins by affirming the essentiality of suffering, and moves away from that by identifying that suffering as sin. Here we have the relation between the two dogmatic presuppositions, expressed as a negative unity. The fundamental question, however, is: how can they be positively related? How is the God-man related to the position of sin, in such a way that the God and the sinner are reconciled; such that the two presuppositions - which finally are the two: the single individual and God - are made "at-one"? I.e. how does one become a Christian?

In the light of the single question of atonement, the two movements "away from ..." are seen to be only penultimate and inadequate formulations of the single movement of becoming a Christian. Thus, we can summarize our suggestions for Kierkegaardian scholarship as follows:

\textsuperscript{38}Ref. this essay, pp. 186-199.
First, by way of approximation, care should be taken to appreciate the two movements "away from ...", which SK argued were so central to his own authorship (ref. My Point of View as an Author). Our essay represents a first attempt at exhibiting the move "away from speculation!" Not that scholarship has not previously considered that move. But it has, for the most part, failed to exhibit the dogmatic qualification. For example, Louis Mackey in his book Kierkegaard: A Kind of Poet argues that one should move away from speculation ... and toward the poetic. But there we see the need for the second movement: "away from the poetic." And this movement likewise has not been carefully developed in terms of its dogmatic qualification. In fact, just as Pojman's work provided the point of departure for the speculative movement (i.e. "away from speculation!"), Mackey's book would provide the ideal departure for the poetic movement.

Second, however, - and this should be the main emphasis - Kierkegaardian scholarship should focus on SK's religious discourse as a discourse which is concerned with becoming a Christian. Namely, with the "second ethic" which brings together the two dogmatic presuppositions.  

---

39Concept of Anxiety, p. 24.
Kierkegaard as Kierkegaard

In our essay thus far we have not considered the details of SK's own life. We have not developed the relation between his ideas and the events which brought SK to reflect on those ideas. This must seem strange, when one considers the preeminence which Kierkegaardian scholarship gives to the existential, personal nature of SK's writing. It must seem even stranger, however, when this essay claims to have begun with an attempt to view SK as SK.

First, we must admit that the scarcity of biographical reference is an additional weakness of this essay. We have avoided biographical detail to keep this essay a reasonable length. But, second, we must answer by saying that scholarship has all too often failed to exhibit the movement of SK's life, because it has concentrated on specific events. SK's existence can only be appreciated when the reader grasps the nature of the problem and task which motivated that existence. In this essay we have considered one side of that problem and task.

Walter Lowrie brings the full task into focus, with all its existential import, when he considers that "secret writing" in SK's inmost part which "explains everything." Lowrie begins by presenting the following entry from SK's Journal:

"After my death no one will find in my papers (this is my comfort) a single explanation of what
it was that really filled my life, the secret writing in my inmost part, which explains everything and often transforms what the world would call bagatelles into events of a prodigious importance for me, which I too regard as insignificant apart from the secret gloss which explains them.\textsuperscript{40}

Here, SK, in speaking of his own existence, says that the secret to understanding it is not the various particular events but rather a "secret gloss" which explains them. He also states that no one will find that secret. But SK, knowing that people will read his journal, should not be interpreted literally in his prohibition. He used ploys such as "no one will find" to entice the reader into the investigation.

Lowrie, then, by way of a careful exposition of "the great earthquake," goes on to argue that this "secret gloss" is the belief that a curse rests upon the Kierkegaard family. Peter Kierkegaard (SK's brother) identified the following account as "our father's story and ours":

"His father as a boy of about eleven years tended sheep on the Jutland heath, where he suffered much from hunger, cold and loneliness. Once in his desperation he stood upon a hammock, lifted up his hands to heaven and cursed the Lord God, who, if he did exist could be so hard-hearted as to let a helpless, innocent child suffer so much without coming to his aid. 'But the memory of this curse in his childhood never left the boy, the man, the patriarch - and seeing that God's grace from that very moment showered temporal blessings upon him, so that instead of tasting the divine wrath he was overwhelmed with riches, esteem - then solemn anxiousness and dread gripped his soul most deeply. God did exist, and he had cursed this God

\textsuperscript{40}Short Life of Kierkegaard, p. 70.
- was not this the sin against the Holy Ghost which never can be forgiven?"

Believing that the sin was visited to the fourth generation, SK saw his father’s curse visited upon himself as God’s curse. This was hereditary sin - experienced in a powerful, existential, personal way.

Lowrie goes on to argue that this curse is the key to understanding such enigmatic events as SK’s broken engagement to Regina. Because of the curse, SK could not rightly attain to the concern of his longing. He could not make actual the possibility of happiness in the universal. Thus he was condemned to being a poet.

This is a profound expression for the bondage of the will: the good he would, he could not. But the curse alone does not fully explain all. Lowrie has not given sufficient weight to another Journal entry in which SK gives the reader a clue to appreciating his person. SK writes:

"Abraham’s collision...He who has explained this riddle has explained my life. But who among my contemporaries has understood this?"

Abraham’s collision was the external expression for the bondage of the will. Abraham sought to actualize a possibility (the establishment of Isaac) which was

41Ibid, pp. 71-72.

42Ibid, p. 78.

43Note how SK picks up this theme in Fear and Trembling. See Lowrie, pp. 146-147.

44Ibid, pp. 70-71.
impossible in human terms because he was called upon to sacrifice Isaac. But, as SK shows in the "Exordium" of Fear and Trembling, Abraham's collision was not just that of the bondage of the will. His collision was between the impossibility of the task, and that same task's possibility - by virtue of the absurd. As Howard Hong notes, "In the Paradox of Faith, possibility is affirmed where there is manifestly only impossibility, because with God all things are possible."

If we now return to SK's life, we see that the curse is just one side of "Abraham's collision." It is the impossibility that lies upon SK; the unfreedom of sin. But the other side of the collision is the freedom of grace. Here one finds the possibility that collides with the impossibility. And the existential locus for that can be found in a powerful religious experience which SK had on May 19 at 10:30 a.m.:

"There is such a thing as an indescribable joy which glows through us as unaccountably as the Apostle's outburst is unexpected: 'Rejoice, and again I say, Rejoice!' - Not a joy over this or that, but full jubilation, 'with hearts, and souls, and voices': 'I rejoice over my joy, of, in by, at, on, through, with my joy' - a heavenly refrain, which cuts short, as it were, our ordinary song; a joy which cools and refreshes like a breeze, a gust of the tradewind which blows from the Grove of Mamre to the eternal mansions."

---

45 Fear and Trembling, "preliminary expectoration."
Lowrie seeks to underplay the significance of the experience. But his argument is weak. And James Collins is much more observant when he notes that "from this experience can be dated his own [SK's] dedication to the problems of religious existence." And not just his dedication to writing. From this began that "providential education" by which SK believed himself to be educated through his own authorship.

Later in his life, SK interpreted that "indescribable joy" as a contemporaneity with the God-man. But he did not explain it as such in the beginning. Lowrie is correct when he points to the ambiguity of the experience for SK. What did it mean? SK did not yet know. But Lowrie is wrong when he underplays its importance. For SK reflection involved a continual clarification and development of that "historically decisive moment of departure." Both the "indescribability" and the "joy" (contrasted with suffering) will be appraised in the light of the God-man, who, as paradox and suffering to reason, will also be viewed as

47 A Short Life of Kierkegaard, p. 124.

48 For example, he calls on a poetic digression of the pseudonym of Repetition to say that "to him this experience remained so equivocal that he had the audacity to travesty it." Ibid, p. 125. But it is far from clear that the pseudonym is speaking in truth; or even that he refers to an experience of the type SK had, as distinguished from that of Adler.

49 The Mind of Kierkegaard, p. 8.
grace, freedom, and joy to the united self.

We see the two key presuppositions: Sin and the God-
man. They are given independently, and thus SK’s reflection
is at first divided; on the one hand developing the
impossibility of sin and the curse, which forced him to be a
poet; and on the other hand, developing the possibility
which is given in the moment of grace, and which overthrows
all attempts at description (language).

Eight years after the discovery of sin ("The Great
Earthquake") and five years after his discovery of Grace
("indescribable joy") SK penned the clues to his "secret
gloss"; those clues which we quoted above from SK’s
journals. In that year (1843) SK published Either/Or, Fear
and Trembling, and Repetition. And it is in these works
that he develops the fundamental collision between the two
presuppositions. In Either/Or the two are still developed
independently; the aesthetic mode of existence being that of
sin, and the ethical being that mode which works out in
existence the grace of God. But one is given a prolepsis of
the neither/nor of Either/Or in the final sermon by "Father
Taciturnus." Then, in Fear and Trembling, the full
confrontation is present — although it is evaluated by an
individual (Johannes de Silentio) who is only able to grasp
the relation as a negative unity; i.e. as the absurd. God,
by virtue of the absurd, makes possible that which was
impossible for Abraham. Again in Repetition the collision
is developed by way of a negative unity. Only there the knight of faith is Job rather than Abraham.

In the following year (1844) two works were published: Philosophical Fragments and The Concept of Anxiety. It is not coincidental that the first develops the conditions of the possibility of a historical point of departure for learning the Truth (i.e. the presupposition of the God-man) while the second develops the conditions of the possibility of hereditary sin (i.e. the presupposition of sin).

Following 1844 the two presuppositions are more integrated and a dogmatic is outlined which is not rooted primarily in either one or the other. We cannot in this essay develop the nature of the integration - that is another task for Kierkegaardian scholarship. But we can note, in passing, that a clear move is exhibited to explicitly religious discourse. The movement of "becoming a Christian" is unified, such that the poetic and speculative are no longer the point of departure.

Thus far we have only been able to briefly suggest ways in which SK can better be understood as SK. We have not shown how his life and the movements "away from..." and "becoming" are interrelated. But we have suggested an approach to the task of Kierkegaardian scholarship which is in accord with the key experiences and writings in his life. It is also in full agreement with SK's own explanation in his Point of View for My Work as an Author.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Collingwood, R.G. "Refutation and Discovery in Philosophy."


Frankel, Victor E. "Nothing But - : On Reductionism and


