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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

KIERKEGAARD ON CITIZENSHIP AND CHARACTER
A PHILOSOPHY OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY

ELSEBET JEGSTRUP

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

DECEMBER 1991

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All quotations from Kierkegaard's published writings are taken from Søren Kierkegaard Samlede Værker, edited by A.B. Drachmann, J.L. Heiberg, and H.O. Lange (København: Gyldendal, 1962-64), 20 vols. incl. a terminological dictionary edited by Jens Himmelstrup. Responsibility for translations are entirely ours, although existing translations have at times been used where preferable.

The citation plan is as follows: all citations from Kierkegaard's works will be given in parenthesis within the text followed by their equivalent in the English translation using their abbreviated form as shown below. In order to maintain some uniformity and coherence in Kierkegaard scholarship, the abbreviations used follow those of the International Kierkegaard Commentary, edited by Robert L. Perkins (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press). A typical citation will appear as follows with the Danish citation preceding the English: (SV 6,38; PF, 37) which stands for Philosophical Fragments and which in the Danish edition is vol. 6. The reference to the English translation is always to the latest translation available, as shown below.

Quotations from Kierkegaard's journals are taken from Søren Kierkegaard's Papirer, 25 vols. incl. index, edited by P.A.

Heiberg og V. Kuhr and expanded by Niels Thulstrup (København: Gyldendal, 1909-78). Citations from these journals will always appear in footnotes, unless otherwise noted, followed, where available, by the citation from the English translation: *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, 8 vols., edited and translated by Howard V. and Edna H. Hong (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967-68). These citations will appear as follows: PAP X 5 A 73 (JP 2823). All other citations will appear in properly annotated footnotes.

POSL	1838	*Af en endnu Levendes Papirer* by S. Kierkegaard. "From the Papers of One Still Living" in *Early Polemical Writings*, tr. Julia Watkin. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.
CI	1841	*Om Begrebet Ironi* by S.A. Kierkegaard. *The Concept of Irony*, tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.
JC	1842	*Johannes Climacus* (with *Philosophical Fragments*) by Johannes Climacus, tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.
EO	1843	*Enten-Eller*, 2 vols., ed. Victor Eremita. *Either/Or*, 2 vols., tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.
ED	1843	*Atten Opbyggelige Taler* by S. Kierkegaard. *Edifying Discourses*, 4 vols., tr. David F. and Lillian Marvin Swenson. Minneapolis: Augsburgh Publishing House, 1943.
FT	1843	*Frygt og Bæven* by Johannes de Silentio. *Fear and Trembling* (with *Repetition*), tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.
R	1843	*Gjentagelsen* by Constantin Constantius. *Repetition* (with *Fear and Trembling*), tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

PF	1844	*Philosophiske Smuler* by Johannes Climacus, ed. S. Kierkegaard. *Philosophical Fragments* (with *Johannes Climacus*), tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.
CA	1844	*Begrebet Angest* by Vigilius Haufniensis. *The Concept of Anxiety*, tr. Reidar Thomte in collaboration with Albert B. Anderson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.
TCS	1845	*Tre Taler ved tænkte Lejligheder* by S. Kierkegaard. *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions*, tr. David F. and Lillian Marvin Swenson. Minneapolis: Augsburgh Publishing House, 1941.
SLW	1845	*Stadier paa Livets Vej*, ed. Hilarius Bogbinder. *Stages on Life's Way*, tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
CUP	1846	*Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift* by Johannes Climacus. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, tr. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.
TA	1846	*En literair Anmeldelse: To Tidsaldre* by S. Kierkegaard. *Two Ages: The Age of Revolution and the Present Age. A Literary Review*, tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.
OAR	1846	*Nutidens Religieuse Forvirring. Bogen om Adler*, by S. Kierkegaard (publ. Julia Watkin, 1984). *On Authority and Revelation. The Book on Adler*, tr. Walter Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955.
PH	1847	*Opbyggelige Taler i forskjellig Aand* by S. Kierkegaard. *Edifying Discourses in Various Spirits*. Part One, *Purity of Heart*, tr. Douglas Steere. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1956.
GS	1847	"Lidelsernes Evangelium" og "Lilierne paa Marken og Himlens Fugle" by S. Kierkegaard. Part Three and Two, *The Gospel of Suffering and the Lilies of the Field*, tr. David F. and Lillian Marvin Swenson. Minneapolis: Augsburgh Publishing House, 1948.
WL	1847	*Kjerlighedens Gjerninger* by S. Kierkegaard. *Works of Love*, tr. Howard and Edna Hong. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962.

C	1848	*Krisen og en Krise i en Skuespillerindes Liv* by Inter et Inter. *The Crisis [and a Crisis] in the Life of an Actress*, tr. Stephen Crites. New York: 1967.
CD	1848	*Christlige Taler* by S. Kierkegaard. *Christian Discourses*, tr. Walter Lowrie. New York: Oxford University Press, 1961.
POV	1848	*Synspunktet for min Forfatter-Virksomhed* by S. Kierkegaard (published posthumously 1859). *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, tr. Walter Lowrie. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962.
AN	1848	*Den Bevæbnede Neutralitet* (publ. 1851) by S. Kierkegaard. *Armed Neutrality and An Open Letter*, tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968.
SUD	1849	*Sygdommen til Døden* by Anti-Climacus. *The Sickness Unto Death*, tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.
TC	1850	*Indøvelse i Christendom* by Anti-Climacus. *Training In Christianity*, tr. Walter Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967.
JFY	1851	*Til Selvprøvelse; Dømmer Selv!* by S. Kierkegaard. *For Self-Examination; Judge for Yourself!*, tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.
KAUC	1854	*Bladartikler* I-XXI; *Dette skal siges; saa være det da sagt*; *Øjeblikket* 1-9; *Hvad Christus dømmer om officiel Christendom* by S. Kierkegaard. *Kierkegaard's Attack Upon Christendom*, tr. Walter Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944.
TCA	1842-1851	*The Corsair Affair*, ed. and tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.
SV		*Søren Kierkegaard Samlede Værker*, ed. A.B. Drachmann, J.L. Heiberg og H.O. Lange. København: Gyldendal, 1962-64.
PAP		*Søren Kierkegaards Papirer*, 25 vols. incl. index, ed. P.A. Heiberg and V. Kuhr and enlarged by Niels Thulstrup. København: Gyldendal, 1909-78.

JP	Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers, 8 vols., ed. and tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.
LD	Kierkegaard's Letters and Documents, tr. Henrik Rosenmeier. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.

ἤθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων·

(Character is for human being its destiny.)

- Heraklitos

INTRODUCTION

I: THE POLITICAL IN KIERKEGAARD'S THOUGHT

To say that Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) has a political philosophy is not an esoteric thought as some would have it. The question that needs to be asked when confronted with such a proposition is what might the concept "political philosophy" mean in this connection. To explain what is here meant by the concept of political philosophy is also to explain the title of this dissertation.

Political philosophy, it is generally assumed, deals with the fundamental questions of human existence especially as they address the relationship of the human individual and society, the possibilities and limitations of such a relationship as well as the foundational principles, if any, that may guide it.[1] We believe these belong among the most important philosophic questions that can be asked, inasmuch as they address what is common to the human condition.

It is the human condition that concerns Kierkegaard, and especially what he considers most essential about the human condition. To be human is for him to possess characteristics, actual and potential, that significantly differentiate, for better or for worse, the human condition from that of the divine, of which we know nothing, and from that of animals, of which we claim to know much. The human condition is thus different from either in that it alone consciously confronts its own mortality. In that very confrontation, however, Kierkegaard argues, "it is every human being's [Menneske] destiny (Bestemmelse) to become free, independent, itself" (SV 12,267; WL, 259), all of which to Kierkegaard are ethical qualifications.[2]

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[1] See especially Leo Strauss, "What is Political Philosophy," in Political Philosophy: Six Essays by Leo Strauss, ed. Hilail Gildin (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1975), pp. 3-57.

It is this very difference that simultaneously embodies the capacity for acting at times as animals, and hence purely sensually, and at other times, we like to think, divinely; it is this difference that originally spawned political philosophy. It is something specific in the human condition that makes possible and necessitates political philosophy.

This something specific is the human capacity to think, the fact that human beings are thinking beings who can perceive reality and act accordingly and simultaneously imagine ideality and strive to go beyond the givens of this world. They are thinking beings who can abstract from their own condition and thus transcend it, but who are also capable of concretizing their own condition in an attempt to understand and act upon its possibilities and its limitations. As Kierkegaard has Johannes Climacus say in the Postscript, "The subjective thinker is someone existing, and yet he is someone thinking; he does not abstract from Existents and from the contradiction, but he is in it, and still he must think" (SV 10,52; CUP, 314).

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[2] "The one who ethically chooses himself, he chooses himself concretely as this specific individual (Individ). . . . The individual thus becomes conscious of himself as this specific individual with these talents, these inclinations, these drives, these passions, influenced by this specific social milieu, as this specific product of a specific environment. But as he becomes conscious of himself in this way, he assumes everything as his responsibility" (SV 3,232; EO, 250-51).

Political philosophy addresses itself to this thinking capacity not only for the purpose of addressing the meaningfulness of thinking, but also, as implied in the earliest manifestation of this symbolic expression of reality[3] by the Socratic dictum "know thyself," to provide a guidance for thinking. Immediately we see that thinking is qualitatively qualified by philosophy, which to Kierkegaard means that the character of thinking is ethically qualified. Importantly "[t]he ethical has to do with particular [enkelte] human beings, and, note well, with every single self [hver Enkelt]" (SV 10,25; CUP, 284).

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[3] This expression has been borrowed from the introduction to John G. Gunnell's Political Philosophy and Time: Plato and the Origins of Political Vision (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968 and 1987), pp. 4-10. Also Eric Voegelin, Israel and Revelation, vol. 1 of Order and History (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), pp. 20, 34, and the "Introduction" in passim.

In the age of modernity where the ethical and the political have become sharply differentiated, this explanation of the meaning of political philosophy still does not qualify Kierkegaard's philosophy as political. We need to see how he conceives of the ethical. First, in an early journal note he briefly explains the content of the last chapter of book X of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics as the ethical's relation to the political of which it is a part. He then comments on how strange it is that Aristotle's own dialectic "almost suspends [hæver, as in the German aufheben] this observation inasmuch as the contemplative life is the highest, and this lower form of happiness lies in the practice of the political virtues. But the contemplative life is isolation."[4] For Kierkegaard to think for the sake of thinking is not to think in the most human manner; rather it is to think disinterestedly. Thinking must have a purpose beyond itself. Thinking must aim at comprehending the human condition which essentially is relational -- to the other, to society. Thinking must address the "idea of community."

Second, the individual, by becoming conscious of the self as a relational being and hence as a responsible being constitutive of belonging in some way, gains identity of the self as equal to the other. Thereby the single self (den

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[4] PAP IV C 27 (JP 114).

Enkelte)[5] fulfills its highest potential, its destiny.[6] This

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[5] Den Enkelte strictly translated means "the only one" or "the single one." However, the adverb enkelt can also mean "simple." We have chosen to translate Kierkegaard's principal category of den Enkelte as "the single self" rather than as "the individual," inasmuch as the latter is not only overused, it also connotes so much related to liberal theory that was not necessarily true of Kierkegaard's category. This choice of translation also enables us to avoid most sexist language by using the third person singular neuter in connection with "the single self." In this way translations and interpretations begin to look much more like what Kierkegaard's original Danish text intended.

This is not to say that there are not problems with this choice of translation, or that Kierkegaard did not at times use sexist language. When connected with nouns and sometimes adjectives, it has been necessary to retain the translation of the adverb "individual" as, for example, in "individual existence." Moreover, sometimes Kierkegaard does use the Danish Individ. In those cases it has always been translated as "individual." Whenever Kierkegaard uses the masculine "he" we have done the same in translating quotations. We also recognize, however, that the word "self" connotes a particular level of consciousness in much contemporary literature. Such connotations should not be attached to our translation of den Enkelte as "the single self." Any change in consciousness of the single self will be evident in the context the category appears, and only then.

Furthermore, the fact that den Enkelte is capitalized has nothing to do with Kierkegaard's attachment to this category. Rather it is because he is following the rules of writing of his time, and den Enkelte is a noun. Not until 1948 were the new "rules of correct writing" (retskrivningsregler) imposed on the Danish language. Among other more confusing changes, all capitalization was abandoned except for pronouns.

Much has been made in English translations of the old rule of capitalization of nouns under which Kierkegaard worked, giving eager translators an opportunity for pursuing personal agenda and thus unnecessarily influence their translations interpretively by also capitalizing particular words in the English translation that would not normally be capitalized. Kierkegaard had many means of emphasizing particular words or phrases or even sentences, and he used all of them, but capitalization was not one of them. The new translations of "Kierkegaard Writings," edited and in many cases translated by the tireless Howard V. and Edna H. Hong and published by Princeton University Press are thankfully free of such aberrations.

identity as equal and as a belonging being qualifies the single self's comportment toward the world. Although this stance of equality and belonging may be purely formal, a matter of consciousness, it nevertheless has an anthropological characteristic. As Kresten Nordentoft has pointed out in his interpretation of Kierkegaard,

> the task could not be set if it were not possible for man to realize it. . . . Thus every person becomes conscious of himself in concern for himself because his existence takes place upon conditions of ambiguity, in time, in hope or fear.[7]

To think in terms of equality and belonging, an ethical dimension to be achieved, is precisely to love one's self. As Kierkegaard puts it, it is the purest form of human love (Menneskekjerlighed).[8] To think one's equality and relatedness in this way is for Kierkegaard to act out the "idea of community," and indeed constitutes an act of freedom. It is a stance he considers the optimal potentiality of the human condition. Thus he seeks to describe the single self as it essentially comports itself toward the world, and he understands it in that particular way he admires in Plato's political philosophy in which the state is not made higher

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[6] "To the best world belongs equality." PAP VII 1 B 88, p. 295. See also PAP VII B 202, PAP VIII 2 B 31:24: ". . . to love the neighbor is precisely to want to be essentially equal for all people." Also PAP VIII 2 B 71:9.

[7] Kierkegaard's Psychology, tr. Bruce Kirmmse (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1978), p. 76.

[8] PAP VII 1 B 202.

than the single self. The single self remains individuated in its concern for the good of the whole.[9]

> In community (Menighed) the single self is; the single self is dialectically decisive as the presupposition for forming community, and in community the single self is qualitatively something essential and can at any moment also become higher than "community," precisely as soon as "the others" fall away from the idea. The cohesiveness of community is that each is a single self, and then the idea. . . . Every single self in community guarantees community.[10]

In order to understand the structure of the single self Kierkegaard unfolds that single self in its essential dimension which is decisively ethical/political.

Without risking much, then, we can say Kierkegaard has learned his political philosophy from Plato and Aristotle. He approaches the fundamental questions partly in an analogous manner, and partly he rewrites the script to formulate a political philosophy commensurable with the Christian teaching he knows from revelation, and especially from Pauline teaching.

With this understanding of Kierkegaard's conception of political philosophy, the title of this project should also become clear. To be a citizen is to strive to be ethical/political before being in any other way. To be in this way, to understand one's self in this relational manner, that is, to think essentially, is to be a person of character.

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[9] PAP VII 1 A 70 (JP 3327).

[10] PAP X 2 A 390 (JP 2952).

Neither citizenship nor character are qualities that would describe divine beings or animals. They belong exclusively to the human condition.

From this perspective it would seem Kierkegaard understands the ethical/political to have a natural basis as Plato and Aristotle maintained. For Kierkegaard this is both true and not true. In the Fragments he talks about a human being's "second nature." But even here he almost embarrassingly parallels Plato who also claims that naturally, not wisdom, but the desire for pleasure rules the soul. It is only after experiencing periagoge, the turning around, that wisdom comes to rule in the soul which is now ordered by justice.[11] It is only after the self's acceptance of itself as it optimally and hence truly is, something that according to Kierkegaard is occasioned by God's grace which enables the single self to acknowledge its original condition as untruth, it is only then the self becomes conscious of the actual (egentlige) sense of citizenship. Character is achieved in the enactment of this awareness, in the single self's comportment toward the world.

The implication of a second nature that allows the single self fulfillment of its most genuine self suggests that the self's original nature suffers from a pathology of consciousness that renders it untrue and therefore incapable of citizenship and character. The aim of this dissertation is first to lay bare the cause of this pathology, a pathology which Kierkegaard believed was fundamentally grounded in modern philosophy's adaptation of scientific methodology by which a separation of knowledge and experience occurred. Second, we seek to explain the consequent symptomatic effects on thinking as Kierkegaard understood them. Third and finally the aim is to present his therapeutic "corrective," by which he intended to restore the possibility for the single self to achieve its optimal condition. As such, the dissertation suggests that Kierkegaard's project constitutes a philosophy of political consciousness framed as a phenomenology garbed in Christian language.

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[11] Gorgias 491e-492a and Republic 443c-444e. Kierkegaard's following of Plato's political philosophy is considered embarrassing only in view of his occasional derogatory remarks about what he sometimes considered Plato's speculative tendencies: for example SV 9,171-172n; CUP, 184 and note.

*

Søren Kierkegaard has been examined from many points of view, predominantly philosophical, theological, psychological, and literary. These analyses have for the most part focused on his earlier pseudonymous writings of indirect communication emphasizing his differentiation of aesthetic, ethical, and religious realms of existence.

This study will focus on the direct communication of his later works almost exclusively published under his own name.

Its aim is to suggest the appropriateness of interpreting the thought of Kierkegaard with a particular concern for its implications on political meaning. It will be shown that his later writings, and especially Two Ages and Works of Love reveal a heretofore unexamined dimension that indicates the undeniable presence of a philosophy of political consciousness that is therapeutic in form.

This is not to say that earlier writings will not be consulted. Indeed, in order to fully appreciate what we call Kierkegaard's "corrective" of liberal theory, it has been necessary to examine certain philosophical concepts that embody his general critique of modern society, concepts that are only touched upon in the later works, but which are more fully detailed in the indirect communication of the pseudonymous literature and especially in the works authored by Johannes Climacus Philosophical Fragments, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, and De Omnibus Dubitandum Est.

Of most interest in the later writings is Kierkegaard's novel understanding of human rights as well as his critical assessment of certain fundamental defects of his time to which he was one of the first serious thinkers to respond. It will be shown that Kierkegaard engages in a "corrective" of the natural rights' understanding of freedom and equality. In doing so, he establishes his own interpretation of these tenets of modern political existence as existential obligations, and hence as something to be achieved, rather than as given rights.

In order to fully appreciate the radical nature of Kierkegaard's theory of freedom and equality, it becomes necessary to understand the underlying assumptions of his critique of modernity and the consequent symptomatic effects that necessitated this therapeutic "corrective." Kierkegaard characterizes the liberal concept of rights as given as one of the fundamental misunderstandings of modernity that originated in the separation of knowledge and experience. This separation was the consequence of the emergence of modern natural science with its emphasis on method and objective truth. In chapter one we shall see how Kierkegaard's attack on modern philosophy's adaptation of scientific methodology to all epistemological inquiry leads to an all out confrontation with Hegel's systematic development of consciousness by means of logical and historical explanation.

Kierkegaard's argument is that classical philosophy's teleological approach to questions of being and Christianity's emphasis on transcendental providence had been replaced with an exclusive focus on immanent and indefinite progress rendering questions of the good all but irrelevant. For Kierkegaard the idea of such a dependency on logic and the course of history is absurd inasmuch as logic cannot explain existence and historical events can only be considered accidental or approximate and can provide no certainty about the future. The problem for Kierkegaard is that systematic philosophy has rendered what he calls essential human experience nonessential in its quest for objectivity, something Kierkegaard interprets as disinterestedness. All emphasis is now on reflection (e.g. calculation), which leaves human beings as passive observers on the margin of all essential relationships, lost in the consequent chasm between fact and value.

When, in addition, Christianity has been posited as an historical phenomenon and its truth cognitively revealed as an eternal truth as in Hegel's philosophy, then the problem of the truth of Christianity has been removed, meaning the all important dialectic of human experience has been rejected. For Kierkegaard this development completes the separation of knowledge and experience inasmuch as the realm of knowledge has now been circumscribed leaving human experience undifferentiated.

Both in chapter one and in chapter two Kierkegaard's attack on Hegel's system will be the focus. The point of dividing up Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel's systematic philosophy in this way is not to deny the oneness of the system. Rather, it is, in the first place, to show that philosophy's conformity to scientific method has wrought a cleft in the union of knowing and experience, a union that was all important to classical philosophy. In the second place, it is to show the symptomatic effects of this objective tendency on theoretical and practical thinking, and consequently to show how a pathology of consciousness has emerged. The latter will be discussed in chapters two and three.

The dissertation then turns to the most debilitating symptomatic effect to follow from this separation of knowledge and experience, an effect Kierkegaard diagnosed as the loss of authority. This loss, he claimed, had pathologically affected individual consciousness manifesting itself both in theoretical and practical thinking.

On a philosophical level, he rejected the "objective tendency" which had intellectualized ethical conduct and subordinated religious life to speculative philosophy. This, of course, was especially true in Hegelianism which speculated systematically and objectively on the truth of things, such as Christianity, projecting them as indisputable historical phenomena of equivalent veracity. Likewise Kierkegaard rejected Hegel's imposition of logic on existence by which an attempt was made to generate identity between object and subject, thought and being. Inasmuch as logic cannot explain movement, according to Kierkegaard, by so doing, he charged, Hegel had only confirmed the loss of meaningful existential experience.

On a religious level, the problem of making Christianity merely an object of cognition had relaxed the tension of the paradox of the Incarnation. It meant that becoming a Christian was as easily achieved as citizenship requiring no special effort and posing no "offense" (Forargelse) to reason, Kierkegaard's definition for an act against the understanding. Moreover, it meant the relationship between philosophy and Christianity had become confused inasmuch as Christianity, on the one hand, had been transformed into a reflective objectivity aimed at transcending existential uncertainty. On the other hand, in order to appear reasonable, Christianity by its embrace of worldly aspirations had jeopardized its mystical authority, and thus it had deformed its own truth in the very creation of "Christendom."

Kierkegaard's differentiation of Christianity and "Christendom" will be discussed in detail only inasmuch as it affects the existential condition of the single self, and likewise the problematic of the paradox of Christianity. This paradox he posits as a challenge to reason to recognize its own limitations, and to the single self to recognize Christianity as essentially subjective and hence of existential concern. Refusal to do so, Kierkegaard charges, implies a rejection of foundational authority, the source of ultimate happiness.

In chapter three we shall turn to the symptomatic effects of the separation of knowledge and experience on practical thinking -- again expressed as a loss of authority.

On a political level, Kierkegaard accepted the emergence of the liberal state, but with severe qualifications. On the one hand, liberal politics had produced "the illusion of perfect equality" conjured up by "the false prophets of secularism in the name of Christianity." On the other, there was the obsessive preoccupation with worldly things generated by "the present age" and its unquestioned adherence to materialism. Envy becomes "the negatively unifying principle" meaning people are brought together on the basis of what they are against, rather than what they support. The implication for Kierkegaard is the principle of characterlessness.

He juxtaposes the two foremost structures of modernity: revolution to achieve civic freedoms and the leveling process to acquire equality. The former had led to violence and anarchy while the latter now was leading to a stifling stillness that nullified all individual achievement. The implication was an equivocation of all relationships, be they political or familial, meaning the natural authority inherent to such relationships had eroded. Consequently the role of citizenship had become marginalized, as the leveling process had rendered the single self atomized, isolated, and impotent engrossed with computing the problems of the political relationship, but never actively participating in the decision making process, and therefore separated from the shared morality that is constitutive of the "idea of community."

Finally, on a psychological level, Kierkegaard claims negative categories dominate everyday existence rendering impotent human beings the victims of "externality." The human condition, he charges, is determined by public opinion as the self is defined in terms of its public role based on superficial consciousness of social differentiations. It is an alienated state, quantitatively justified, that implicitly denies all investments of erotic feeling or of political "inwardness" (Inderlighed). The consequence is an abstract form of subjectivism that entails a denial of human nature as Kierkegaard understands it.

Kierkegaard uncovers this problematic by juxtaposing the categories of excellence and leveling, showing that the latter negates the former, meaning that there is no longer a basis for political will, but rather a "spiritlessness" (Aandløshed) best described by its philistine-bourgeois mentality. This mentality constitutes a pathology that Kierkegaard will argue is articulated in the voluntary mediation of the principle of contradiction, an axiom of human existence. He shows how the suspension of the principle of contradiction leads to self-contradiction through a number of examples that all demonstrate the lack of authority. The problem is that authority is inherent to being in harmony with the self.

In chapters four and five the dissertation turns to its central theme: Kierkegaard's radical therapeutic "corrective" of the tenets of liberal existence. We shall see how Kierkegaard put his trust in the individual human being, believing that the single self, if shown the way, will ultimately choose the course of action that will bring him the most fulfillment and hence the most happiness. Modernity has prevented such a course of action precisely by its confusion of the two realms of existence and the consequent symptomatic equivocation of values, and hence it has engaged in a denial of differentiated experience.

This part of the analysis will focus on the declaration of the rights of man (Menneske-Rettigheder), which in Kierkegaard's rigorous interpretation signified mankind's self-deification. The declaration posited rights as political in nature and assumed them as given, implying they dictated certain political circumstances. But Kierkegaard argues this is a fundamental misunderstanding. The rights of man had already been provided, meaning they are existential and must be viewed as obligations or duties to which the single self is intentionally dedicated for the purposes of achieving genuine freedom and equality.

The problem as he sees it, is that only an inadequate understanding of freedom can be derived from political rights, and inasmuch as human beings by nature are distinct, an imposed equality is but a chimera. In other words, modernity has confused what is by the grace of God with what is by human design. To Kierkegaard freedom and equality are ethical categories that essentially engage each individual in a common purpose without suppressing the original individuation idea. That is to say, they are tasks the single self must undertake in order to realize community and personal fulfillment.

Kierkegaard's novel and undeniably rigorous conception of freedom and equality assumes the religious (and rational) expectation expressed in the law's demand, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." In its fulfilled state, this law constitutes the foundation of his "idea of community." This law, therefore, has universal application. In order to fulfill this law's demand, Kierkegaard appeals to what he considers the deepest and most fundamental characteristic of human nature: love.

Love (Kjerlighed), he argues, is the dynamic force underlying such essential experience. In its "eternal transformation," i.e. in understanding it as duty to the law's demand, love not only separates itself from the bonds of necessity, it also frees the single self of "preferential love" (such as erotic love (Elskov) or friendship) which makes distinctions and like acquisitiveness excludes. "Only law can give freedom," Kierkegaard reasons, establishing a connection between love and freedom. And only the law that requires the single self to love its neighbor indiscriminately, only that law does not make distinctions, establishing a connection between love and equality.

From the perspective of love as obedience to a law, it becomes clear that freedom originates in human action establishing true humanity (Menneskelighed) which to Kierkegaard constitutes genuine human equality (Menneske-Lighed). That is to say, the reform Kierkegaard deems necessary is the realization of the thought of equality (Lighedstanken) which only through love can be effected and still maintain freedom. Such a comportment toward the world not only fulfills the "idea of community," but assures the single self of the greatest happiness precisely because it expresses its most genuine self.

Where Liberalism basically posits freedom and equality in enlightened self-interest, it follows that the single self need only prudently to act on its self-understanding of these interests to achieve fulfillment. In this case an appreciation of the political dimension of human existence is diminished insofar as individual freedom is expressed in proprietary acts that owe nothing to society. In contrast, Kierkegaard claims that freedom and equality are grounded in acts of self-determination expressed as obligation to a law. Inasmuch as this act originates in love, which essentially seeks satisfaction in community, it follows that political consciousness becomes a necessity for the completion and fulfillment of human experience. That is to say, the realization of community as an external social arrangement presupposes an internal transformation of the understanding of human nature proper.

What appears to be unique about Kierkegaard's concept of love is its upbuilding (opbyggende) quality. Loving your neighbor (the person before you) presupposes the presence of love as the ground in that other person, and by this very presupposition he builds up love in him without attempting to make any demands of him. This capacity for upbuilding is present in every single self, Kierkegaard will argue, inasmuch as it is not dependent upon natural or social advantages.

Rather it is in every person (Menneske) by virtue of character demonstrated "through his behavior in common things, through his relationship with his fellows, through his language, his expression."

Such an upbuilding quality, Kierkegaard is certain could not be derived from the positing of a universal criterion that with unqualified truthfulness could evaluate every human action. The proper conception of love can only be derived through the God-relation, he insists, and only exercised through citizenship and character and thereby express the "idea of community." In that sense, love as upbuilding has an efficacious quality inasmuch as Kierkegaard expects the qualitative personality of the single self to uplift political and social life rather than vice versa. For him the single self is prior to society inasmuch as it is personal conduct that will determine the character of society. In that upbuilding sense, therefore, love constitutes what this project has defined as a philosophy of political consciousness.

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Since Howard A. Johnson in 1962 published a critical essay "Kierkegaard and Politics,"[12] only a few attempts have been made to elucidate the presence of political meaning in

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[12] A Kierkegaard Critique, ed. Howard a Johnson and Niels Thulstrup (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1962), pp. 74-84.

Kierkegaard's thought.[13] They have almost exclusively been based on the early writings[14] beginning with Kierkegaard's dissertation The Concept of Irony with Constant Reference to Socrates (1841)[15] and ending with Concluding Unscientific Postscript (1846). Of the later writings, only Two Ages has received some attention from this perspective.[16] It is the intent of this study to show the wealth of political insight revealed in these later works.

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[13] Some noteworthy examples are Russell H. Davis, "Kierkegaard and Community" in Union Seminary Quarterly Review XXXVI, 4 (Summer 1981): 205-222; Gregor Malantschuk, The Controversial Kierkegaard, tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980); Paul Müller, "Kierkegaard som social of politisk tænker" in Kierkegaardiana, 13 (1984): 122-127; and Merold Westphal, Kierkegaard's Critique of Reason and Society (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987.

[14] A notable exception is Bruce H. Kirmmse, whose two-volume dissertation "Kierkegaard's Politics: The Social Thought of Søren Kierkegaard in Its Historical Context," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1977), focusing on all Kierkegaard's later works has made a major contribution to Kierkegaard scholarship by analyzing the historical context including its political aspects. Also John W. Elrod, Kierkegaard and Christendom (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); and "Kierkegaard on Self and Society" in Kierkegaardiana, 11 (1980): 178-196.

[15] For all references to Kierkegaard's writings both in the original Danish and English translations see the bibliography with the appropriate names of pseudonymous authors as well as year of first publication and generally accepted abbreviations of each work preceding this Introduction.

[16] Merold Westphal, "Kierkegaard's Sociology" in Op. Cit. pp. 43-59; Werner Stark, "Kierkegaard on Capitalism" in Kierkegaard's Presence in Contemporary American Life, ed. Lewis A. Lawson (Methuen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1970), pp. 120-149; and David Bruce Fletcher, Social and Political Perspectives in the Thought of Søren Kierkegaard (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1982).

Such a revelation would be of great significance to the discipline of political science inasmuch as it would add a novel dimension to the study of contemporary political thought. But it would also introduce the question why Kierkegaard's understanding of freedom and equality has not been uncovered before and hence why his writings have not been included in the mainstream of political theory.[17]

Much of this is due to the popular but mistaken belief that Kierkegaard's philosophy of the single self (den Enkelte) is acosmic, meaning it emphasizes an individualism that distances itself from all social concerns and hence is apolitical in nature.[18] Moreover, contemporary political

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[17] Only two dissertations that deal exclusively with Kierkegaard have come out of Political Science: Robert Dale Bonser, "The Role of Socrates in the Thought of Søren Kierkegaard" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1985); and Knud Rasmussen, "Søren Kierkegaard's Political Ideas" (PH.D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 1965). To the best of our knowledge no published writings on Kierkegaard have come out of Political Science.

[18] See, for example, Louis Mackey, "The Loss of the World in Kierkegaard's Ethics" in Kierkegaard: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Josiah Thompson (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972), pp. 266-88; Louis Dupre, "The Sickness Unto Death: Critique of the Modern Age" in International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Sickness Unto Death, ed. Robert L. Perkins (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), pp. 85-106; and Josiah Thompson, The Lonely Labyrinth: Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Works (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967).

In the Postscript Johannes Climacus suggests that charges of acosmism may be ill founded: "If ethics were to take away the entire world from . . . a thinker, letting him keep his own self, he would probably regard such a trifle as not worth keeping and would let it go with the rest -- and so it becomes acosmism. But why does he think so slightingly of his own self? If it were the meaning that he should give up the whole world in order to content himself with another person's ethical reality, he would be justified in disdaining the exchange, SV 10,44; CUP, 305. In a double sense Kierkegaard theorists tend to think of Kierkegaard as a religious author, which is indeed what he called himself (SV 18,81; POV, 5), and hence it is believed that his writings could not embody a rational political philosophy.[19]

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affirms the political relation.

[19] David Bruce Fletcher, Op. Cit. has correctly identified three noted authors who held this view: H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), pp. 243-44; Marjorie Grene, Introduction to Existentialism (Chicago: Phoenix Press, 1959), pp. 38-40; and S.U. Zuidema, Kierkegaard (Philadelphia: Presbytarian and Reformed, 1974), pp. 18-19. Both Zuidema and Grene draw on Kierkegaard's personal history to bolster their conclusions. Fletcher does the same to prove the opposite. One aim of this project is to show that it is not necessary to include biographical data to demonstrate Kierkegaard's political or philosophical concerns. See Paul Holmer, "On Understanding Kierkegaard," A Kierkegaard Critique, eds. Howard A. Johnson and Niels Thulstrup (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1962), in passim. Finally there is Walter Kaufmann, From Shakespeare to Existentialism (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960), who is a favorite of political theorists because of his excellent translations especially of the works of Nietzsche and Goethe. His interpretations of Kierkegaard's writings, however, leave a lot to be desired, and, we want to suggest, have negatively influenced political theorists on the subject of Kierkegaard. Kaufmann is not only negative in his overall assessment of Kierkegaard, his critique is all but an assassination of him both personally and in terms of his thought, an approach that makes little sense inasmuch as he in fact includes Kierkegaard in this and other surveys. The major points of his critique involve misquoting, misreading, and misunderstanding of Kierkegaard's thought, for example, attacking his psychology as inferior to Freud's when in fact Kierkegaard's psychology is far different and is generally characterized as anthropological philosophy (p. 184). He characterizes Kierkegaard's single self as a tormented individuality without the open horizon of Nietzsche, Goethe, or Kant (pp. 184 and 189), when in fact it is Kierkegaard who is willing to entertain the idea of something beyond the scope of reason or empirical inquiry. He describes Kierkegaard's religion as authoritarian omitting an explanation of what it is the age in fact refuses to obey, namely the potentiality of their own selves, and omitting the fact that Kierkegaard's most important ethical principle is freedom (p. 176-77). The brief positive comments at the end of this diatribe, which few readers probably ever arrive at, demonstrate that at least in part Kaufmann is perfectly capable of reading Kierkegaard with

But one should also keep in mind that exploring Kierkegaard's authorship involves immense problems because Kierkegaard himself consciously set out "to make a penetration of his work more difficult."[20] Kierkegaard wrote in various modes of communication, both direct and indirect, often publishing both simultaneously under his own and pseudonymous names, and making much use of a dialectical approach.[21] Moreover, his formulation sometimes would make use of an aphoristic style and at other times of a Hegelian and hence convoluted style giving "the appearance of chance and caprice," and making it difficult to discover "what an exceedingly rigorous ordering" underlies the development of his thought. Indeed, Kierkegaard seems to appeal to a

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an open mind (especially p. 202), which makes the prior unrestrained critique look even more strange.

[20] Gregor Malantschuk, Kierkegaard's Thought, tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 3.

[21] This approach should not be confused with Hegelian dialectics. Kierkegaard distinguishes between two kinds of dialectics: conceptual and qualitative dialectics. As Sylvia Walsh Utterback, "Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Christian Existence" (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1975), pp. 11-13, explains: "Conceptual dialectic refers to the conceptual or logical method of viewing one thing and its opposite simultaneously. The dialectical task is to sustain a dual perspective which emphasizes the opposition, duplicity, and tension between concepts rather than the synthesis and mediation of opposition as in Hegelian dialectics. While opposites seem to contradict each other, sometimes they actually complement each other." Qualitative (existential) dialectic refers not to cognitive concepts, but rather to existence. It is what Kierkegaard calls "the dialectic of inwardness or 'the ethical' in individual existence." See also Paul Holmer, "Kierkegaard's Logic," in Kierkegaardiana 2 (1957), pp. 34-5.

particular audience when he in his journals notes "the task must be made difficult, for only the difficult inspires the noble-hearted."[22]

That he also wrote in a relatively obscure language and suffered much in early English translations has only aggravated the circumstances of interpretation. At best, then, Kierkegaard's writings are regarded as "essentially esoteric literature,"[23] difficult to approach. Nevertheless, this study is also meant to encourage political scientists to further explore the riches of this immense authorship, especially in view of the emergence of the excellent new translations of the entire "Kierkegaard Writings," in order to dig open new areas of thought as well as a different approach to political meaning. Kierkegaard's somewhat obscure phenomenology deserves to be poured over by theorists, political and otherwise, as this projects hopes to show.

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II: THE DIALECTICS OF KIERKEGAARD'S AUTHORSHIP

Kierkegaard utilizes an indirect methodology in conveying his propositions about the single self. That is to say, he does not prescribe a philosophy of existence by dictating a psychiatric restorative to the problem of existence. That would not provide the proper condition for the achievement of freedom and equality and would be to misunderstand his Socratic perception of the teacher-student relationship (SV 6,17; PF, 12). Rather he maieutically provokes the reader to seek and acquire insight into the optimal standard for human activity whereupon the single self is expected to existentially appropriate this cognitive authority into its own life experience. The best way to do this, Kierkegaard suggests, is to catch the reader's attention not by pointing an accusing finger, but by carefully leading the reader to the point where self-consciousness becomes activated (SV 18, 101-02; POV, 35).

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[22] Malantschuk, Op. Cit. p. 4. Quotations are from PAP VII 1 A 104 (JP 656) and PAP VIII 2 B 88, pp. 184-85.

[23] C. Stephen Evans, Kierkegaard's "Fragments" and "Postscript": The Religious Philosophy of Johannes Climacus (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1983), p. 2.

To activate the consciousness of the reader necessitated an aesthetic detour which Kierkegaard himself characterized as deceptive (SV 18,105; POV, 40). It was designed to "lift"[24] the illusion under which the recipient (the reader) presumably existed. It was to be a proper preparation for a communication of truth, but to make this effective Kierkegaard insists "I must understand more than he -- but first and foremost I must surely understand what he understands (SV 18,97; POV, 27). Kierkegaard refers to this "deceptive" method as "the indirect mode of communication" as opposed to "direct communication."[25]

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[24] I have used the English translation "lift" (hæve) in the sense of "lifting away" to underscore Kierkegaard's implied illusion as something ephemeral that would have to float up and away --if someone blows at it hard enough. Later it will become obvious this illusion is anything but ephemeral.

Employing a direct attack Kierkegaard believes would only confirm the deluded in his illusion as well as embitter him, while the indirect approach would allow the deluded recipient to find his own way out of the illusion. Thus Kierkegaard reasons that the religious author in the present age must abandon "all the old military science" (SV 18,103; POV, 38) of direct attack and instead get in touch with the people in a less direct manner. That is to say, he must begin with aesthetic achievement, "[t]hat is earnest money" (POV, 26).

The point of Kierkegaard's argument is his insistence that he has to communicate an uncomfortable truth, and therefore he must proceed with caution.

> Consequently one does not begin in this way: I am a Christian, you are not a Christian; but in this way: you are a Christian, I am no Christian. Or one

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[25] "Objective thinking is wholly indifferent to the subjectivity, and thereby also to inwardness and appropriation; its mode of communication is therefore direct. . . . [I]t can be understood directly and be recited by rote. Objective thinking is therefore conscious only of itself, and is therefore not a communication[.] . . . Everywhere the subjective is of importance in cognition, and consequently appropriation constitutes the main issue; there communication is a work of art. It is doubly reflected, and its first form is precisely the subtlety that the subjectivities must be held divinely apart from one another, and not be permitted to fuse or coagulate into objectivity. This is objectivity's parting from the subjectivity," SV 9,65-8; CUP, 70-3. Moreover, "The indirect mode of communication makes communication an art in a different sense than when it is assumed by imagining it in this way: that the communicator has to present the communication to someone knowing, that this person may judge it, or to someone not knowing, that he may learn something. But no one bothers himself about the next consideration, that which precisely makes the communication dialectically so difficult: that the recipient is someone existing, and that this is the essential," SV 9,232; CUP, 246-47.

> does not begin in this way: It is Christianity I proclaim, and you live merely in aesthetic categories; no, one begins in this way: let us talk about the aesthetic; the deception lies in that one talks in this way precisely in order to arrive at the religious. Given the assumption, however, the other is, after all, also in the illusion that the aesthetic is the Christian, for he believes he is Christian, and yet he lives in aesthetic categories (SV 18;105; POV, 41).

The approach of indirect communication is to avoid the doctrinaire, avoid the pretense of theory, which, if communicated as knowledge, the recipient might misunderstand as something to be "known."[26] As Louis Mackey explains, "his purpose was not mystification but distance."[27]

Kierkegaard makes it very clear in his digression on the authorship in the middle of the Postscript that the fact "that there is no author is a means of keeping the reader at a distance" (SV 9,211; CUP, 226). The point is, the reader is not to dwell on the author in an exercise of hermeneutic gymnastics, but rather on the indirect communication which is meant to convey the state of illusion the reader presumably is in.

As a religious author Kierkegaard was well aware of his polemic situation, striking out as he did from within the society in which he himself had a stake. Thus his intention was not to absent himself to the proverbial Archimedean point. He recognized that "Every religious author, or speaker or teacher who absents himself, who is not there where the danger is, and where evil has its stronghold, he is a deceiver, and that will eventually become apparent" (SV 18,117; POV, 59-60).[28] Importantly, it should be noted, that Kierkegaard's aim was not destruction but reform (SV 12,203-18; WL, 199-212). He considered his efforts as a necessary therapeutic "corrective" to the present age[29] as will become clear in chapter four.

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[26] "That there is no result and no finite decision, is an indirect expression for the truth as inwardness, and thus, perhaps, a polemic against the truth as knowledge," SV 9,211; CUP, 226.

[27] Kierkegaard: A kind of Poet, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), p. 247.

Understanding Kierkegaard's methodology is to a large degree to understand his authorship which is both dialectically complex and intriguing, especially in view of its pseudonymous dimension.[30] The explanation of the

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[28] Michael Walzer, Interpretation and Social Criticism (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 61, has suggested that this is also the common stance of the social critic. "He is not a detached observer, even when he looks at the society he inhabits with a fresh and skeptical eye. He is not an enemy, even when he is fiercely opposed to this or that prevailing practice or institutional arrangement. His criticism does not require either detachment or enmity, because he finds warrant for critical engagement in the idealism, even if it is a hypocritical idealism, of the actually existing moral world."

[29] Kirmmse, Op. Cit. p. 738.

[30] It should be noted that Kierkegaard did not just write under a pen name. Most of his pseudonymous writings each have their own carefully chosen pseudonym some of which, like Johannes Climacus, the rationalist, has been involved in more than one work. In each case, Kierkegaard aimed to convey a message with the name. Thus Climacus is the Latin for ladder, meaning he is the rationalist constantly climbing toward and beyond the limitations of reason. What he finds beyond reason's limitations he may not embrace existentially, but he refuses to stifle thought that by virtue of passionate wonder pushes itself toward the paradox, toward what it cannot know. It is in this sense this inquiry understands openness.

Indeed, Kierkegaard in relation to himself ranks the authorship that follows is analyzed with a view to Kierkegaard's political philosophy. From this perspective it is possible to argue that among other things he, from the beginning of his authorship, was aiming at a political philosophy motivated by the circumstances of his historical situation. This is not to say that Kierkegaard asks 'who should rule.' He for all intents and purposes accepted the decisions of regime made for many Western European nations by the dramatic political upheavals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Liberal democracy was becoming an undeniable fact.

What concerns him now are the consequences of this new form of representative democracy that seems to sever the relationship between the single self and the state and in so doing generates internal relational conflicts. What concerns him now is the social condition as he mockingly observes the inevitable:

> [T]he dialectic of monarchy is historically both tried and settled. Now we are going to begin at another point, namely upon the intensive development of the state itself. Then emerges the category of "the single self."[31]

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pseudonyms hierarchically referring to them as higher and lower pseudonyms depending upon whether they are upbuilding or merely aesthetic. See Howard Hong's "Historical Introduction" to The Sickness Unto Death, pp. xxi-xxii. Importantly, and as stated in "A First and Last Declaration" at the end of the Postscript, Kierkegaard wants to be distinctly separated from these works, SV 10,285; CUP, no pagination, "p. 551," precisely because they represent unreal personalities lacking concretion. They are idealizations unbound by actual moral limitations of reality, Ibid.

[31] PAP 1 A 108 (JP 4116).

And Kierkegaard continues in a margin note, this time positing a warning:

> "It is one thing when the people, the crowd, the opposition struggles against the king, the government (that is what we call politics),[32] another thing is when there are disturbances in the state in the sense as when in a dwelling the residents on the various levels become antagonistic -- not toward the landlord, but among themselves. -- Controversy within the floors, all the way from the basement to the attic, but among themselves."[33]

Kierkegaard is concerned with how authority had been transferred from its religious and political origins to spontaneously arising social structures that were eagerly embraced by an unconnected public.[34] In other words, the problem of society was not to be expected to come from outside, but rather from within where, as Kierkegaard puts it, the house is in a disarray.

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[32] It should be noted that in chapter four we differentiate between "the political" in Kierkegaard which constitutes an existential condition closely associated with the ethical dimension of the single self and "politics" as here explained by Kierkegaard himself.

[33] PAP VIII 1 A 109 (JP 4117). Also Merold Westphal, "Kierkegaard's Sociology," International Kierkegaard Commentary: Two Ages, ed. Robert L. Perkins (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), pp. 133-34.

[34] Cf. Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), Ch. 2 in passim and especially p. 40: "It is decisive that society, on all its levels, excludes the possibility of action . . . Instead, society expects from each of its members a certain kind of behavior, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to 'normalize' its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement." Also Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960), Ch. 10 in passim; and John H. Hallowell, The Moral Foundation of Democracy (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 69.

It is this pathological condition Kierkegaard wants to make the reader aware of and especially the effect it has on the single self's spiritual health, and consequently on its understanding of the concept of citizenship.

His authorship can best be understood as he, in an Aristotelian fashion and hence scientifically, isolates the most important element from the context of the whole in order to analyze this element from its most ideal, indeed extreme, position. Like Aristotle, Kierkegaard presents this ideal version of individual existence in what Kresten Nordentoft has referred to as "literary-psychological experiments,"[35] on three progressive levels: aesthetic existence the end of which is pleasure, ethical existence which aims at some institutionalized good such as marriage or vocation, and religious existence which in Kierkegaard's scheme consists of two levels. In religiousness A the single self pursues dialectical inwardness in a development of self through self-knowledge in a relationship with God. In religiousness B the individual reclaims the world in relationship and community yet maintains the "dialectical tension with the passionate inwardness of religiousness A."[36] Thus in Kierkegaard's

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[35] Kresten Nordentoft, Kierkegaard's Psychology (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1978), p. 13.

[36] Russell M. Davis, "Kierkegaard and Community" in Union Seminary Quarterly Review 36 no. 4 (Summer 1981): p. 212. For a formal analysis of the "structure" of Kierkegaard's theory of stages see Stephen N. Dunning, Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Inwardness (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). Mark C Taylor's Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Authorship: A Study of Time and the Self (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975) is also helpful here.

"phenomenology of spirit" the single self is placed "in a progressively more self-conscious position of responsibility for his own life,"[37] a progression, however, that has no implications of logical necessity. These various forms of existence allow Kierkegaard to work out his category of the single self (*den Enkelte*) exposing all the traits and attributes these various experiences embody, and in so doing, he demonstrates his considerable psychological prowess.

These spheres of existence are presented in the form of more or less poetic prose from exciting and profound Nietzschean type disjunctive aphorisms and only apparently disorganized essays[38] in *Either-Or*, vol. I, to extraordinarily long, awkward, and repetitive Calvinistic type essays in *Either-Or*, vol. II, that depict the kind of ethical life that grounds its principles in social institutions and thereby expresses the God-relationship,[39] an ethical life distinct

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The implication of structure in the stages of existence should not be confused with Hegel's systematic dialectics emphatically castigated by Kierkegaard's pseudonyms. It is interesting to note that in his later writings of direct communication, Kierkegaard all but abandons these differentiations of forms of existence as his attack on the present state of affairs becomes more overt and radical. In a sense these later writings present the "either-or" of concrete existence: the life of the "philistine-bourgeois" or the life of the "ethico-religious personality."

[37] Stephen Crites, *In the Twilight of Christendom: Hegel vs Kierkegaard on Faith and History* (Chambersburgh, PA: American Academy of Religion, 1972), p. 74.

[38] George Connell, *To Be One Thing: Personal Unity in Kierkegaard's Thought* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985), p.54.

[39] *Ibid*, p. 161.

from the Christian life described in the later literature. However, it is what is in between these two extremes, and that includes the rest of Either-Or, vol. I and all the other early pseudonymous writings that demonstrate the breadth and depth of Kierkegaard's analytical acumen. From this perspective it is no wonder these early works have captured the imagination of readers throughout the world.

From the perspective of political philosophy, however, these are the works that render the least to an understanding of Kierkegaard's writings. In these works the single self is portrayed abstractly, without a concrete context and would seem to exist in a void.[40] Kierkegaard himself points to this problem in the essay entitled "The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama" in Either-Or, vol. I. There he equates the form of his pseudonymous authorship with the modern experience as he describes how in modern tragedy there are no epic circumstances. The hero is not tied to categories of state, of family, or of destiny (something that will become clear in chapter three) nor to a context which in Greek tragedy represents the fatalistic element where the hero's destruction is the result of both deed and suffering. In modern tragedy, in contrast, Kierkegaard contends the hero's destruction results from his deeds alone and hence "situation and character are actually predominant." The pain belongs to the hero alone; he is transparent only unto himself. There is "no epic foreground, no epic residue. The hero stands and falls entirely on his own deeds (Gjerninger)" (SV 2,133; EO I 144).

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[40] Russell Davis, Op. Cit. pp. 214-16, has admirably attempted to deduct a theory of community from the pseudonymous authorship, but even he must in the end resort to the later literature and especially to Works of Love to find concrete meaning to religiousness B's requirement for community.

Kierkegaard presents the category of the single self in these pseudonymous writings of indirect communication exactly as that self exists in "the present age," unattached, disinterested, if transparent, only to the self, but not comprehensible to others, and completely preoccupied with the self as most poignantly exemplified in the essay "Johannes the Seducer," that concludes Either-Or, vol. I.

With this explanation in mind it becomes necessary to ask how these early pseudonymous writings are to be understood, especially in view of the fact that they were accompanied by a parallel series of direct communications that Kierkegaard refers to as "Upbuilding Discourses." It was in the very first of these latter, published just three months after Either-Or, that Kierkegaard introduced his category of the single self undeniably underscoring his claim in the Point of View that he wanted, at least for his own sake, to remind the world that his was a religious project.[41] He knew well that people would not read these discourses, and certainly not with the enthusiasm accorded especially Either-Or. However, the presence of these direct communications only intensify the problem of the early writings inasmuch as they too focus upon an unattached and hence abstract single self. Kierkegaard explains the parallel series this way.

> "The religious is immediately present straight from the beginning. Conversely, the aesthetic is again present still at the last moment. . . . Hence first and last assurance is provided against interpreting the phenomenon thusly: that it is an aesthetic author who with the lapse of time has changed and has kind of become a religious author" (SV 18,86; POV, 12).

But this does not explain the problem of the abstract single self, and thus it would seem that at the outset of this dialectical authorship two things seem to be occupying Kierkegaard.

On the one hand, he wants to present what is going to form the central focus for his work as an author, namely the single self as it emerges most ideally within the various spheres of existence. It would be described in such a way as to appear either detrimental or beneficial to its spiritual health, but without the clutter that a social context necessarily generates. Thus within these early writings the reader is only exposed to the internal impulses this single self must overcome if it is to achieve what Kierkegaard refers to as inwardness.[42] On the other hand, that something is missing is not lost on Kierkegaard. In a journal note from 1847, the year of the publication of Works of Love, he chastises his readers because they have not understood the meaning of his "maieutic prudence" designed to advance slowly so as not to reveal how much he is aware of, not to reveal what is to follow.

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[41] See the chapter titled "The Expectation of Faith" in Edifying Discourses, in passim. Note that in all the latest scholarship, including the new translations, the Danish word used so much by Kierkegaard to characterize the "right" form of love (see chapter five): opbyggende, which Walter Lowrie translated as "edifying," is now generally agreed upon should be translated as "upbuilding." However, because the new "Kierkegaard Writings" have not yet been completed, the reader must still rely on Lowrie's translation.

> On the occasion of my new upbuilding discourses there will probably be cries about that I do not know what the next is to be, do not know about sociality. Those fools! On the other hand, I owe to myself before God to confess, that there in some sense is some truth in it, only not as people understand it, namely that it constantly, when first I have quite clearly and sharply drawn up the one side, then the other side stands out so much stronger.
>
> Now I have the theme for the next book. It will be called:
>
> Works of Love.[43]

It is, then, only in the later writings, and especially in Works of Love and Two Ages, where the social context is included, that the reader is introduced to the imposition of the reductionism of the collective idea in its historical manifestation, and is introduced to the qualifying or authenticating need (Nødvendighed) of the "idea of community" expressed in loving one's neighbor as oneself. Only then does Kierkegaard reveal all the external measures that manifest themselves internally, measures which the single self must incorporate into the economy of its life in its quest for existential authenticity.

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[42] This is where the reader is introduced to Kierkegaard's renowned concept of despair that takes a different form in each sphere of existence. Note, however, that this category is not worked through properly until the later literature, in other words, not until the social aspect of the individual's experience has been included. See The Sickness Unto Death, in passim, where Kierkegaard gives this concept its final comprehensive formulation.

[43] PAP VIII 1 A 4. Note that Kierkegaard in the Danish has a different spelling than throughout Works of Love of the word translated as love: Kjærligheden. It is closer to the modern spelling of that word which simply eliminates the "j".

> In every one of the pseudonymous works, in one way or another, this about 'the single self' appears; but there the single self is that aesthetically qualified in a preeminent sense, the excellent, etc. In every one of the upbuilding writings, and as officially as possible, this about 'the single self' appears; but there the single self is what every human being is or can be. The point of departure for the pseudonyms is precisely in the differentiation between human beings [menneske og menneske] in terms of intellect, cultivation [dannelse) etc; the point of departure for the upbuilding discourses is in the upbuilding, and consequently in the universally human. But this double meaning is precisely the dialectic of 'the single self.' 'The single self' can signify the only one among all, and 'the single self' can signify everyone (SV 18,159-60; POV, 124).

CHAPTER I

A PROBLEM OF MODERNITY: THE SEPARATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

> . . . I cannot understand how you can talk so coldly and so calmly about what affects me so deeply.[1]

> I wonder if my gaze is not turned away from what is important by letting myself begin with physiology, instead of assuming the whole of physiology and saying: Begin.[2]

Søren Kierkegaard is one of the first serious thinkers to address what he considers the primary problem of modern thought, a problem he believes has permeated all realms of human experience be they theoretical or practical. In view of the perceived seriousness of this problem, Kierkegaard found it necessary to introduce a radical rewriting of the most cherished tenets of the modern experience, freedom and equality. He realized that he could not mitigate the problem unless he addressed what was most fundamental to the human condition in the present age. Thus it is not a rewriting grounded in subjective arbitrariness nor in religious enthusiasm. Kierkegaard's concern lies with the health of the consciousness of the single self (den Enkelte)[3] which he believed had been severely threatened in the modern age. However, in order to fully appreciate the radical nature of Kierkegaard's theory of freedom and equality, what will here be referred to as his "corrective," it becomes necessary to understand the underlying assumptions for his critique of modernity and the consequent symptomatic effects of the imputed problem.[4]

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[1] Søren Kierkegaards Papirer, ed. P.A. Heiberg og V. Kuhr (København: Gyldendal, 1915), VII 1 A 182, p. 118 (Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers, ed. and tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978, #2807). Hereafter known as PAP followed by volume and number and (JP followed by number).

[2] Ibid, p. 119.

I:1

The underlying assumptions for Kierkegaard's critique of modernity had their origin in the fundamental separation of knowledge and human experience, a separation which Kierkegaard believed, occurred as a result of the emergence of modern natural science and philosophy's adoptation of scientific methodology.[5] He argues this separation ensued from the rejection of classical philosophy's teleological approach to questions of being. Classical philosophy presupposed an ordered whole that could be consciously known and experienced, creating for the single self a place in the world that would fundamentally shape the framework of his thought and thus make human existence directed and purposeful. This holistic approach was replaced by modernity's rigorous application of scientific methodology to all epistemological inquiry and with an exclusive focus on natural measurable objects.[6]

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[3] For more on Kierkegaard's category of the single self and our choice of translation see Introduction, p. iv, note 5.

[4] These symptomatic effects as they express themselves theoretically and practically will be dealt with in chapters II and III respectively.

[5] See especially PAP VII 1 A 182-215 (JP 2807-2820) and SV 10,46-51; CUP, 307-312.

> In our time it is the natural sciences which are especially dangerous. Physiology[7] will ultimately extend itself to the point that it embraces ethics. There are already sufficient clues of a new endeavor: to treat ethics as physics, whereby all of the ethical becomes an illusion, and the ethical in the race is treated statistically by averages or is calculated as one calculates vibrations in laws of nature.[8]

Ethical and religious categories were excluded from modern philosophical analysis, signifying for Kierkegaard a secularization of consciousness.[9] This transformation of the how and what of philosophical inquiry led him to fear that all inquiry into the good, and hence questions of essential human experience, would lose their transcendent ground and instead be mathematized and answer only to material and efficient causes, as if they were laws of nature.[10] That is to say, the scientific method's insistence upon objectivity had resulted in a fundamental aesthetic and intellectual disinterestedness which Kierkegaard interpreted as "an expression for indifference to reality" (SV 10,24; CUP, 282).

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[6] The unfinished and during his own lifetime unpublished Johannes Climacus or De Omnibus Dubitandum Est (JC) by Johannes Climacus illuminates Kierkegaard's understanding of the shift that philosophy underwent as a result of Descartes' adaptation of the scientific approach to rational inquiry.

[7] By "physiology" Kierkegaard means biology and the doctrine of evolution (udviklingslære) according to Gregor Malantschuk, "Søren Kierkegaard og Naturvidenskaberne," Kristligt Dagblad (October 22, 1951). Malantschuk appears to be a little ahead of himself since Darwin did not publish The Origin of Species until 1859, and hence Kierkegaard could not have known the doctrine of evolution.

[8] PAP VII 1 A 182 (JP 2807).

[9] "When the rich man drives with lights on his carriage in the dark night, he sees a small area better than the poor who drives in the dark -- but neither does he see the stars; precisely the lights prevent that. Just so with all secularized understanding (Forstandighed); it sees well close

Inasmuch as Kierkegaard's philosophical anthropology[11] implied an eternal quality to which the ethical dimension of existence responds, the separation of knowledge and experience meant that the potentiality, or to use Kierkegaard's own language, "the possibility" (Muligheden) of essential human experience was no longer the aim of philosophical inquiry.

> Everywhere it is decisively concluded that thinking is the ultimate; science moves farther and farther

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up, but is deprived of the infinite view." PAP VII 1 A 234 (JP 2289).

[10] Compare Edmund Husserl, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, tr. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 9, where he explains how the new science dropped all metaphysical questions, and further on pp. 22-3, where he suggests modern natural science produced an altogether "new idea of mathematical natural science" that transformed the general idea of philosophy.

[11] See chapter four, note 65 for Reidar Thompte's "Historical Introduction" to The Concept of Anxiety, p. xiv, on how we are to understand Kierkegaard's concept of philosophical anthropology.

> away from the primitive impressions of Existents.[12] There is nothing to experience, nothing to learn, everything is completed and the task of speculation is now to rubricate, classify, and methodically arrange the particular conceptualization of thought. One does not love, does not believe, does not act, but one knows what erotic love (Elskov)[13] is, what faith is, and now the only question is about their place in the system: in the same way the domino player has his pieces lying before him and the game consists in putting them together (SV 10,46; CUP, 307-08).

That is to say, the scientific approach could not pursue the metaphysical categories essential to human experience, and hence could render no meaningful explanations of the most important dimension of human existence: the striving embodied in the movement from possibility to actuality.

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[12] Ordinarily Kierkegaard would use the Danish word Tilværelse for existence. Here he is eager to emphasize the special meaning he brings to his particular conception of existence, a meaning spelled out in the Postscript, but which, according to Climacus, has its origin in Plato's Symposium. "Existents itself, to exist as such, is striving and is equally as pathetic as it is comic. It is pathetic because striving is infinite, that is, it is directed toward the infinite, is the actualization of infinitude which is the ultimate form of pathos; it is comic because striving is inherently a self-contradiction. . . . This quality of Existents recalls the Greek conception of Eros as found in the Symposium [203bff] [where] . . . erotic love (Elskov) here means unconcealed Existents or that by which life is in its totality, the life which is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite. Poverty and wealth, according to Plato, begat Eros whose nature is created from both. But what is Existents? It is that child begat of the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal, and therefore is continuously striving. This was Socrates' meaning: therefore love (Kjerlighed) is continuously striving, that is, the thinking subject is existing. It is only systematists and the objective philosophers who have ceased to be human beings and have become speculative philosophy which belongs in the realm of pure being (SV 9,79-80; CUP, 84-5). See also SV 20,66-7 where Jens Himmelstrup elaborates on Kierkegaard's use of the word "Existents."

[13] Climacus differentiates between erotic love (Elskov) and love (Kjerlighed) as in love of neighbor (see note above). This differentiation becomes very important in chapters IV and V where it will be shown that Kierkegaard's "corrective" is fundamentally grounded in the latter conception of love.

Although Kierkegaard is addressing the problem of the natural sciences, "the conflict with the objections of the natural sciences and the struggle in this regard will . . . be analogical to the conflict with the system."[14] Natural science could not incorporate this intentional movement on a concrete level, that is, in individual human existence. Kierkegaard is addressing the Hegelian system which was the major focus of his attack on speculative philosophy as it manifested itself in the guise (method) of modern natural science (something that will become clear in the present as well as in the following chapter).[15] In other words, knowledge has become its own end, and the more dexterity scholarship could bring to this gathering of information, the more knowledge became removed from what mattered in life, what Kierkegaard refers to as essential experience.[16]

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[14] PAP X 5 A 73 (JP 2823).

[15] In referring to Hegelian systematic philosophy, which Kierkegaard believes took its cue from Cartesian rationalism (see JC in passim), his sardonic irony comes to the fore: "The objective tendency (which proposes to make everyone an observer and in its maximum into such an observer that he like a ghost is scarcely to be distinguished from the monstrous spirit of past eras) naturally refuses to hear anything and to know anything except what stands in relation to itself (SV 9,110; CUP, 118). This extravagance of speculative philosophy has also been captured by Husserl, Op. Cit. pp. 8-9: "In a bold, even extravagant, elevation of the meaning of universality, begun by Descartes, this new philosophy seeks nothing less than to encompass, in the unity of a theoretical system, all meaningful questions in a rigorous scientific manner, with an apodictically intelligible methodology, in an unending but rationally ordered progress of inquiry."

> "The subjective thinker is not a scientist, he is an artist. To exist is an art. The subjective thinker is aesthetic enough to give his life aesthetic content, ethical enough to regulate it, dialectical enough to thoughtfully govern it" (SV 10,52; CUP, 314).

This means the subjective thinker is a person of reason, a reason which governs the other traits.

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Kierkegaard's intentional philosophy derives mainly from Aristotle.[17] According to Aristotle, philosophical inquiry into the nature of things required both knowledge and experience.[18] Without experience human beings would be determined by fate unable to explain or adequately apply in a practical sense the data of their cognitive insight. The philosopher is compelled to establish the truth of things by theoretical investigation,[19] and only by reflecting on that experience would there be an awareness of universal principles.[20] Only by applying both knowledge and experience could one hope to answer the What and Why of the world and thus discover its meaning.

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[16] "That essential knowledge essentially relates itself to existence -- does not mean . . . that knowledge relates to something existing as its object, but means that knowledge relates itself to the knower, who is essentially an existing being and that for this reason all essential knowledge is essentially related to Existents, to existing as such. Only ethical and ethico-religious knowledge is therefore essential knowledge. But all ethical and all ethico-religious knowledge is essentially related to the fact that the knower exists (SV 9,164-65; CUP, 177). See also SV 9,126-27; CUP, 135-36; SV 9,173; CUP, 185; and again PAP XI 2 A 191 (JP 2303): "[M]athematical, historical learning, and so on, [are intellectual disciplines] which are not related to what kind of life one lives, to character." For a contrasting interpretation of Hegel's "system," see Hans-Georg Gadamer, Reason in the Age of Science, tr. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1981), pp. 36-7.

[17] "[When Aristotle] already has said that the transition from possibility to actuality is a kinesis, then he is not talking about the logical possibility and actuality but about that of freedom, and therefore he correctly posits the movement." PAP IV B 117, p. 290. Also PAP IV C 47 and SV 10,45; CUP, 306.

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[18] Metaphysics 981a, tr. taken from A.E. Taylor Aristotle on His Predecessors (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1969): ". . . the human species lives also by the guidance of rules of art and reflective inferences. . . .[S]cience and art in man are a product of experience. For 'experience has created art,' as Polus correctly remarks, 'but inexperience chance.' . . . Now, for purposes of practice experience is recognized to be not inferior to art; indeed, we observe that persons of experience are actually more successful than those who possess theory without experience. The reason of this is that experience is acquaintance with individual facts, but art with general rules, and all action and production is concerned with the individual. Thus the physician does not cure man, except in an accidental sense, but Callias or Socrates or some other individual person of whom it is an accident to be a man. Hence, if one possesses the theory without the experience, and is acquainted with the universal concept, but not with the individual fact contained under it, he will often go wrong in his treatment; for what has to be treated is the individual."
To "possess theory without experience" in this sense is a serious problem in the present age according to Kierkegaard. He uses the connection between knowledge and experience differently than Aristotle's example shows only to the degree that his individual, unlike Aristotle's physician, is not acting upon somebody else, but on himself.

[19] Metaphysics, tr. Richard Hope (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1952), 997a13.

[20] A.E. Taylor, Aristotle (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1955), p. 37.

Aristotle's point, according to Werner Jaeger, is that only when, for example, politics "is studied on scientific principles and regarded as a normative discipline," can knowledge "give the statesman insight into the ultimate norms in accordance with which he must direct his activity."[21] This kind of move from theoretical insight to practical application is embodied in Aristotle's understanding of the nature of philosophy as teleological, meaning "[t]he very art or applied science and every . . . action and choice seem to aim at some good."[22] That is to say everything comes into being for the sake of an end. In Jaeger's words, "an end is that which always appears as the final result of a development, in accordance with natural law and by a continuous process, and in which the process attains its completion."[23] In other words, classical philosophy conducted its epistemological and ontological inquiries precisely in order to allow participation in being making human existence directed and purposeful.

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[21] Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development, tr. Richard Robinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 76-7.

[22] Nicomachean Ethics, tr. Martin Ostwald (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1962), 1094a.

[23] Jaeger, Op. Cit. p. 75.

With the scientific and philosophical revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, a quantitative equivalence of all changes in nature had emerged which denied in its most negative aspect the possibility of any non-physical dimension intervening in the course of physical events. Rather than engaging in discoveries that would make the universe meaningful in human terms, modern natural science concentrated its efforts on explaining the efficient and material causes underlying the phenomena of nature without concern for the practical aspects of life (SV 10,24; CUP, 282-83).[24] It meant that the act of thinking changed as did the way of life for the single self. Not only was the contingency of its existence revealed, but as Karl Löwith has commented, it also implied a denaturing of human life.[25] This single self also became separated from his world, a world that was characterized "as a relatively insignificant background of man's forlorn existence."[26] It was a world situated in a seemingly infinite universe "that is the farthest removed from immediate existential concern of a self with itself,"[27] and subject only to certain laws that could be cognitively discovered. In these, human beings could not participate inasmuch as these laws rendered no universal categories for what Kierkegaard has defined as essential experience, and consequently the single self was utterly lost in the contingency of that world.

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[24] As Hannah Arendt has so aptly commented in Between Past and Future (New York: Penguin Books, 1954), p. 57: "Emphasis shifted from interest in things to interest in processes, of which things were soon to become almost accidental by-products." Compare Hans Jonas, "Seventeenth Century and After: The Meaning of the Scientific and Technological Revolution," Philosophical Essays (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 47.

[25] Nature, History, and Existentialism (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966), p. 24.

[26] Ibid, pp. 27, 103.

> I am at the end of my rope. I am nauseated by life, it is insipid without salt and meaning. . . . One sticks a finger into the ground to smell what country one is in; I stick my finger into existence -- it smells of nothing. Where am I? What does it mean: the world? What does this word mean? Who tricked me into this whole thing and now leaves me standing there? Who am I? How did I get into the world; why was I not asked, why was I not informed of the rules and regulations, but thrust into the ranks as if I was bought from a peddling shanghaier of human beings? How did I get involved in this big enterprise called reality? Why should I be interested? Is it not a matter of free choice? And if I am compelled to be interested, where is the conductor, I have something to say about this (SV 5,171; R, 200).

It is this circumstance that prompts Kierkegaard to call natural science sophistical and the scientist a sophist,[28] precisely because the relationship between science and philosophy had become confused.

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[27] Ibid, p. 102.

[28] PAP VII 1 A 195 (JP 2815); PAP VII 1 A 196 (JP 2816); PAP VII 1 A 199 (JP 2819); and PAP VII 1 A 185 (JP 2295). Malantschuk in Kristligt Dagblad reminds the reader that Kierkegaard's critical stance toward the natural sciences were at his own time difficult to comprehend in view of the general and often blinding enthusiasm over scientific progress. Today his stance, although embraced by many, would to some degree also be misplaced inasmuch as we have come to understand that scientific knowledge is not as radically separated from the knower's mind as was thought in Kierkegaard's time and indeed up to very recently. See, for example, Michael Polanyi,

> The confusion lies in the fact that it never becomes dialectically clear which is which, how philosophy is to use natural science. Is the whole thing an ingenious metaphor (then one might as well be ignorant of it), is it an example, an analogy, or is it of such importance that theory must be revised in relation to it?[29]

The consequences for the single self would be detrimental, Kierkegaard laments, inasmuch as he believes that knowledge affects the knower's mind,[30] and the knower is essentially interested. Scientific methodology, in contrast, requires objectivity and hence disinterestedness, as when "a physiologist counts the pulse-beat and studies the nervous system [which] has no relation to ethical enthusiasm."[31]

Personal Knowledge (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958 and 1962), esp. pp. 299-324; and Stephen Toulmin, "The Construal of Reality: Criticism in Modern and Postmodern Science," The Politics of Interpretation, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 112. See also note 79 this chapter.

[29] PAP VII 1 A 200 (JP 2820). For somewhat parallel arguments see Hans Jonas, pp. 47, 66; Eric Voegelin, "The Origins of Scientism," Social Research 15 (1948), pp. 470-72; and Husserl, Op. Cit. p. 61.

[30] "All knowledge has something captivating about it, but, on the other hand, it also alters the entire state of the knower's psyche." PAP VII 1 A 182 (JP 2807). See also note 15 this chapter.

[31] PAP VII 1 A 182 (JP 2807). In the margin to this journal notation Kierkegaard has added: "Scientific admiration of nature's ingenuity in the human physiology is entirely heterogeneous, indeed is heresy in relation to the ethical which has nothing to do with admiration but only with this: You shall." PAP VII 1 A 183 (JP 2808). These (two) quotations are crucial to a partial demonstration of what Kierkegaard identifies as the modern pathology of consciousness and the

The scientific preoccupation with the configuration of the universe or newly discovered biological structures strictly for the sake of information gathering rendered what Kierkegaard calls essential human experience nonessential.[32] The demand for objectivity, which required disinterestedness and impersonal analysis, had produced an investigator attaining knowledge of the world, but acquiring little, if any, self-knowledge.[33] This mechanical approach to a study of the universe had necessarily eliminated or so transmuted the ethical dimension that questions about the good are rendered

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consequent need for a "corrective." Malantschuk, Op. Cit. explains Kierkegaard's objection to the scientific approach vividly: "Kierkegaard finds that what is most comical are the materialist biologists: first they kill the spirit, that is, they acknowledge only the lifeless, the material as the foundational, and out of this dead stuff they then believe they can derive an explanation of life and all its variety. The material apprehension, according to Kierkegaard, has to do with 'that by killing one believes to have found the spirit that animates it.'"

[32] For parallel interpretations see, for example, Alexandre Koyré, From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957), p. 2; E.A. Burtt, The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1952), pp. 89-90; A.N. Whitehead, Science and the Modern World (New York: The Free Press, 1925 and 1953), p. 30; and Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 261ff.

[33] PAP VII 1 A 200 (JP 2820). Compare to Husserl who in his "Vienna Lectures," Op. Cit., p. 295, stated: "Someone who is raised on natural science takes it for granted that everything merely subjective must be excluded and that the natural scientific method, exhibiting itself in subjective manners of representation, determines objectivity. Thus he seeks what is objectively true even for the psychic." See also pp. 56-7.

insignificant and even irrelevant, erecting an insurmountable chasm between fact and value. Kierkegaard refers directly to this chasm when he tries to explain the consequences of the scientific approach that has either engaged in hypocrisy by insisting that natural science will lead to God,[34] or has altogether set God aside leaving questions of good and bad to be decided "en masse." Thus he argues that neither moral nor religious judgments can be settled by human consensus (SV 15,172; SUD, 123-24 and SV 18,155; POV, 114).[35] As Paul Holmer comments, for Kierkegaard philosophers had forgotten the meaning of existence; the familiar had escaped them.[36]

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[34] PAP VII 1 A 186 (JP 2809). It is surprising that Kierkegaard in this regard nowhere comments on his contemporary H.C. Ørsted, the discoverer of electro-magnetism, except to react negatively to a positive account of his book Aanden i Naturen (København: Vintens Forlag, 1978), in the newspaper Berlingske Tidende, København (Dec. 28, 1849). Kierkegaard's remark is little else than an ill tempered generalization when he notes: ". . . the whole book is from first to last, scientifically, that is, philosophically scientifically, insignificant." PAP X 2 A 302. Ørsted's book sets out to elucidate the relationship between faith and science. The chapter titled "Videnskabsdyrkningen, betragtet som Religionsudøvelse" (The Cultivation of Science viewed as Religious Exercise), p. 146, is especially revealing: "The constant in nature comes from the eternally independent; the utterings on life from him who is life itself, the coherence and harmony of the whole from the one perfect wisdom."

[35] For parallel interpretations see Leo Strauss, Natural Right and History (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 8 and 35-80; Koyré, Op. Cit. pp. 2, 100-01, 105; Burtt, Op. Cit. p. 303; and Whitehead, Op. Cit. p. 142.

[36] "Kierkegaard and Philosophy," New Themes in Christian Philosophy, ed. Ralph M. McInerny (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), p. 17. See also p. 33 for Holmer's interpretation of Kierkegaard's charge that modern philosophy is fearful of knowledge which cannot be categorized and systematized and therefore is placed outside of

By eliminating questions about the good, the two distinct realms of human experience had become confused, indeed conflated, positing worldly values as authoritative. The language of the spiritual realm as Kierkegaard recognized it, had been transmuted by the secular world's material expectations (processes) implying for Kierkegaard a clear rejection of a genuine dialectical life and rendering the single self unconnected and therefore confused and unfulfilled.

I:4

That the scientific approach also opposed Christian teaching's emphasis on the importance of the existence of the single self, the essence of which was rooted in an empirically unverifiable soul, only aggravated the problem from Kierkegaard's perspective. In this mechanized view of nature man was reduced to an observer by which Kierkegaard meant an "outsider" (Trediemand), a spectator (Tilskuer), someone who stood at the margin of all essential relationships (SV 14,73;

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epistemological concerns. Compare to Leo Strauss, "The Three Waves of Modernity," Political Philosophy: Six Essays by Leo Strauss, ed. Hilail Gildin (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1975), pp. 81-2: "The crisis . . . of modernity reveals itself in the fact . . . that modern Western man no longer knows what he wants -- that he no longer believes that he can know what is good and bad, what is right and wrong. . . . The crisis of modernity is, then, primarily the crisis of modern political philosophy."

TA, 202).[37]

The active moral agent so elementary to classical philosophy and Christian teaching had been replaced by a "totality" (SV 9,47; CUP, 50) made up of an aggregate of individuals about whom it was assumed, as a matter of course, that they were Christians. As Johannes Climacus[38] explains the Hegelian speculative viewpoint, "the philosopher contemplates Christianity for the sake of interpreting it with his speculative thought; aye, with his genuinely speculative thought" (SV 9,48; CUP, 51).

But, Anti-Climacus responds, truth, as Christ argued, is like a food, it is a matter of "appropriating" (tilegne) it through "eating" (spise), not through lectures that leave the impression "truth is understanding." Hence "Christianly understood, the truth consists not in knowing the truth but in being the truth" (SV 16,193; TC, 201-02). Therefore Christianity cannot be taught as such.

The aim of teaching is a result, learning something cognitively. The end of believing is a way of life, a particular lifestyle. In other words, the Christian single self had become objectivized, and this happened precisely because speculative philosophy had posited Christianity as an historical phenomenon in the development of consciousness of freedom (SV 9,46-52; CUP, 49-55; and SV 16,207; TC, 216).[39]

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[37] As E.A. Burtt, Op. Cit. p. 90, has so poignantly expressed this problem: "[M]an is hardly more than a bundle of secondary qualities [as he] . . . begins to appear for the first time in the history of thought as an irrelevant spectator and insignificant effect of the great mathematical system which is the substance of reality."

[38] For more on this pseudonym see Introduction, p. xxix, note 30.

By positing Christianity as an historical phenomenon, it is assumed that its truth is cognitively revealed as the eternal truth, meaning the problem of its truth is removed. To remove the problem of Christianity is to obviate the dialectic of human experience, and hence in Kierkegaard's opinion to deny human nature proper. Climacus summarizes the distinction between the scientific and the Christian viewpoints in a terse statement in the Postscript: "The difference is merely this, that [modern natural] science will teach that the way is to become objective, while Christianity teaches that the way is to become subjective, i.e. to become a subject in truth" (SV 9,109; CUP, 117).[40] To make his point

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[39] Here Anti-Climacus engages in an appropriate and most interesting discussion about the difference between truth and truth and hence the confusion between Christianity and the triumphant church. He suggests that Christianity has been viewed as truth in terms of the result rather than viewing it as truth in terms of "the way" (Veien) (SV 16,194; TC, 202). However, a detailed analysis of this discussion is beyond the scope of this project.

[40] Also PAP VII 1 A 196 (JP 2816); PAP VII 1 A 182 (JP 2807); PAP VI B 40:5 (JP 2286); and PAP VII 1 A 34 (JP 2292). It should be noted that Kierkegaard does not deny the value of the natural sciences. Indeed, he concedes with undeniable hubris he was quite inspired by the possibilities they provided. But he was more interested in the questions of existence: "By virtue of reason and freedom, life has always interested me most, and it has always been my desire to clarify and solve the riddle of life." Kierkegaard: Letters and Documents, tr. Henrik Rosenmeier, ed. Howard V. and Edna

Climacus engages in a linguistic quip that loses little in translation: "The guidance of science is misguidance" (Videnskabens Veiledning er Vildledelse).

Kierkegaard's fear is that the thinker has been left to oscillate with all the results his talents and instincts have provided him about the universe. This undialectical pursuit does not render him certainty of spirit, it does not allow him to "become transparent to himself in the decisiveness of the spirit, in the ethical appropriation of his talents,"[41] and so he ends up understanding the world, but not himself.[42] And if he does not understand himself in this Socratic sense, Kierkegaard concludes, his existence is essentially meaningless.

> To the extent that there is a sort of unconscious life in such a person's knowledge, the sciences may be said to demand his life, but to the extent that there is not, his activity is comparable to that of the person who nourishes the earth by the decay of

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H. Hong, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 45. Hereafter known as Letters.

[41] By "the ethical appropriation of his talents" Kierkegaard means something very close to what Charles Taylor in his seminal work Sources of the Self (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 18 and 28, has called a framework, an orientation in moral space toward the good. "Framework is that in virtue of which we make sense of our lives spiritually. Not to have a framework is to fall into a life which is spiritually senseless."

[42] PAP VII 1 A 200 (JP 2820). In the margin Kierkegaard added a further notation of his skepticism at the thought of such a person living "happily in this way without feeling any misgivings because the deceptive variety of observations and discoveries continuously conceals the total unclarity."

her dead body."[43]

By removing experience from "essential knowing" (væsentlig erkjenden), an awareness of an intentional movement in the human condition has also been eliminated. The implication is that becoming fully human only demands what the world wants (SV 12,251; WL, 244). It also suggests the scientific method has been successful, but as Paul Feyerabend cautions, "this success is in part a result of a historical path of least resistance."[44] However, a deepening of the self under these circumstances would be neither possible nor required (SV 12,223; WL, 217). But a deepening of the self is precisely what Kierkegaard's intentional philosophy allows for.

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[43] Letters, p. 44. Compare Paul Feyerabend, Farewell to Reason (London: Verso, 1987), p. 4: "The imposition of . . . 'objective' information detached from [existential] preferences and problems emptied existence of its epistemic ingredients and made it barren and meaningless." And again on p. 5: "To say that a procedure or a point of view is objective(ly true) is to claim that it is valid irrespective of human expectations, ideas, attitudes, wishes." But as he also and most appropriately reminds the reader, "Rationalism did not introduce order and wisdom where before there was chaos and ignorance; it introduced a special kind of order, established by special procedures and different from the order and the procedures of historical traditions." (p. 118). . . . "Philosophy is the domain of thought and thought seems to be objective and independent of styles, impressions, feelings. . . . This is itself a philosophical theory. There are other views, such as that of Kierkegaard, who also asserts that thought receives content by being connected with a thinker, is essentially subjective and is incapable of producing 'results' -- that is, permanent and unchanging signposts for an evaluation of the evanescent opinions of humanity. While objective thought, writes Kierkegaard [Climacus], translates everything into results and helps all mankind to cheat, by copying these off and reciting them by rote, subjective thought puts everything in process and omits the results; partly because this belongs to him who has the way and partly because as an existing individual he is constantly in process of coming to be, which holds true of every human being who has not permitted himself to be deceived into becoming objective, inhumanly identifying himself with speculative philosophy in the abstract." (p. 153). Cf. SV 9,63; CUP, 68. For more on the problem of the scientific method's demand for results see Stephen Crites, In the Twilight of Christendom: Hegel vs Kierkegaard on Faith and History (Chambersburg, PA: American Academy of Religion, 1972), pp. 61-2; and for more on Climacus' objections, see SV 9,117-37; CUP, 126-47.

Kierkegaard operates with two conceptions of intentional existence, one that posits an absolute end that requires existence to express "a pathetic relationship to an eternal happiness," and thus "involves a volitional concentration in the highest sense," and one that posits relative ends. Even the latter, Climacus argues, in itself could transform human existence, at least partially, except that modernity has become so preoccupied with "thinking about everything, we rarely see an existence that devotes itself energetically even to a relative end."

The point of relative ends is that they are willed for the sake of other ends, while the absolute end "must be willed for its own sake" (SV 10,87-8; CUP, 352-53). This would mean that the decisive criterion for relating absolutely to the absolute would be that "one is willing to give up the relative whenever the relative conflicts with the absolute." As C. Stephen Evans goes on to say, for Climacus this is a universal argument and "is valid even if someone understands the absolute end differently than he does. This state of being willing to give up any and every finite good for the sake of the infinite Climacus calls resignation."[45]

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[44] Farewell to Reason (London: Verso, 1987), p. 157n5.

Climacus' language of resignation and its differentiation from suffering which, according to Evans, is "the condition of the individual self who is attempting to realize his condition but has not fully done so,"[46] has often been misunderstood to mean a withdrawal _from_ the world. But Climacus is very clear on this point.

> It is the absolute _telos_ for the one willing, who wants to strive absolutely. . . . [T]he pathetic lies in _existentially [existerende] expressing this in Existents_; the pathetic lies _not_ in witnessing about an eternal happiness, but in transforming one's own _Existents_ into a testimony about it (SV 10,88; CUP, 353 emphasis added).

Climacus has three Socratic moments in mind here.

First: what he calls the Socratic meaning of love (_Kjerlighed_), which is constantly to strive, a subject discussed above (SV 9,80; CUP, 85).[47]

Second: the Socratic meaning of the problem of immortality: "But Socrates! He puts the question objectively in a problematic manner: if there is an immortality. . . . On this "if" he stakes his whole life, he dares to die, and he has so arranged the pattern of his life that it must be found acceptable -- _if_ there is an immortality" (SV 9,168; CUP 180). Climacus concludes, "the Socratic uncertainty was thus an expression of the fact that the eternal truth is related to an existing individual self, and hence must remain a paradox to him as long as he exists" (_Ibid_).[48]

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[45] _Kierkegaard's 'Fragments' and 'Postscript': The Religious Philosophy of Johannes Climacus_ (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1983), pp. 163-64.

[46] _Ibid_.

[47] See also note 11 this chapter.

Third: what he characterizes as the "infinitely meritorious of the Socratic position [which] was precisely to accentuate that the knower is existing, and that to exist is the essential" (SV 9,173; CUP, 185). This means to appropriate into one's life what one knows, requiring what one knows is meaningful to existence. To _strive_ for the absolute end absolutely is meaningful. This end is not meant to be achieved -- the paradox of striving -- for in that case it would be a finite end.

The point Kierkegaard is trying to advance in the language of Climacus is that the striving takes place in this world, is expressed in this world.[49] As this project will argue, this is precisely the form of the "corrective" the content of which, as will become clear, is "You shall love the neighbor as yourself." For Kierkegaard, then, to love God or to love the good is expressed by loving the other, a this-worldly act of consciousness which indeed is what is meant by Existents.[50] In other words, the solution to the problem of the contingency of human existence is to be found in our own experience, not outside of it, and the proof of its worth lies not in theoretical exegesis but in "practical activity."[51]

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[48] The translation of this latter part of the quotation is from Hannah Arendt, "What is Existenz Philosophy?" _Partisan Review_ 13 (1946), p. 43.

[49] "If the rights of knowledge are to have their due, one must venture out into life, out upon the sea, and raise one's scream in hopes that God will hear, not stand on the beach and see the others struggle and strive -- only then does knowledge acquire its true _official_ registration." PAP III A 145 (JP 2279).

By positing a requirement for a dialectical existence that appeals both to absolute as well as relative ends, Kierkegaard has posited a standard, or as Leo Strauss would put it, "a solid basis of all efforts to transcend the actual."[52] By not providing a standard, any hope of improving the lot of humanity would appear to be superfluous. This seems especially true in an age where the dominant political theory appeals to the reductive view that denounces all qualitative distinctions in a celebration of the lowest common denominator of human characteristics and provides only minimalist rules that allow those lowest human characteristics to be accentuated.[53] In the dominant political theory one finds only material goals to strive for, and although these have all too well captured the human imagination, the crisis of modernity only appears to deepen. Thus Kierkegaard's emphasis on a standard can be considered unproblematic. It is only the implied content, which for Kierkegaard derives from Christian teaching, that may prove questionable. However, insofar as his focus is on Existents, expressed in loving the other as oneself, and hence constitutes a manifestation of community, and is a religious as well as a rational principle,[54] it appears the dogmatics Kierkegaard engages in would not necessarily prove problematic for non-Christians.

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[50] The "corrective" will be dealt with in chapters IV and V.

[51] Arnold Ljungdal, Problemet Søren Kierkegaard, tr. Ina Rhode (København: Stig Vendelkærs Forlag, 1964), p. 60.

[52] Strauss, Natural Right and History, p. 15. Strauss might object to Climacus' standard being considered a "solid basis" inasmuch as he is thinking of what is best by nature and would most likely consider Climacus' standard dogmatic (Ibid, pp. 320-21). Nevertheless, insofar as Strauss himself considers Locke's adaptation of divine law from the New Testament to have both relevatory and rational validity (Ibid, pp. 204-05), and what is best by nature is something we can know as rational beings, the comparison does not seem out of hand.

I:5

Kierkegaard's conception of philosophy as intentional is closely connected to his understanding of history. He analyses this concept under the general problematic of Philosophical Fragments: "Can a historical point of departure be given for an eternal consciousness; how can such a point of departure be of more than historical interest; can an eternal happiness (Salighed) be built on historical knowledge?" (SV 6,7; PF, 1).

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[53] We are especially thinking of John Locke, Second Treatise of Government, ed. C.B. Macpherson (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1980), chapters 2-5, 8-9. See also Charles Taylor, Op. Cit. p. 23.

[54] Strauss, Op. Cit., pp. 204-05.

His argument directly confronts Hegel's conception of history, which is that it constitutes the unfolding of human consciousness, an unfolding that takes place with logical necessity, whereby the freedom presupposed in the Christian view of life apparently disappears. Against this Climacus posits a conception of history which preserves a realm of freedom within which the single self has two major choices. One choice is to strive to fulfill one's potential, to choose to exist in that essential sense that Kierkegaard has labelled Existents: to live in terms of qualitative distinctions. The other choice is to wholly succumb to the givens of the material world, in which the end of all action is always already another end and hence constitutes a life of insatiable self-indulgence -- sort of like Socrates' leaky jar analogy by which he attempts to convince Callicles of the meaninglessness of his existential priorities.[55]

From Hegel's perspective, the problematic of the Fragments has been rendered unproblematic inasmuch as the transcendent has been immanentized by the logical movement which follows the law of necessity. In the "Introduction" to the Phenomenology of Spirit he claims

> "the goal is as necessarily fixed for knowledge as the serial progression; it is the point where knowledge no longer needs to go beyond itself, where knowledge finds itself, where Notion [Idea] corresponds to object and object to Notion

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[55] Plato, Gorgias, tr. W.C. Helmbold (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1952), 493b-c.

[Idea]."[56]

Later he adds, "The movement of carrying forward the form of its self-knowledge is the labor which it accomplishes as actual History."[57] Hegel's aim was to reconcile subject and object, what Descartes had wrestled apart and Kant was unable to bring together.

Kierkegaard, believing that it is impossible to reconcile subject and object and still maintain existential freedom except in the abstract realm of pure thinking, adopts the Kantian dichotomous relationship of these entities. However, rather than concentrating on the object and how we are to understand such a phenomenon, he focuses on the thinking entity, on the subject who for him is a concrete existing single self faced with a reality that, as Arnold Ljungdal has interpreted Kierkegaard, "every second demands our interruption in the form of decisions and resolutions of the will." As Kierkegaard sees it the role of philosophy is to clarify what the ultimate presuppositions are for such an "active interruption" and hence to make human existence, not necessarily easier, but more meaningful. It is from this perspective that we must understand Kierkegaard's conception of freedom as well as his claim about truth being located in subjectivity.[58] "It does not mean that there is no objective reality outside of us, but it must be personally appropriated,"[59] something the scientific method and its implication of logical necessity does not allow for.

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[56] Phenomenology of Spirit, tr. A.V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), #80, p. 51.

[57] Ibid, #803, p. 488.

I:6

The problem of the imposition of logic into existence will be discussed in chapter II. Here the focus will be on the problematic of historical necessity allowing us to see yet another dimension of Kierkegaard's analytical dexterity. That he sees a problem here cannot surprise anyone considering how this historical necessity expresses itself politically in Hegel's philosophy as discussed above. There his solution to the problem of the subject-object dichotomy was given political meaning in his concept of "Ethical Life." In his Philosophy of Right he claims this ethical life constitutes

> the Idea of freedom in that . . . self-consciousness has in ethical existence its absolute foundation and the end which actuates its effort. . . The objective ethical order . . . posits within itself distinctions whose specific character is thereby determined by the concept, and by means of which the ethical order has a fixed content -- necessary and independent -- and an existence elevated above subjective opinion and choice. These distinctions are absolutely valid laws and institutions.

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[58] For more on Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity see chapter two, section II:2:3.

[59] Op. Cit. p. 59.

Hegel concludes his definition of ethical life by emphasizing the logical necessity of this movement. "Hence the ethical order is freedom or the absolute will as what is objective, a circle of necessity whose moments are the ethical powers which regulate the life of [accidental] individuals."[60]

Climacus, for some reason, does not directly address Hegel's Philosophy of Right, only the methodology that informs it. But he is not only interested in attacking speculative philosophy's conception of history as necessary, implying existence is subordinated to the self-questioning moments of the development of absolute consciousness, he is, as Søren Holm has suggested, also interested in addressing the common sense view of existence which believes "the past cannot be changed and the future is extremely uncertain."[61] This common sense view, in other words, is willing to accept risk inasmuch as it sees no way out of it, a point that will prove important to Climacus.

First, however, we want to understand Kierkegaard's questioning of the possibility of freedom in the concrete existence of the single self in Hegel's system. The first point of disagreement with Hegel comes when he, according to Climacus, omits an explanation of how _becoming_, that is, coming into existence,[62] can possibly be incorporated under the category of necessity. After all, Hegel himself insists that _becoming_ is only a factor when being and nothing are distinguished which implies a movement into time. It is at this point, of course, that the quality of determinateness is added to being and nothing in the very synthesis of _becoming_.[63] For Climacus, the problem concerns the kind of change that takes place in becoming or coming into existence (_Tilblivelse_).[64] He understands all of history in its broadest sense to be a transition from possibility to actuality, and the condition for this actualization is _kinesis_. As Søren Holm explains,

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[60] Hegel's Philosophy of Right, tr. T.M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), #142-45, p. 105, emphasis added. Translation is from Peter J. Steinberger, Logic and Politics: Hegel's Philosophy of Right (New Haven: Yale University Press University Press, 1988), p.151. He comments: "Thus, the laws and institutions of Ethical Life are 'absolutely valid' not because of consent, not because they owe their existence to the best of intentions, not because they are selected by virtuous persons, but rather because they have in some sense been philosophically demonstrated."

[61] Søren Kierkegaards Historiefilosofi (København: Nyt Nordisk Forlag, 1952), p. 31.

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[62] According to _Hegel's Science of Logic_, tr. A.V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1969), pp. 82-3, _becoming_ is a synthesis of being and nothingness. "_Pure being_ and _pure nothing_ are . . . the same. What is the truth is neither being nor nothing, but that being -- does not pass over but has passed over -- into nothing and nothing into being. . . . Their truth is, therefore, this movement of the immediate vanishing of the one in the other: _becoming_, a movement in which both are distinguished but by a difference which has equally immediately resolved itself."

[63] _Ibid_, p. 92.

[64] "In spite of all Hegel's talk about process, he does not understand world history in terms of becoming, but with the help of the illusion attaching to pastness, understands it in terms of finality where all becoming is excluded," SV 10,14n; CUP, 272n. See David Humbert, "Kierkegaard's use of Plato in his Analysis of The Moment in Time," _Dionysius_, VII (Dec. 1983), p. 161.

> it is the actualization of the possible in its capacity of possibility which constitutes movement. A thing only begins movement and change when its actualization is this movement. In this actualization, however, there is no logical self-development embedded, and Kierkegaard can therefore say in The Concept of Anxiety: "It is therefore not to be understood logically, but in the direction of historical freedom when Aristotle says all transition from possibility to actuality is kinesis.[65] . . . Hereby Kierkegaard strongly emphasizes that change, coming into existence, and becoming [Vorden] are concepts which belong exclusively within the realm of being [Væren] . . . and this factual or empirical being is in the domain of human life called existence [Existents].[66]

Climacus warns that these categories must not be confused with timeless or eternal being. With all other changes it is presupposed that that which changes exists even though change implies the suspension of its existence. But not so with the change implied in becoming, for inasmuch as what becomes does not remain the same or unchanged, then what has become is not this becoming but another. Climacus provides an enlightening example:

> If, in coming into existence [becoming], a plan is intrinsically changed, then it is not this plan that comes into existence; but if it comes into existence unchanged, what, then, is the change of coming into existence? This change, then, is not in essence [Væsen] but in being [Væren] and is from not existing to existing . . . [S]uch a being that nevertheless is a non-being is possibility, and a being that is being is indeed actual being or actuality, and the change of coming into existence

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[65] Cf. Aristotle's Physics, tr. Richard Hope (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), 201b.

[66] Op. Cit. pp. 34-5.

> is the transition from possibility to actuality (SV 6,68; PF, 73-4).

Climacus procedes to ask: "Can the necessary come into existence?" His answer is that becoming implies a change, but the necessary cannot be changed inasmuch as it "always relates itself to itself, and relates itself to itself in the same way" (SV 6,68; PF, 74). Therefore the necessary is the one thing which cannot become, cannot come into existence precisely because the necessary _is_. To demonstrate this absolute difference, Climacus explains that the necessary does not endure the suffering that afflicts actuality when possibility is excluded not only as possibility as such but also the anticipation of possibility by becoming actuality. "[B]y actuality," Climacus insists, "possibility is annihilated (_tilintetgjort_)" (_Ibid_). Said differently, once we have history, the event cannot be changed, and thereby any other possible outcome has been ruled out; precisely by coming into existence, everything that becomes demonstrates that it is not necessary. Utilizing the Aristotelian definition of change Climacus concludes that "the change of coming into existence is the transition from possibility to actuality" (_Ibid_).

Hegel then goes on to say that necessity is the unity of possibility and actuality.[67] Climacus is adamant in his response claiming that this is metaphysically contradictory. His point is that possibility and actuality are not different in essence (or nature) (Væsen) but in being (Væren) (Ibid). Hegel does not appear to make this distinction. Nevertheless, from this difference in being, Climacus insists, no unity can be formed and certainly not a necessary unity, since necessity is not a category of being, but of essence, and "the essence of necessity is to be" (SV 6,69; PF, 74). Otherwise possibility and actuality, by becoming necessity, would become an entirely different essence. However, this would not constitute a change in being. Moreover, by becoming necessity, possibility and actuality "would become the one and only thing that precludes coming into existence which is just as impossible as it is self-contradictory" (Ibid).[68]

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[67] "What is necessary _cannot be otherwise_; but what is simply _possible_ can; for possibility is the in-itself that is only positedness and therefore essentially otherness. Formal possibility is this identity as transition into a sheer other;

> Necessity stands all by itself; nothing whatever comes into existence by way of necessity, no more than necessity comes into existence or anything coming into existence becomes the necessary. Nothing whatever exists (er til) because it is necessary or because the necessary is. The actual is no more necessary than the possible for the necessary is absolutely different from both (SV 6,69; PF, 74-

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but real possibility, because it contains the other moment, actuality, is already itself necessity. Therefore what is really possible can no longer be otherwise; under the particular conditions and circumstances something else cannot follow. Real possibility and necessity are therefore only seemingly different; this is an identity which does not have to become but is already presupposed and lies at their base. Real necessity is therefore a relation pregnant with content; for the content is that implicit identity that is indifferent to the differences of form." The Science of Logic, p. 549.

[68] See also SV 15,92-98; SUD, 35-42.

5).[69]

The intriguing nuances of the abstract and the concrete that preoccupies Hegel's Logic through 844 pages do not concern Climacus whose only focus is the meaningfulness of all this to concrete existential experience. As should be sufficiently clear from the above is that Climacus' argument constitutes a direct refutation of Hegel's deterministic conception of time, a refutation of his historicism. Climacus' conclusion to the whole thought process, his imperative assumptions grounded in Christian teaching, is that "[a]ll coming into existence occurs in freedom, not by way of necessity" (SV 6,69; PF, 75, emphasis added).

On an abstract level, Kierkegaard (Climacus) is in full agreement with Hegel and indeed admires his theoretical dexterity.[70] Putting the two theories into perspective, however, one is not a refutation of the (logical) validity of the other. It is more like two ships passing in a foggy night: there is no recognition. That is to say, Kierkegaard rejects Hegel's project because it operates in the realm of the idea and immanentizes the absolute end -- what for Climacus constitutes the necessary -- and thereby it is finitized.[71] But this is metaphysically impossible.

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[69] Kierkegaard appears frustrated at what he considers a careless relating of these categories by Hegel: "Perhaps an investigation into the concepts of possibility, actuality, and necessity is something our time needs the most in order to clarify the relationship between the logical and the ontological. To be desired, however, would be for the one who wished to furnish something in this regard was influenced by the Greeks." PAP VI B 54:21.

Hegel's scientific approach seeks the security of results, but to Kierkegaard nothing is secure, nothing is certain about concrete human existence. Life is a striving that must acknowledge its own incompleteness precisely because of the paradox of existence: that we can think the ideal but never concretely experience it. An existence confronted with such a paradox must necessarily be a tension-filled existence that accepts the contingency of its becoming and recognizes the futility of speculating about what is to be yet continues to hope for a more perfected outcome in the future.

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[70] The fact that history is the conception of the Idea has certainly given Hegel "the occasion to display a rare scholarship, a rare sway in shaping the material in which through him there is turmoil enough. But he has also prompted the learner's mind to become distracted, with the result that he . . . forgot to examine whether there has now appeared at the conclusion, at the end of that enchanted journey, that which was continually promised at the beginning, that which was, after all, the primary issue, that which all the world's glory could not replace, the only thing that could make up for the untimely tension in which one was kept -- the correctness of the method."

[71] As Climacus with irony intimates in the Postscript, and as some interpreter with equal irony has commented, God may be a Hegelian, but that is better than the other way around. Cf. SV 9,117; CUP, 126.

> Life's task [is] to become subjective, and to the same degree the uncertainty becomes more and more dialectically penetrating in regard to my personality; it therefore becomes more and more important to me to think it in every moment of my life. Since its uncertainty is in every moment, this uncertainty can be overcome only by my overcoming it every moment (SV 9,139; CUP, 149).[72]

For Kierkegaard, historical events have come about by chance, or as he says in the Postscript, "maximally the objectivity that has come into existence, subjectively speaking, is either a hypothesis or an approximation because all eternal decision lies precisely in subjectivity" (SV 9,161; CUP, 173). By approximation is meant that "the past is not necessary inasmuch as it came into existence; it did not become necessary by coming into existence (a contradiction), and it becomes even less necessary through anyone's apprehension of it. . . . If what is apprehended is changed in the apprehension," Climacus warns rather tersely, "then the apprehension is changed into a misunderstanding" (SV 73; PF, 79-80).[73] In other words, there can be no cognitive certainty about historical events.

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[72] In The Sickness Unto Death, Anti-Climacus undertakes a discussion of despair "defined by possibility/necessity," analyzing the impact on the self by the lack of either. Both possibility and necessity (as both Climacus and Anti-Climacus understand the latter) are "equally essential to becoming (and the self must, after all, become itself in freedom)" SV 15,92; SUD, 35.

[73] Climacus, in addition to making an historical argument, also appears to be making a hermeneutical statement. For more on Kierkegaard's conception of history as an approximation see Evans, Op. Cit. pp. 118 and 124: "Insofar

As will become clear, the truth of an historical event will necessarily implicate an existential decision. But before continuing this line of argument, its present stage suggests a Kierkegaardian concern that is of much importance to the present project.

I:7

Climacus' perception of history as accidental -- "the unchangeableness [and hence the necessity] of the past is that its actual 'thus and so' cannot become different, but from this it does not follow that its possible 'how' could not have been different" (SV 6,71; PF, 77) -- is intriguingly comparable to Rousseau's conception of history.[74] However, where Rousseau appears to come to such a conclusion in order to allow for the positing of an alternative which he presents in the Social Contract, Kierkegaard's aim is to safeguard the

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as objective truth concerns existence, only approximations can be realized, not the truth itself. Insofar as final truth is achievable, it is achieved by abstracting from existence. In neither case does the truth exist, in Climacus' special sense, though truth may be nonetheless eternally real and, for God, actual." Also Crites, Op. Cit. p. 22n; Stephen N. Dunning, Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Inwardness: A Structural Analysis of the Theory of Stages (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 182; and Mark C. Taylor, Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Authorship: A Study of Time and Self (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 41.

[74] "Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men," The First and Second Discourses, tr. Roger D. and Judith R. Masters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), p. 97 and in passim.

category of freedom which he considers essential and therefore a primary ethical category which he derives from Christian teaching, but which, as it were, is also a primary category of modern thought as a whole, whether we are considering Hegelian, liberal, or Marxist political theory.

The problem with Hegel's approach is that the experience of absolute mind at its various stages of development and concretion is an absolute method that has enchanted scholarship to the point where it has forgotten to examine the method itself.

The concretion, as Climacus says, was distracted away from inquiry, meaning it became so enthralled with its own theory that it forgot about its practical application. Indeed, Climacus chastises Hegel for utilizing world-historical examples to prove his point, when the Idea shows itself equally well in the life of a single self.[75]

Paraphrasing Johannes Sløk, Die Anthropologie Kierkegaards[76] the Danish editors of Søren Kierkegaard Samlede Værker explain that from Climacus' perspective the concrete is "not an expression for identity with reality, but an expression for the one who has shown himself to be able to take charge of himself, while the one who is not capable of doing this, but lives in the immediate, lives in the abstract"

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[75] PAP V B 14 (JP 50, 3301). Also SV 9,118; CUP, 126.

[76] København: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1954).

(SV 6,337). Thus the change that occurs in becoming is the presence of actuality from possibility, a transition that happens by virtue of choice and hence within the category of freedom. Nothing comes into existence by way of logical causality (ratio), but everything by way of a freely acting cause (SV 6,70; PF, 76). That is to say, everything that has come into existence belongs to the historical category. This is also true of nature, according to Climacus, albeit only to a certain degree.[77]

The problem for Climacus is that nature is too abstract to be dialectical with respect to time. Therefore, as Søren Holm points out, it is said in The Concept of Anxiety that nature's "security (Tryghed) is caused by the fact that time has no meaning for it."[78] Although a plant does come into existence and hence partakes of time, its future is predestined unlike that of human beings who have alternative choices and hence represent the only phenomena that are truly dialectical (SV 6,70; PF, 76). Freedom for Climacus, however, should not be understood as liberum arbitrium. Rather, human beings are free to choose the good, and hence for Climacus it is a relative freedom. In turn every relatively freely acting cause points to an absolutely freely acting cause (Ibid). For

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[77] Climacus is perfectly aware of Hegel's conception of the unfolding of the idea in history is temporal while its unfolding in nature is spatial. Indeed, in the case of nature he seems generally to agree with Hegel.

[78] Op. Cit. p. 38.

Climacus this absolutely freely acting cause represents necessity, that which eternally is, which undergoes no change, which does not become in history.

Looking remarkably like Aristotle's first unmoved mover, the absolutely freely acting cause constitutes "[n]ecessity [which] stands all by itself" (SV 6,69; PF, 74).[79] But if all relatively freely acting causes point to necessity, does this not negate the implicit human freedom? In a journal note Kierkegaard anticipates the question:

> The whole question about God's omnipotence [Almagt] and the relationship of evil to goodness can perhaps (instead of making the distinction that God effects the good and simply allows evil) be solved quite simply in the following way. The ultimate that can altogether be done for a being, higher than what one can make it into is to make it free. However, in order to be able to do that, there needs to be omnipotence. This seems strange inasmuch as omnipotence would seem to incur dependency. But if one wants to think [through the quality of] omnipotence, it becomes clear that precisely therein there must in addition be that qualification of being able in such a way to take oneself back again in the expression of omnipotence. It is precisely for that reason one human being cannot make another free, because the one who has the power himself is imprisoned in having it and therefore constantly acquires a relationship to the one he wants to set free. To this it must be added that in all finite power (talent, etc.), there is a finite self-love. Only omnipotence can take itself back while it gives, and this relationship is precisely the receiver's independence. God's omnipotence is therefore his goodness. For goodness is to give wholly, but in such a way that one by omnipotently taking oneself back again makes the receiver

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[79] Cf. Metaphysics 1072b10.

independent.[80]

However, the question of existential freedom is not even relevant when the systematic becomes philosophy's approach. Thus Kierkegaard in another journal note compares the aesthetic to the ethical. Those engaged in the former can live a whole life being admired, and it is merely accidental whether such a person is persecuted or mocked.

> Each such a person is related as difference to the generally human, and his productions do not essentially touch on Existents since it takes place in the medium of the imagination. But an ethicist must essentially be persecuted -- or he is a mediocre ethicist. An ethicist is related to the generally human (consequently to every human being, and equally, not as difference), and he is related to human Existents as a demand.[81]

We have engaged in this digression in order to underscore Kierkegaard's distancing his conception of history from historicism. Rather he joins Lessing in his conclusion that "accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason," nor can they compel faith or provide demonstrations that have the power of obligation. Only the teachings themselves, that is, faith can do that.[82] Climacus adds, that from this perspective the historian is a "backwards prophet" inasmuch as the certainty of the past is grounded in uncertainty (SV 6,73; PF, 80). Hence it is not surprising or accidental that Climacus emphasizes striving as the necessary ingredient for arriving at truth, a concept he has inherited precisely from Lessing (SV 9,92; CUP, 98-9).

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[80] PAP VII 1 A 181. Reminiscences of Hegel's master-slave theme is quite evident in this quotation, but it is obviously used rather differently. As will become clear in chapters IV and V, there is also a strong implication that human beings cannot make other human beings free -- something that according to Kierkegaard modernity has misunderstood. Here we should note that freedom, in any case, means something entirely different for Kierkegaard than the concept we find in, for example, natural rights theory. Indeed, these are the misunderstandings that Kierkegaard set out to "correct."

[81] PAP VIII 1 A 160, emphasis added.

Climacus' epistemology thus resembles Lessing's to a large degree, and like him he also differentiates between experience and historical evidence. Immediate sensation cannot deceive insofar as the question of truth does not exist for it. There is a suspension of judgment as with the Greek skeptics who in this way avoided being deceived. The proverbial stick in the water that looks broken but is straight when taken out -- both sensations are (correct) until consciousness makes a judgment about the truth or untruth of this sense perception. Thus Climacus insists that the factual cannot be known through pure reasoning but only by the act of judgment following upon critical analysis. "Abstract reasoning knows the necessary, but the historical is what has come into existence and is therefore not necessary but contingent and uncertain."[83]

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[82] Lessing's Theological Writings, ed. and tr. Henry Chadwich (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1956), pp. 53-5.

[83] Eugene Webb, Philosophers of Consciousness (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), p. 237.

We should note here, as Kresten Nordentoft suggests, that Climacus is not setting the stage for a "naively empirical epistemology." Rather the opposite is true. "The problem of correctness and the problem of actuality do not belong to sensed phenomena or to sensation, but to the single self who wishes to interpret what has been sensed."[84]

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Interpretation may take many forms and clearly involves risk. Climacus makes an historical argument suggesting that what for the Greek skeptics constituted knowledge, in modernity is clearly considered belief, indeed an act of freedom or expression of will (SV 6,76; PF, 83). He then connects belief and history drawing a definitive conclusion:

> Now insofar as that which by belief becomes the historical and as the historical becomes the object of belief (the one corresponds to the other), does exist immediately and is apprehended immediately, it does not deceive. The contemporary, then, does use his eyes, etc., but he must pay attention to the conclusion, [and] . . . the conclusion of belief is no conclusion (Slutning) but a resolution (Beslutning), and thus doubt is excluded (SV 6,76; PF, 83-4).

A careful reading of the text reveals that Climacus has made a subtle move from conclusions of belief in the ordinary sense to belief of an historical event in the extraordinary or eminent sense, which was his aim to begin with. In either case, it is important to understand that the (historical) conclusion is not cognitive, but rests with an existential, decisive act of will. Therefore we get an emphasis on striving.

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[84] Kierkegaard's Psychology, tr. Bruce H. Kirmmse (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1978), p. 333.

But there is another reason for this open ended understanding of history. Climacus realizes that if history is perceived deterministically and hence as necessary, there can be no room for wonder.

Hegel, following Descartes, claimed that "thought must necessarily commence from itself."[85] This means all previous philosophy must be set aside, as we have seen. Descartes doubted it away, and de omnibus dubitandum est represented for him an absolute beginning. Hegel appears to be more creative as he sets all previous philosophy aside only in order to use it as elements of his foundational system.

For Climacus, however, philosophy must begin with wonder, just as it did with the Greeks; it must have an experiential ground. Thus he argues in Johannes Climacus that to dispense with this experiential dimension may prove satisfactory, even fruitful in the case of mathematical theses. These do not require talent and their truths are inherently authoritative; they merely need to be correctly enunciated. Or as Kierkegaard puts it in a journal notation, ". . . there can be no conviction with respect to the mathematical;" for such a proposition there is proof which rules out all other claims against it.[86] But, Climacus complains, such propositions are not apt to generate character (PAP IV B 1 p.152; JC, 152).[87] That is to say, the personality of the discoverer of these truths becomes a matter of indifference after the discovery (Ibid).

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[85] Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy, vol. 3, tr. E.S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (New York: The Humanities Press, 1955), p. 224.

Climacus compares such theses with ethical and religious theses which, in contrast, have existential significance: they do not leave the knower untouched. Here we might think of such principles as freedom and equality which are primary ethical qualities in Kierkegaard's philosophy. Climacus' point is that these latter theses require authority behind them in the form of character or personality if they are to be accredited as true, "just as in civil life anyone may formally be a guarantor, and yet it makes an absolute difference who the guarantor is" (Ibid). Such theses cannot claim mathematical or philosophical necessity. They must have subjective beginning, meaning those who are to enunciate them must discover them, they must have talent, and they must have authority; they require a person to be passionately interested in existential participation, they require conviction (PAP IV

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[86] PAP VII 1 A 215 (JP 2296).

[87] This text appears in the Danish only in Søren Kierkegaards Papirer. Only in this case will journal notes appear within the text in parenthesis together with the English language citation.

B 1 p.135; JC, 153).[88] Against such propositions other "proofs" (Modbevis) can be posited, as the person of conviction is well aware of. "He knows very well what doubt may have to say: contra."[89]

Moreover, Climacus continues, such knowledge necessitates a beginning in wonder (Forundring - Beundring)[90] echoing both Plato and Aristotle (PAP IV B 1 p.127; JC, 145). The problem as he sees it with not beginning the philosophical enterprise with wonder, but instead with doubt or with setting all previous philosophy aside, would necessarily mean to cut oneself off from classical Greek philosophy, and indeed from the metaphysical tradition, and hence to cut oneself off from the beginning. "Doubt is precisely a polemic against what went before" (Ibid). That is to say, other forms of beginning are discontinuous, and in Climacus' opinion they are therefore unsound.

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[88] Evans, Op. Cit. p. 132, has already noted that in this regard Climacus's claims in the Postscript about the "role of subjectivity in objective knowledge bear a striking resemblance to the philosophy of science" developed by Michael Polanyi and Thomas Kuhn. However, Evans does not note Climacus' differentiation between mathematical knowledge and ethical and religious knowledge. In view of this differentiation the comparison may not be entirely correct, at least not with regard to Polanyi who believes scientific knowledge also depends on existential commitment. See note 27 this chapter.

[89] PAP VII 1 A 215 (JP 2296).

[90] Kierkegaard throughout his authorship uses the two meanings of "wonder" intermittently. It should be noted that Beundring also means admiration.

With the pronouncement that all other beginnings, such as Descartes' beginning with doubt, is discontinuous, Climacus seems to say that if we are to make existence meaningful to humanity, we must understand human experience of reality in all its manifestations as well as their respective symbolic expressions, and that would necessarily include the classical Greek philosophical tradition. Hegel, in contrast, held that philosophy had to raise itself above the experience of wonder in order to allow for thought to begin from itself.[91] For Climacus his philosophy must therefore also be characterized as discontinuous.

Finally, in a rather heavy handed critique of analytical thinking, Climacus charges that doubt excludes the thinker from the philosophical endeavor as such.

> [W]hether it was assumed that philosophy actually continued to endure even if the single individual by means of his beginning excluded himself from it, or whether it was assumed that this beginning annihilated philosophy, [either way] one was thereby prevented from entering into it (PAP IV B 1 p.138; JC, 156).

I:9

Turning to wonder's connection to Climacus' conception of history, it becomes quite clear that wonder and necessity are contradictory. To wonder about what is necessary is absurd. But by positing the historical as accidental, "there the uncertainty (which is the uncertainty of coming into existence) of the most certain coming into existence can express itself only in this passion worthy of and necessary to the philosopher" (SV 6, 73; PF, 80).[92] That is to say, the historian can once again "stand by the past stirred by the passion that is the passionate sense for becoming, that is wonder (admiration) (Beundring). If the philosopher wonders over nothing . . . then he has eo ipso nothing to do with the historical" (Ibid). Thus wonder is important to Climacus precisely because it guarantees continuity (PAP IV B 1 p.127; JC, 145).[93] Discontinuity, in contrast, threatens to lock out of philosophical thinking the one historical event to which Kierkegaard is committed, and therefore he is compelled to mount his attack on what in his opinion has lessened the philosophical endeavor, lessened the task of thinking: the experience of absolute truth as he understands it.[94]

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[91] Hegel's Logic (Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences), tr. William Wallace (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1975), #12. Hereafter known as Ency.

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[92] Hannah Arendt, The Life of the Mind (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), p. 143, has captured the gist of Climacus' meaning: "Wonder is a pathos, something to be suffered, not acted. . . . In other words, what sets men wondering is something familiar and yet normally invisible, and something men are forced to admire. The wonder that is the starting point of thinking is neither puzzlement nor surprise nor perplexity; it is an admiring wonder."

[93] See also PAP VII 1 A 34: "That which stirs one to begin is wonder (Forundring), that with which one begins is a resolution (Beslutning).

[94] The details of this experience will be delt with in the last part of chapter two.

Still, Climacus is intrigued by the notion of doubt precisely because he believes it represents more than an epistemological problem of discontinuity. The whole question of doubt as such bothers him, and he proceeds to describe its properties phenomenologically.[95]

Climacus begins the analysis by asking what it means to doubt from the perspective of its "ideal possibility in consciousness," realizing that an empirical investigation would lead nowhere (JC, 166). He orients himself by imagining a consciousness without doubt. Such a consciousness would be immediate or spontaneous, as in a child. Immediacy in this sense has the nature of indetermination, it is reality itself in a spatial-temporal sense. A child does not have to make major decisions but can remain (spontaneously) open to all possibilities. For such a consciousness everything is true or everything is untrue, meaning there really is no consciousness. The question of truth is suspended and only emerges when consciousness is "brought into relation with something else." That something else, mediacy, according to Climacus, is language, the expression of which constitutes ideality. Ideality, in turn, suspends (hæver) immediacy or reality (PAP IV B 1 p.146; JC, 168). This opposition of reality and ideality within consciousness defines consciousness as a contradiction, for the moment "I make a statement about reality, the contradiction is present, for what I say is ideality" (Ibid). In other words, language posits the contradiction, a contradiction that requires a resolution. The implication is the possibility of doubt in consciousness whose nature is contradiction -- or better, dialectical. Climacus' point is that in reality or immediacy as such, there is no doubt. Nor is doubt present in ideality. It is consciousness that brings them into relationship with each other, meaning consciousness indicates a state of conflict, a conflict that must be resolved in some way and can be resolved by doubt, although not exclusively. For Climacus there are other possibilities. Thus he insists the opposite of doubt is faith, and faith itself implies wonder (SV 6,61; PF, 65), and the autopsy of faith is to see (SV 6,92; PF, 102).[96]

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[95] According to Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 275 and note, Kierkegaard explored the true dimensions of doubt more honestly, adding that it is "perhaps still the deepest interpretation of Cartesian doubt." Karl Löwith referred to Climacus' analysis as a radicalization of Cartesian doubt. Op. Cit., p. 126.

On the one hand, Climacus has been talking about reflection, the categories of which are always dichotomous. Reflection as such is the possibility of the relationship, but essentially it is disinterested or "without interest (interesseløs). Consciousness, on the other hand, is spirit, the categories of which Climacus defines as trichotomous. These categories constitute the relationship. Consciousness thereby represents interest (as in the Latin interesse meaning "being between") PAP IV B 1 p.148; JC, 170). Consciousness is interested in the sense that it is situated between reality and ideality, between the is and the ought, and a decision is called for.

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[96] As Eugene Webb, Op. Cit., p. 237, has interpreted the Fragments, "wonder is the tension in subjectivity that moves one to reach from uncertainty [doubt] toward factual knowledge." Cf. SV 6,73; PF 80.

Now we can begin to see where Climacus is heading with this phenomenological description of doubt, for it is reflection that deals with all disinterested knowledge such as mathematics, aesthetics, or metaphysics, and therefore only presupposes doubt. Doubt, consequently, cannot be overcome by objective thinking inasmuch as objective thinking is always already qualified by it. The point is, doubt expresses something deeper, expresses interest (Ibid). That is to say, neither Hegelian speculative philosophy nor the scientific methodology can overcome doubt inasmuch as all systematic knowledge is reflection, and reflection is disinterested. Therefore doubt presupposes consciousness, and consciousness is interest. What we have learned is that Climacus has come to understand what it means to doubt; it means to express an interest (PAP IV B 1 p. 149; JC, 170).

It would seem Climacus has caught Hegel in a self-contradiction inasmuch as a logical system supposedly is neutral, unbiased, and hence unable to express something as mundane as interest. Climacus chastises Hegel for not entirely understanding the concept of doubt when he claimed it could be overcome systematically (Ibid). Climacus would seem to have shown that either speculative philosophy is not entirely objective, or that it has essentially failed in its aim. We can now understand why it is that Kierkegaard can make so much fun of Hegel's claim to a presuppositionless philosophy.[97]

Climacus (Kierkegaard) regrets learning about Descartes through Hegel and wishes he had begun with the former. Whether that would have changed anything is questionable. What is no longer questionable, according to Climacus, and a young Climacus at that, is that to begin philosophy with doubt is to express a conscious interest.[98] Then we might argue that Descartes in "Discourse on Method" did not clear his mind of the "deceiving senses" nor of the "thoughts and conceptions" that were "no more true than the illusions of [his] dreams"[99] as well as he believed he had when he sat down to write a 'new first philosophy.' The point is, as Kierkegaard added in a journal note, "doubt is produced **either** by bringing reality into relation with ideality [which] is the act of cognition . . . **or** by bringing ideality into relation with reality [and] this is the ethical: that in which I am interested is myself."[100]

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[97] See especially the wonderful little anecdote Kierkegaard concocted in which he has Socrates and Hegel engaged in a dialogue in the underworld, PAP VI A 145.

[98] This is also suggested by Feyerabend, Op. Cit. p. 36, when he writes, "There is no one 'scientific method,' but there is a great deal of opportunism; anything goes -- anything, that is, that is liable to advance knowledge as understood by a particular researcher or research tradition. . . . What is exclusive is not science itself but an ideology that isolates some of its parts and hardens them by prejudice and ignorance." Eric Voegelin, Science, Politics and Gnosticism (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1959), p. 42, understands Hegel's, and by extension Descartes', systematic approaches a little differently suggesting the leap into "the perfection of actual knowledge" is not to advance philosophy, but to abandon it in favor of becoming a gnostic.

[99] Op. Cit. p. 101.

It now appears clear that when doubt and scientific methodology became embodied in philosophical inquiry human beings were left to themselves in a world whose significance had become increasingly reduced and man's place in it even more so. History and any meaning it could produce, such as the eschatological attempts especially by Hegel and Marx, took on, major proportions for the purpose of relieving the consequent anxiety that burdened modern existence, what Heidegger has characterized as the "thrownness" of Dasein.[101]

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[100] PAP IV B 13:18 (JP 891). Also PF, 256.

From Kierkegaard's perspective, however, such fantastical ideas constitute nothing more than illusions. These illusions would ultimately deny human beings their true dialectical nature and thus would end up deceiving them. But has Kierkegaard not made matters worse by offering a conception of history grounded in freedom, a condition that would seem only to increase anxiety, not decrease it? After all, "the objective reality of contingent fact is that which can be only reasonably confirmed through attentive inquiry and critical judgment,"[102] requiring substantial effort upon the part of the concrete individual knower.

Kierkegaard is not unaware of this predicament and stands ready, one might say all too ready, with the solution by which he will also address the common sense view of history discussed above. One could argue that his conception of history is spuriously connected to his mission to revive a waning Christianity, although one has to proceed with some care here. Thus he claims there is an "organ . . . which continually suspends (ophæver as the German aufheben) the incertitude that corresponds to the uncertainty of coming into existence," that is, the uncertainty of history, and this organ he calls "belief" (Tro) in the ordinary sense (SV 6,74; PF, 81). But that Climacus also has other than ordinary belief in mind seems obvious from the following quotation where he continues the characterization of belief.

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[101] Being and Time, tr. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962), H 136, pp. 175: "Factually, Dasein can, should, and must, through knowledge and will, become master of its moods; in certain possible ways of existing, this may signify a priority of volition and cognition. Only we must not be misled by this into denying that ontologically mood is a primordial kind of Being for Dasein, in which Dasein is disclosed to itself prior to all cognition and volition, and beyond their range of disclosure. . . . Ontologically, we thus obtain as the first essential characteristic of states-of-mind that they disclose Dasein in its thrownness." (Heidegger's debt to Kierkegaard appears self-evident when, in addition, we speculate that Heidegger's choice of Dasein perhaps also to some degree was inspired by Kierkegaard's category of "the single self" (den Enkelte) when we separate the word, not in the way it is usually separated as Da-sein (there being), but as Das-ein.

[102] Webb, p. 238.

> Precisely belief is of such a quality, for in the certainty of belief the uncertainty is continually present as the suspended, which in every way corresponds to that of coming into existence. Thus faith [Tro] believes what it does not see; it does not believe that the star exists, for this can be seen, but it believes that the star came into existence. The same holds true of an event. The 'what' of a happening may be immediately known, but that it did happen, not at all, not even that it is happening, even if it happens, as it is said, right before our noses (SV 6,74; PF, 81-2).

His point is that "second hand" followers of "the teacher" are no worse off than the "contemporary followers" were. The Incarnation is equally an object of faith, not of cognition. Thus Climacus reminds the reader that belief is not an act of cognition, but an act of freedom, an expression of will, requiring commitment, resolution, and courage to passionately engage in the act of judgment, engage in Existents. Such belief can suspend all doubt, not by way of cognition, but by way of the will, and indeed constitutes the very opposite of doubt. That is to say, they are opposite passions, not cognitions.

> Belief and doubt are not two forms of knowledge which let themselves be qualified in continuity with each other, for neither of them is an act of knowing; they are opposite passions. Belief is a sense for coming into existence and doubt is a protest against every conclusion that wants to transcend immediate sensation and immediate knowledge (SV 6,77; PF, 84).

For Kierkegaard subjective commitment plays a significant role in theoretical inquiry, but it plays an "absolutely decisive role in action,"[103] action expressed as love of the other, and hence expressed in the single self's comportment toward the world. What has become clear is that the problem of the mechanical approach of scientific methodology is not an unsolvable problem; therefore Kierkegaard pushes on in order not only to attempt to restore Christianity and transcendence to its "rightful" place in human existence, but also to prepare every human individual self for his or her possibilities which, indeed, if actualized, can mean genuine human fulfillment.[104]

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[103] Evans, Op. Cit. p. 133.

[104] Karl Löwith, Op. Cit., p. 104, has captured most poignantly the major points of Kierkegaard's critique of modernity as laid out in this chapter: "Kierkegaard is exclusively concerned with man's inner life. He resumes Augustine's quest for the soul and its relation to God as the only two things worth knowing. He thereby implicitly dismisses the classical concern with the logos of the cosmos as a pagan curiosity. A sentence like that of Anaxagoras, that the end for which man is born is the contemplation of the sun, the moon, and the sky, is utterly strange to Kierkegaard and his

Before the inquiry can progress to a discussion about Kierkegaard's so called "corrective," it is helpful to come to an understanding of the symptomatic effects as they manifested themselves upon theoretical and practical thinking. According to Kierkegaard these symptomatic effects were caused by the scientific methodology adopted by philosophical inquiry and by the consequent objective tendency, as laid out in this chapter. As Climacus laments in the Postscript, "[t]he way of objective reflection makes the subject accidental and thereby transforms existence into something indifferent, something

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followers. It is equally strange to those of us who, unencumbered by a god or a soul, but clothed in psychology and psychoanalysis, are living on the capital of the Christian concern for man's soul. Confronted with the task of recapturing a Christian existence according to the law of the Gospel, Kierkegaard felt that he had to ignore the laws of the cosmos and the modern discoveries of the telescope. If Christ appeared today, he said, the Christian task of appropriating His message would still be the same as it was for the first generation of Christians. But the natural scientist, and all those who believe in the truth of science rather than of the Gospel, would demand an examination of Christ's brain under a microscope to determine whether He is the Son of God or a schizophrenic. Unfortunately for the sciences, all the modern discoveries by telescope and microscope are irrelevant for an understanding of the human condition in its inwardness. A thoughtful person, according to Kierkegaard, who wants to understand what it means to exist as a self before God cannot be interested in natural science; for it does not make any difference for man's moral choices and religious decisions whether the moon is made of blue cheese or something else. What is the use of explaining the whole physical universe or world history if one does not understand oneself, one's own single self? As an existing self, man is singled out from the physical cosmos and world history and their deceptive greatness. To Kierkegaard the concern with six thousand years of world history, or with some billion years of cosmic history, is an escape from one's self into an illusory importance."

vanishing" (SV 9,161; CUP, 173). As such the objective tendency constitutes a negation of Existents proper. The scientific revolution originated in thought, Hans Jonas suggests, reflecting Kierkegaard's viewpoint wholly: it "changed man's ways of thinking, by thinking, before it materially changed, even affected, his ways of living."[105]

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[105] Op. Cit. p. 47.

Chapter II

A SYMPTOMATIC EFFECT: THE LOSS OF AUTHORITY IN THEORETICAL THINKING

> To assert the supremacy of thought is gnosticism.[1]
>
> Christianity is not a doctrine, but expresses a contradiction of Existents and is a communication of Existents.[2]

The most debilitating symptomatic effect to follow from the separation of knowledge and experience Kierkegaard diagnosed as the loss of authority. The separation of knowledge and experience occurred when the scientific method was imposed upon philosophical inquiry. Thereby the realm of knowledge became circumscribed limiting the inquiry to questions which could be answered only by appeals to rational deduction or empirical induction. Neutrality was deemed a paramount methodological requirement obviating all appeals to existential experience, and thus the scientific method imposed a fixed opposition between subject and object. The realm of transcendent experience that had traditionally been the object of theoretical investigation, was now considered beyond what reason could explain or the scientist observe and measure. It was therefore entirely abandoned, meaning that what for Kierkegaard constituted the ultimate authority for all thinking had lost its absolute legitimacy. This loss, he claimed, had pathologically affected individual consciousness manifesting itself in the various realms of thought, whether philosophical, religious, political, or psychological.

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[1] SV 10,44; CUP, 305.

[2] SV 10,75-6; CUP, 339.

Although Kierkegaard was not to know perhaps the worst perversions of authority as they unfolded in the twentieth century with the totalitarian regimes of Nazism and Stalinism, the events that led up to and reached their explosive consequences in 1848 dramatically influenced the direction of this Danish author's writings. Thus he came to describe his own age as one lacking foundation and therefore lost in an unstoppable "vortex" (Hvirvel), "a prey to the illusion of wanting a fixed point ahead" when in actuality "the fixed point lies behind."[3] The fixed point ahead refers to the utopian theories fraught with eschatological overtones that at this time flourished throughout Europe.

Kierkegaard became so preoccupied with analyzing and explaining the effects of this disease that it would not be inaccurate to characterize his authorship in the words of Eric Voegelin as a "quest for truth . . . a movement of resistance to the prevalent disorder."[4] Kierkegaard thus described his own time as "the age of dissolution" (SV 18,163; POV, 130), a dissolution that had manifested itself in the corruption of individual consciousness, and indeed a corruption that had proved to be unmanageably contagious (SV 12,77-8; WL, 85). Kierkegaard can say this inasmuch as he considers the category "the single self" (den Enkelte) to be a category of spirit and of spiritual awakening which stands in sharp opposition to what dominates the age, namely politics, meaning the worldly (SV 18,165; POV, 132).[5]

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[3] Letters, #186, p. 262.

[4] In Search of Order, vol. 5 of Order and History (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), p. 25.

This corruption, he argued, was most emphatically expressed in theoretical gnosticism (SV 10,44; CUP 305) and pragmatic "witchcraft" (Bedaarelse) (SV 10,56; CUP, 317), Climacus' label for the politics of ideology. The former, by which Climacus simply meant any assertion of the supremacy of thought over all other attributes of consciousness, came to dominate philosophical and theological inquiry. The latter, by which he especially meant the problem of mass movements with emphasis on the numerical, came to tyrannize political and psychological experience. In both cases, there was a loss of a fundamental ground of the human condition.

Every revolt in passion -- against discipline, every

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[5] It is interesting to note that Kierkegaard with his analysis of the problem of the age and later the positing of a therapeutic "corrective" conceives of this "corrective" as a movement "from the philosophical, the systematic, to the simple, that is, the existential," which has a political dimension, as we shall see. Kierkegaard parallels this movement to the one especially emphasized in Works of Love: "from the poet to religious existence" (SV 18,164n; POV, 132n).

> revolt in the social life -- against obedience, every revolt in the political -- against secular rule, is connected with and is derived from this revolt of the human race against God with respect to Christianity (SV 18,165; POV, 133).[6]

Kierkegaard's point is precisely that thought in general has been caught up in the spreading disease unable to wrestle itself free in order to obey the law's command for community and hence unable to actualize freedom and equality. Instead thought is entrapped in the web of numbers and mechanical devices to which the age pays homage. The conflict facing the dialectics of individual existence is thus manifold. In the present chapter the loss of authority in theoretical thinking will be dealt with, while the loss of authority in practical thinking will be discussed in chapter three.

I:1:1

On a philosophical level we shall confine the analysis to the problem that according to Climacus followed from "the objective tendency" of the age. This tendency, especially mastered by Hegelian philosophy, had intellectualized ethical conduct and subordinated Christian life to speculative philosophy which interpreted meaningfulness in terms of an abstract absolute that negated concrete individual experience (SV 9,110-13; CUP, 118-21). Climacus rejects this disposition of modern philosophy to speculate systematically and objectively on the truth of things, such as Christianity, projecting them as indisputable historical phenomena of equivalent veracity.[7]

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[6] It should be noted that Kierkegaard was an avid reader of Ludwig Feuerbach considering him helpful inasmuch as he performed what Kierkegaard considered an "indirect service to Christianity as an offended individuality. The illusion it takes in our age to become offended, since Christianity has been made as mild as possible, as meaningless as the scrawl a physician makes at the top of a prescription." PAP B 9. Offence, as will be discussed later in this chapter, is, in short, reason's unhappy reaction to reaching its limitation and its realization of another dimension of knowledge in which it cannot participate, SV 6,48-52; PF, 49-54.

According to Climacus such an approach to philosophical inquiry was attempted by Hegel whose systematic approach was intended to generate identity between thought and being, between subject and object. Hegel's speculative philosophy was aimed at overcoming the tension of bifurcated experience so provocatively delineated in Kantian philosophy.[8] It would do so as stated early in the "Preface" to the Phenomenology of Spirit by laying "aside the title 'love of knowing' and be actual knowing."[9] This move by Hegel incorporated and thereby discarded the existential dimension of knowing as discussed in the previous chapter, and hence it discarded what Climacus considered the necessary grounding for a meaningful truth. Thereby it restricted the "being of world and ego . . . to the knowledge of the immediate or existent," prohibiting questions about "the context of the order of being in which this knowledge occurs."[10] From this, according to Climacus, there followed severe ontological and epistemological consequences.

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[7] "People have become all too nimble in appropriating Christianity without more ado as a part of world-history; they have come to regard it as a matter of course that Christianity is a stage in the development of the human race" (TC, 216). As will become clear in chapter three, Kierkegaard can demonstrate that the irruption of Christianity into the ancient world represented a radical change in human experience (SV 12,133-44; WL, 136-47 and PF, especially ch. 1). See also Merold Westphal, History and Truth in Hegel's "Phenomenology." (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, Inc., 1978), p. 207.

[8] "Therein lies actually the whole foundational confusion of the modern age (which branches itself out in logic, metaphysics, dogmatics, and the whole way of life of the age) or the confusion lies foundationally in this: that the yawning abyss of quality has been removed from the difference between God and human being," PAP VIII 1 A 414.

The systematic approach imposed logic on existence, by which Hegel only confirmed the loss of a meaningful existential experiential existence.[11] Climacus' overall rejection of Hegel's thought is a rejection of modern philosophy's capacity to fully capture the essence of particular concrete experience. Instead he wants to posit Existents as that which separates thought and being and all the other dichotomous pairs, not to imply that "Existents is thoughtless" (SV 9,105; CUP, 112) or ontologically empty, but to signify that it denotes more than knowledge.[12]

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[9] Phenomenology of Spirit, p. 3.

[10] Eric Voegelin, Science, Politics and Gnosticism, p. 68. Echoing Kierkegaard, Voegelin has suggested that "while there is indeed a progress in clarity and precision of knowledge of the order of being, the leap over the bounds of the finite into the perfection of actual knowledge is impossible. If a thinker attempts it, he is not advancing philosophy, but abandoning it to become a gnostic." (Ibid, p. 42). Cf. SV 10,44-6; CUP, 305-07.

[11] "Existence constitutes the highest interest of the existing individual, and his interest in his existence constitutes his actuality. What actuality is, cannot be expressed in the language of abstraction. Actuality is an inter-esse between abstraction's hypothetical unity of thought and being" (SV 10,21; CUP, 279).

To begin, then, Kierkegaard posits "the leap" as "the most decisive protest against the inverse procedure of the method" (SV 9,90; CUP, 96, emph. added), referring to the circular nature of speculative philosophy. It is a radical opposition intended to clarify the contrary approaches to philosophical inquiry and thereby reveal the weaknesses of the one and the strengths of the other. Thus it is not accidental that Climacus just before engaging in a discussion of the problem of imposing logic onto existence contrasts Lessing's emphasis on striving for the truth with the systematist's claim to possess the truth by virtue of the system (SV 9,92; CUP, 98-9).

For this project their differences are of significant interest.[13] We shall look at a few fundamental differences between them that will illustrate Kierkegaard's claim that there has been a loss of authority within philosophy.

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[12] "The way of objective reflection makes the subject accidental, and thereby transforms existence into something indifferent, something vanishing. . . . But as Hamlet says, existence and non-existence have only subjective significance" (SV 9,161; CUP, 173).

[13] This chapter shall not attempt to give a comprehensive analysis of either approach, this has already been covered in a variety of analyses. See, for example, Stephen Crites, In the Twilight of Christendom: Hegel vs Kierkegaard on Faith and History (Chambersburgh, PA: American Academy of Religion, 1972); C. Stephen Evans, Kierkegaard's "Fragments" and "Postscript": The Religious Philosophy of Johannes Climacus (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1983); Paul L. Holmer, "Kierkegaard and Logic" in Kierkegaardiana 2 (1957), pp. 25-42; Robert L. Perkins, "Kierkegaard and Hegel: The Dialectical Structure of Kierkegaard's Ethical Thought." Ph.D.

II:1:2

The opposition between Hegelian and Kierkegaardian philosophy is not accidental, nor is it merely one thinker's negative reaction to another, and in this case towering, thinker's radical and influential philosophy. Their respective understanding of the basis of philosophy differs fundamentally as does their understanding of the object of philosophy. It should therefore not be a surprise that their methodological approaches would also differ. Perhaps it can even be argued that their respective methodologies were "causally" connected to how they perceived of the ground and purpose of philosophy.

The first problem lies in how Hegel and Kierkegaard perceive of the beginning of philosophy and this beginning is for both of them closely connected with the object of philosophy. In the case of Hegel the object of philosophy is to unify rigid dichotomies, while for Kierkegaard it is to accept the paradox as given. Kierkegaard states their different approaches succinctly:

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dissertation (Indiana University, 1965); Dietrich Ritschl, "Kierkegaards Kritik an Hegels Logik," in Theologische Zeitschrift 11 (1955), pp. 437-465; Mark C. Taylor, Journeys to Selfhood: Hegel and Kierkegaard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Niels Thulstrup, Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel, tr. George L. Stengren. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

> "The systematic idea is the subject-object, is the unity of thinking and being; Existents, on the contrary, is precisely their separation. From this it nowise follows that Existents is thoughtless, but it has distanced and distances subject from object, thought from being" (SV 9,104; CUP, 112).

We shall begin with Hegel.

Following Descartes, Hegel first rejects the Greek understanding of the beginning of philosophy as discussed in chapter one. What generates the situation that calls forth philosophy is for Hegel the problem of bifurcation (Entzweiung). For him philosophy is a response to the emergence of rigid dichotomies in a given culture such as that of body and soul, faith and reason, subjectivity and objectivity, freedom and necessity. Hence philosophy arises in response to rigid oppositions in order to restore unity, a unity that has been disrupted by these rigid dichotomies.[14] Hegel stresses that philosophy does not simply dissolve the opposition into a new unity. "The sole interest of Reason is to suspend [aufheben] such rigid antitheses. But this does not mean that Reason is altogether opposed to opposition."[15] That is to say, it is to be a reunification in which opposition is not simply cancelled but is preserved precisely in being surpassed (aufheben). What philosophy opposes is the absolute fixity the establishment gives to these dichotomies.[16] He wants to make these oppositions more fluid.

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[14] The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy, tr. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), pp. 89-94.

[15] Ibid, pp. 90-1.

In order for Hegelian speculative philosophy to come into play, even the deepest opposition must first have been established as with Greek philosophy. In other words, the point of departure for philosophy is experience, but, and this is what becomes problematic for Kierkegaard, it is a move away from experience, away from the world of senses to which experience is bound and "into its own unadulterated element."[17] According to Hegel, philosophy "owes its development to the empirical sciences." However, by removing the immediacy of scientific materials "a development of thought out of itself" has at the same time been formed giving to the content of the empirical sciences "the freedom of thought" and hence an a priori, meaning necessary character.[18] What we have, then, is a "System of Philosophy," the implication of which is necessity.[19]

The movement of thought in the System of Philosophy follows the historical process as laid out in Lectures on the History of Philosophy, but it is freed of the historical externality. For Hegel, such a "genuine and self-supporting" thought is in itself concrete and therefore must be an Idea.[20] His point is that the science of Idea is essentially system, because the true as concrete is only as unfolding into itself and as taking and holding together totality. Thought proper, then, the Idea, is only in the unfolding character of overreaching (übergreifen). It is the unfolding of thought proper and hence a movement of thought that is intrinsically systematic and therefore necessary.[21] This means the standpoint that appears to be immediate must, within the science itself, be converted to a "result" in which science again reaches its beginning. What is clear is that fundamental to Hegel's systematic approach are the categories of movement and necessity. These categories enable Hegel to make "fixed thoughts fluid" thereby overcoming the "dead bones" of formal logic.[22] He calls this a metaphysical or ontological logic that necessarily seeks its fulfillment within its own self-movement. Consequently the system of philosophy "exhibits the appearance of a circle which closes within itself and has no beginning in the same way as the other sciences have."[23]

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[16] Ibid, p. 91.

[17] Ency. #12.

[18] Ibid.

[19] See chapter I, p. ? and note.

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[20] Ibid, #14.

[21] Ency. #13-15.

[22] Quoted in Robert Heiss, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx: Three Great Philosophers Whose Ideas Changed the Course of Civilization, tr. E.B. Garside (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1975), pp. 56, 86.

The points emphasized in this short survey of what the post-Hegelians have referred to as the dialectic, are the very points that become bothersome to Climacus. For him they can be reduced to necessity, a necessity that has its ground in the logical movement of the dialectic.[24]

> Necessity must be discussed by itself. Only confusion has been caused by the later speculative thinking's importation of necessity into the interpretation of world history, whereby the categories of possibility, actuality, and necessity have become confused" (SV 10,45; CUP, 306-07).

For Climacus a logical movement can explain nothing about the concrete existence of the single self, indeed it appears to want to remove itself from it. Therefore it cannot do what in Climacus' opinion is the task of philosophy. That is to say, a logical movement, which to Climacus is a contradiction in terms, cannot explain the meaningfulness of human existence as such, a meaningfulness that acquires its qualitative distinction in the category of freedom.[25]

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[23] Ency. #17. As will be discussed presently, it is not really a circle, but a spiral, a fact that was not appreciated by Climacus.

[24] Phenomenology of Spirit, especially pp. 2-3, 17, 51.

[25] It may be tempting to suggest that Climacus has not grasped that Hegel in his logic is discussing "necessity" by itself. But as was made clear in chapter one, what Climacus means by necessity differs radically from Hegel's understanding of this category.

For Hegel the object of philosophy is the same as that of religion which is the truth "in that supreme sense in which God and God only is the Truth."[26] But as Hegel adds, philosophy will have to show that it is capable of apprehending such truths unassisted, meaning reason will need no help from religion.[27] Why would Hegel say that? Hegel does not want to be caught up in the dichotomous relationship of reason and faith that plagued scholasticism. There, he says, metaphysical thinking had turned into dogmatism or unfree thinking. As noted with irony in the zuzätze to #32 in the Encyclopaedia, "Dogmatism may be most simply described as the contrary of skepticism." Hegel's point is that he cannot allow philosophy to be constrained by the Kantian dichotomy of phenomenon and noumenon.

It is the problem of uncertainty that Hegel seeks to overcome, inasmuch as uncertainty would prove an embarrassment to philosophy. He claims to overcome this problem by presupposing enough intelligence to know transcendent being and its actuality.[28]

This actuality is what Kant referred to in the "Transcendental Analytic" as the noumenon: that which the understanding cannot know. "The most the understanding can achieve a priori is to anticipate the form of a possible experience in general."[29] But Hegel answers this claim of uncertainty with a counterclaim, namely that the object of philosophy is the Idea, the noumenon of which phenomena are only "the superficial outside" such as political and social organizational structures.[30] What concerns Hegel at this point is the absolute truth, and such truth, he argues, can only be known through thought proper, that is, through free and genuine thought which is itself concrete.[31]

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[26] Ency. #1.

[27] Ibid, #4.

[28] Ibid, #6.

Ordinarily, Hegel says, we take thoughts and the objects of thought (universals) to be anything but concrete. We take thought to be abstract. We take there to be an opposition between abstract thought (universals) and concrete individuals (particulars). To say that thought as free and genuine thought is concrete, is to dissolve and surpass this rigid opposition, the very aim for which philosophy arose in the first place. He goes on to promise that it will be shown that thought is at once itself and its other, that it overreaches (übergreifen) its other and lets nothing escape it.

Concrete thought is not merely opposed to the sensible particular as its other, but it literally reaches over to that other in such a way that the other, the particular, is drawn into a higher unity.[32] In one move Hegel has overcome the dichotomies that he believed tainted knowledge as uncertain, and in so doing he has assured philosophy the throne of cognitive knowledge.[33] Thus the Idea, free concrete thought, thought proper, is only in the unfolding character of overreaching, it is only in its development in this overreaching by which unity is achieved. It is only the system. It is an unfolding of thought proper that is intrinsically systematic. As such it will eventually know ultimate truth, it will become actual knowledge.

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[29] Critique of Pure Reason,tr. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1929), B303.

[30] Ency. #6.

[31] Ibid, #14.

This proposition confronts Climacus with two problems. The first is the givenness of the proposition and hence its inherent necessity. As he sees it, with necessity there is no need for authority as such. Indeed, authority (and its loss) only makes sense in circumstances of liberty, that is, if consciousness is truly free. For Climacus this means that the movement toward truth is not one of choice made in freedom, a fact that for him de-authenticates the progress of consciousness toward its own completion. The second problem is Hegel's arrogant claim that ultimate truth can be known cognitively. That kind of claim finitizes ultimate truth which to Climacus is the same as to negate the radical difference between the human and the divine and thus to reject an ultimate authority.

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[32] Ibid, #20, #21. I am indebted to John Sallis' lectures on Hegel's logic for this and other insights into this difficult subject.

[33] We see how Hegel works this out politically in his Philosophy of Right where the individual gains a self-awareness of his necessary relationship to the whole. As Steinberger, Op. Cit. p. 208, elaborates: "Reason prescribes the nature of political society and the nature of the individuals who comprise it; and each individual, as a rational creature, has the capacity to recognize that which reason prescribes. In fulfilling his capacity for reason, the individual comes to see that his very individuality is dependent upon society, and that only by being integrated into the body politic can he affirm his subjectivity and his freedom."

Although Climacus would agree with Hegel on an abstract level, such abstractions he considers useless when it comes to existential experience (SV 9,158; CUP, 176). In short, such a presentation is to misrepresent truth and constitutes a complete denial of the human condition proper. As Paul Holmer explains, Kierkegaard (Climacus) "denies that the relation between discourse and the world discoursed about is itself a logical relation. Meanings are logically inter-related, but not meanings and the world."[34] An existential system is not possible precisely because the heterogeneity of existence and the inner life cannot be reduced to a logical conclusion. This is Climacus' point in "denying so candidly the Hegelian effort to introduce movement (kinesis) into logic."[35]

"Logic cannot explain movement" Climacus says, meaning anything that has "any relation to existence (Tilværelse), which is not indifferent to Existents, [must not] be incorporated in a logical system" (SV 9,94; CUP, 100). But the development and transformation of subjectivity constitutes movement, the movement of intentional completion. Hence for Climacus logic and movement are mutually exclusive categories.

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[34] "Kierkegaard and Logic" in Kierkegaardiana 2 (1957): p. 29.

[35] Ibid, p. 41.

Logic is static and necessary, he insists,[36] whereas the existential development and transformation represents movement and is constitutive of an act of freedom. As Climacus expressed it in the Fragments as we have seen, all coming into existence occurs in freedom, not by way of necessity (SV 6,71; PF 77). Therefore the application of a logical system to explain the meaningfulness of human existence is nonsensical to Climacus.

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[36] Holmer makes Kierkegaard's understanding of logic more intelligible when he explains p. 27: "Logic is for Kierkegaard the disciplined inquiry into the meaning structure and principles of knowledge. . . . Logic is, by him, not conceived to be immediately methodological nor a biological weapon. Throughout his literature he seems to make clear, too, that logic is a spectator science, it is broadly descriptive. But the question is -- of what? It is surely not ontological description; for this is the almost constant criticism made in the Postscript, and every other occasion permitting in the literature, of the Hegelian philosophy.

Kierkegaard is a singular 'via media' thinker. Denying that logic is ontological, or a science about being, does not entail the affirmation that logic is an arbitrary invention, or simply conventional, or only rules like those governing a parlor game. He seems to be insisting that logic is a descriptive science, but descriptive principally of the structures implicit in the meaningful use of language. Logic describes the idealities, rules and norms, principles and criteria, in virtue of which meanings are communicated."

One might well wonder why Climacus, the rationalist, could not, if not adopt Hegel's dialectic, at least recognize the obvious movement within it, a movement motivated by spirit's self-testing dimension embodied in consciousness, in traditional terms, the quest for truth.[37] Indeed, he seems to misread Hegel when he claims that "pure thought without ado abrogates (hæve = ophæve like the German aufheben) all movement, or meaninglessly imports it into logic" (SV 10,19;

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[37] Hegel's Science of Logic, p. 55. In a contrasting interpretation of Hegel, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Op. Cit., pp. 17-8, suggests: "[T]he distance proper to theoria is that of proximity and affinity. The primitive meaning of theoria is participation in the delegation sent to the festival for the sake of honoring the gods. The viewing of the divine proceedings is no participationless establishing of some neutral state of affairs or observation of some splendid demonstration or show. Rather it is a genuine sharing in an event, a real being present. Correspondingly the rationality of being, this grand hypothesis of Greek philosophy, is not first and foremost a property of human self-consciousness but of being itself, which is the whole in such a way and appears as the whole in such a way that human reason is far more appropriately thought of as part of this rationality instead of as the self-consciousness that knows itself over against an external totality. There is, then, another way in which a human heightening of awareness penetrates and discovers itself -- not the way inward to which Augustine appealed but the way of complete self-donation to what is outside in which the seeker nevertheless finds himself. Hegel's greatness lies in fact in that he did not suppose this way of the Greeks to be a false way left behind in contrast to that modern mode of reflection, but he acknowledged that way as a facet of being itself. It was the magnificent achievement of his Logic to have acknowledged precisely within the dimension of the logical this ground that gathers in and underpins what points in the opposite direction. Whether he named this nous or God, either way it is ultimately what lies utterly outside us, just as the mystical submersion of the Christians ultimately attains inward reality."

CUP 277), although he knows well the ambiguous nature of this language. The point is, Hegel's logic is not circular, as Climacus suggests, but spiral. But Climacus (and here we must include Kierkegaard himself as well), is committed to formal logic, to Aristotle's principle of contradiction.[38] It is a position that apparently parallels Trendleburg's Logische Untersuchungen which Climacus praises in the Postscript for its proper understanding of movement as "the inexplainable presupposition, as the common factor wherein being and thinking agree and as the continued reciprocity" (SV 9,94; CUP 100).

The curious problem is that Climacus sees no conflict between a formal logic which consequently embodies no movement and Aristotle's whole conception of kinesis, of teleological movement, especially as we find it in the Physics where Aristotle tells us a plant develops necessarily. One might even argue that in Aristotle's syllogism there is a kind of metaphorical movement inasmuch as the premise suggests a conclusion. For the thinker this always represents a movement, even though it was presupposed in the proposition. All of this seems to be acknowledged by Climacus when he proclaims:

> The transition from possibility to actuality is, as Aristotle rightly teaches kinesis, a movement. This cannot be expressed or understood in the language

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[38] Kierkegaard is especially clear and unambiguous on how he understands the principle of contradiction and the consequences of its mediation in Two Ages, as will be discussed in chapter three. SV 14,88-94; TA, 97-103. Also SV 10,12-3; CUP, 270-71.

> of abstraction where movement cannot have assigned to it either time or space which presupposes movement or are presupposed by it (SV 10,45; CUP, 306).

We must conclude that Climacus at best appears to be inconsistent about the question of logic, an inconsistency perhaps propelled by his imposition of passion in order to derive meaning from knowledge. That brings us to perhaps his most important opposition to Hegel's logical system, namely its claim to be able to know the absolute truth.

II:1:5

Climacus asks how it is possible to know the absolute truth, and his own answer is a clear rejection of this claim.[39] This is not to say Climacus is unaware of the attraction of gnostic thinking, but for him the enthusiasm of claiming certainty, even about the highest, is essentially nihilistic.[40] The absolute truth is not knowable because it involves an absolute paradox as well as an ultimate paradox for thought itself, what will be referred to as the intellectual paradox. In the chapter on the "Absolute Paradox" in the Fragments, Climacus (always the heroic climber) urges the reader to take the category of paradox seriously inasmuch as it fundamentally connects the human subjectivity proper. "One must not think ill of the paradox, because the paradox is the passion of thought, and the thinker who is without the paradox, he is like the lover who is without passion, a mediocre customer" (SV 6,38; PF, 38).[41]

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[39] "This impiety (the abolition of the relationship of conscience) is the fundamental damage done by Hegelian philosophy," PAP VIII 1 A 283 (JP 1613).

[40] PAP II A 127. Compare with Eric Voegelin, The Ecumenic Age, vol. 4 of Order and History (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), pp. 27-8: "Gnosticism whether ancient or modern, is a dead end. That of course is its attraction. Magic pneumatism gives its addicts a sense of superiority over the reality which does not conform. . . . [I]t is a dead end inasmuch as it rejects the life of spirit and reason under the conditions of the cosmos in which reality becomes luminous in pneumatic and noetic consciousness."

Paradox for Kierkegaard has two functions. Inasmuch as it is a category of thinking, it posits the limitations upon what thinking as a cognitive effort can accomplish, that is, what thinking can ultimately think.[42] The paradox also reveals the difference between what can be known and what cannot be known, a state of differentiated, and hence tension filled, existence that Kierkegaard insists every concrete single self occupies.[43]

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[41] In regard to paradox Eugene Webb in Philosophers of Consciousness (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), p. 240, affirms the importance of this theme to Kierkegaard's philosophy: "There are two reasons for the prominence of the theme of paradox in Kierkegaard. One is that in trying to find a way to speak of subjectivity in a milieu in which philosophical language was oriented almost exclusively toward the description of objects of perception or of intellection, he was driven to use the currently available language of philosophical discourse in ways it was not suited to. In this respect, Kierkegaardian paradox is a function of the breakdown of a language pushed beyond its capacity. . . . There is also another type of paradox in Kierkegaard's thought, however, and it is this Climacus refers to as "the source of the thinker's passion." [Webb is relying on the older faulty translation of the Fragments; it should read as quoted above: "the paradox is the passion of thought."] This we might term "essential" paradox -- essential in that it stems from the structure of human consciousness itself so that there is no way it could be resolved by reformulation in another language. The paradox that is [the source of] the thinker's passion, as Climacus goes on to explain, is the desire to attain what is truly other than thought: "The supreme paradox of all thought is the attempt to discover something that thought cannot think. This passion is at bottom present in all thinking."

Here we might want to think about what paradox means. In its very formulation paradox appears to be forbidding, indeed we can say it is self-concealing.[44] In that sense it is mysterious and ambiguous. But Kierkegaard chose the categories with which Climacus operates very diligently, and that is especially true of the category of the intellectual paradox which in its deepest most profound meaning signifies the absolute paradox, "the god, the eternal, as human in time" (SV 20,156).

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[42] "This, then, is thinking's highest paradox: to want to discover something that it cannot itself think" (SV 6,38; PF, 37).

[43] SV 6,48-52; PF, 49-54. Also SV 9,70-74, SV 10,3,18,75-6 and note,250-52; CUP, 75-79, 267, 276, 339 and note, 518-19; SV 12,192-97; WL, 191-96; and SV 16,167; TC, 173.

[44] According to Liddell and Scott the etymological origin of paradox is Greek: paradoxos which means contrary to opinion, incredible, contrary to expectation, marvelous. Jens Himmelstrup (SV 20,152) has suggested its derivative meanings as absurd or incongruous (urimelig), but also contrary to reason (fornuftstridig). But as the OED adds, "though on investigation or when explained, it may prove to be well-founded (or, according to some, though it is essentially true)."

The ambiguity of the paradox lies in its ability to shed light where only darkness would appear to be present. But for light to appear we have to let go of ratiocination and leap across "radical discontinuity" between thinking and that which it cannot think: the paradox. "One 'leaps' by letting go,"[45] by giving up any rational explanations of the paradox and instead allow the self to participate in what cannot be thought through enactment. The achievement is self-knowledge (SV 6,46; PF, 47). Climacus suggests "one who does not pretend to be a Christian [can best] raise the question of what Christianity is" (SV 10,75; CUP, 338), and that someone, of course, is himself.

We suggest that that is Climacus' ultimate purpose, and we draw the conclusion that that was Kierkegaard's ultimate purpose with this rational pseudonymous author.

Climacus, the rationalist, is existentially willing to recognize the limits of cognitive thinking and the possibility of transcendence beyond these limits. He is open toward the possibility of the absolute paradox, yet not afraid of questioning it, and hence he is genuinely open to the possibility of an absolute authority, although he apparently does not existentially embrace it. For that we need to progress in Kierkegaard's authorship to Anti-Climacus. But

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[45] Louis Mackey, "A Ram in the Afternoon: Kierkegaard's Discourse of the Other," Kierkegaard's Truth: The Disclosure of the Self, ed. Joseph Smith, M.D., Psychiatry and the Humanities 5 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 202.

Johannes Climacus' passion, which for him expresses itself in thinking, allows him to envision (imagine) the offense (Forargelse) that "comes into existence with the paradox" (SV 6,50; PF, 51).[46] Moreover, this passion allows him to envision the possibilities of such an encounter between the paradox and the understanding (Forstaaelse) and to characterize it as being either happy or unhappy (SV 6,48; PF, 49).

Depending upon the intensity of the passion the "paradox and the understanding [Forstanden] [may] meet in mutual understanding" (SV 6,48; PF, 49), thereby avoiding the offense to the understanding, or they may not.[47] If they do not meet in mutual understanding, that is, if thinking cannot accept its own limitation and think the paradox as such, thinking has suffered its own downfall, and for Climacus that is catastrophic. As Sløk has pointed out, if Climacus' passion cannot encompass the god who is the ground of all thinking, of all that can be thought -- if you cannot think the ground, you cannot think at all. The implication is that self-knowledge, then, has broken down all together.[48]

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[46] Mackey, "A Ram in the Afternoon: Kierkegaard's Discourse of the Other," p. 193, perhaps says it better when he suggests that because of the limitations of language "the Fragments neither says nor shows but rather performs the 'absolute paradox': that the limit of language, its irreducible other, is also its radical source."

[47] Kierkegaard suggests the analogy of self-love which also seeks its own downfall in love of the other. In chapters four and five a detailed analysis of Kierkegaard's concept of love will help us understand the possibility of a happy encounter between thinking and paradox.

Climacus by maintaining an open posture toward the intellectual paradox, that paradox, as it were, opens itself to him and unconceals or discloses the very essence of his being, what Climacus understands as genuine subjectivity.

> That intimated paradox of the understanding acts in turn upon a person and upon his self-knowledge in such a way that he who believed that he knew himself now no longer knows with certainty whether he perhaps is a more curiously complex animal than Typhon or whether he has in his nature a gentler and diviner part (SV 6,40; PF, 39).

The paradox reveals the intentional movement that it makes possible, and thereby it defines what in the Postscript is characterized as becoming subject in truth. As such the paradox makes possible a genuine movement in freedom.

> This development or transformation of subjectivity, this its infinite concentration in itself over against the representation of the highest good of infinity . . . is the developed possibility of the subjectivity's primary possibility (SV 9,108; CUP, 116).

To the one who is open toward it, the paradox reveals the two-dimensional structure of human consciousness, and hence it reveals consciousness essentially as intentional and therefore tension filled.[49] This bifurcated nature of concrete experience, as Climacus has shown, cannot be mediated or reconciled in existence, least of all by the imposition of logic.

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[48] Sløk, Kierkegaard: humanismens tænker (København: Hans Reitzel, 1978), p. 118. Climacus' discussion is very reminiscent of Plato's inferred dialogue in the Republic (475e-476b) between the philosophos who is "the man who loves to look with admiration (philotheamones) at the . . . truth of things . . . as that which they are in themselves" and the philodoxos who can "see beauty only as it appears in the many beautiful things, but [is] unable to see beauty 'in itself.'" Eric Voegelin, Plato (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), pp. 65-6.

II:2:1

We can now turn to the symptomatic effects of the scientific methodology on religious thinking. Kierkegaard continues the attack on Hegel charging, that by virtue of speculative philosophy, the epiphany of Christ has been transmuted into doctrine illicitly deduced from history.[50] The result is that Christianity has become the subject of cognition, not of action. This is "Christendom's" misfortune, Anti-Climacus laments, for by becoming an object of knowledge, Christianity has lost all its "juice and energy" (SV 16,44-5; TC, 37-8), meaning it has lost its efficaciousness.

But Kierkegaard is not only battling Hegel's claim that we can have "absolute knowledge." His attack is also directed at Enlightenment philosophy and especially at "the established order" of the orthodox church. By immanentizing Christian doctrine it accomodated the influential scientific requirement which insists we can only know by way of rational deduction (Descartes) or empirical induction (Bacon). This is how "Christendom" emerges.

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[49] By tension-filled we mean to say that a movement in freedom is always perilous, requires risk taking inasmuch as it does not contain the security of certainty that is characteristic of a movement grounded in necessity.

[50] "History makes out Christ to be another than he in truth is" (SV 16,36; TC, 28).

On the one hand, it meant that the tension of the paradox of the Incarnation was relaxed, and becoming a Christian was now as easily achieved as citizenship (SV 9,46-7; CUP, 49-50, 328 and SV 16,73; TC, 71) requiring no special effort and posing no "offense" (Forargelse) to reason.[51] On the other hand, the relationship between philosophy and Christianity had become confused inasmuch as "the problem of its truth . . . becomes the problem of so interpenetrating it with thought, that Christianity at last reveals itself as the eternal truth . . . [and] is assumed as given" (SV 9,46; CUP, 49).[52]

Speculative philosophy has transformed Christianity into a reflective objectivity aimed at transcending existential uncertainty, and at the same time Christianity, by its embrace of worldly aspirations, has jeopardized its mystical authority, and thus it has deformed its own truth in the very creation of "Christendom."[53]

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[51] "The decisive in the Christian suffering is: the volition and the possibility of offense for the suffering. . . . For when I voluntarily give up everything, choose danger and adversity, then it is impossible to avoid vexation (Anfægtelse) (which again especially belongs to the category of the Christian, but which naturally has been abolished in Christendom" (SV 16,109-10; TC, 111).

[52] Also SV 10,66; CUP, 329.

Christianity represented a paradox that for Kierkegaard constituted an offense to reason. Christendom, in contrast, is Christianity accommodated to the established secular order where the tension of the paradox is relaxed, and hence essentially accommodated to speculative philosophy.

> The consequences of such a union (of Christianity and philosophy) are seen by rationalism, a representation, of which the confusion of language is a type, and just as it has been noticed that many words reappear in the different languages, in the same way the rationalists, even though they denigrate each other, have these words in common: philosophically, reasonable Christianity (Christendom and the whole presencing of Christ is an -- accommodation).[54]

Such an accomodation implied a circumscription of reason, meaning reason could no longer, like before the Enlightenment, noetically experience transcendent being. The scientific method had dictated to philosophy what could be known and experienced, and the established order," which represented Christianity, accommodated this demand.

> If one were to describe the whole orthodox-apologetic striving in one single sentence, but also with categorical precision, one would have to say: the intent is to make Christianity plausible

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[53] "Christendom has abolished Christianity without itself realizing it; the consequence is that if anything is to be done, an attempt must be made once again to interpose Christianity into Christendom" (SV 16,45; TC, 39).

[54] PAP I A 98.

(sandsynlig).[55]

This destructive turn of events for Christianity lead both Anti-Climacus and Johannes Climacus to characterize the circumstance of "Christendom" as the "way Christianity became paganism" (SV 16,45; TC, 38. Also SV 10,66; CUP, 329). It meant the Christian experience had not only become confused, but had also been negatively influenced by what Peter Gay, echoing Kierkegaard but more likely thinking of John Locke, has characterized as the Enlightenment's "appeal to reason and reasonableness."[56]

What does it mean to make Christianity reasonable? Making Christianity reasonable is precisely the problem for Kierkegaard, who sees this movement as the world's imposition of its principles on the domain of Christianity. Although these principles may be appropriate in secular affairs where concern is about relative goals, they tend to degenerate Christianity. In Kierkegaard's opinion they deprive the human individual of a higher form of life, which is precisely what a Christian life makes possible and to which the human being as he or she essentially is apparently aspires. He expresses this conviction when he has Climacus pronounce in the Postscript:

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[55] Nutidens Religieuse Forvirring. Bogen om Adler, p. 78; OAR, 59. Kierkegaard chose the word sandsynlig with great care, for literally it means "truly visible."

[56] The Enlightenment: An Interpretation. The Rise of Modern Paganism (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1966), p. 354. The work referred to by John Locke is The Reasonableness of Christianity (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), in passim.

> Here it is not asked whether Christianity is right, but what Christianity is about. Speculative thought leaves out this preliminary agreement, and therefore it is successful with the mediation. Before it mediates, it has already mediated, that is, transformed Christianity into a philosophical doctrine (SV 10,75; CUP, 338).

To ask what Christianity is about is precisely to question and thereby manifest the difference between what is immanent and what is transcendent for Kierkegaard, a difference modern philosophy on a whole according to Anti-Climacus, has attempted to deny deluding "us into the notion that faith has an immanent quality, that it is immanency" (SV 16,136; TC, 140).[57] The point is, as Gregor Malantschuk has noted, that Kierkegaard perceived of Hegel's philosophy as one designed to engender thought about immanence as absolute within philosophy as well as within theology. But "if people by logical thinking can manage all of existence, then [Kierkegaard can only come to the conclusion that] there is no room for transcendence."[58] By rationalizing Christianity Hegel makes it into something philosophically comprehensible, that is, into doctrine. Consequently any statement about Christianity can be reduced to an opinion about Christianity, reduced to anybody's opinion about it.

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[57] Anti-Climacus is especially aiming at Schleiermacher who in On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers, tr. John Oman (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1958) insisted religion is natural to the human being (p. 9), is a feeling or affection (pp. 36, 46, and especially 54) that originates not in a pure impulse to know, but rather in how human beings comport themselves toward the nature of things. The editors of the Danish edition who refer to Schleiermacher's Glaubenslehre, 3rd edition, vol. I, P. 167ff, also suggest the referral in PAP 1 A 273 to Hegel and Hegelians appears to be incorrect. However, Anti-Climacus, as well as Kierkegaard himself, could easily be drawn to this conclusion, it would seem, from Hegel's lectures on faith in Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, one vol. ed. Peter C. Hodgson "The Lectures of 1827," tr. R.F. Brown, P.C. Hodgson, and J.M. Stewart (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 134-37. There Hegel pronounces that "faith --i.e. certainty inasmuch as it is feeling and exists in feeling . . . is certainty of God, immediate knowledge." (p. 134).

> "What modern philosophy understands as faith is actually what is called an opinion [and this opinion is] proclaimed [forkyndes] to a person, and he now believes that it is so as the doctrine teaches. The next stage therefore becomes to grasp [begribe] this doctrine; this philosophy does" (SV 16, 136; TC, 140).

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[58] "Begreberne Immanens og Transcendens hos Søren Kierkegaard" in Frihed og Existens: Studier i Søren Kierkegaards tænkning (København: C.A. Reitzel, 1980), pp. 196-97. Malantschuk goes on to inform the reader that Kierkegaard thought of these concepts as belonging strictly to philosophy and theology and not to an upbuilding literature. Therefore he never uses these concepts in the upbuilding literature under his own name. There they instead are referred to as time and eternity, world and God, while in the pseudonymous literature the paradox or the absurd sometimes is substituted for transcendence "inasmuch as the oppositions these designations express would not appear without a transcendence." (p. 200). Malantschuk continues with an outline of Kierkegaard's two-tiered understanding of transcendence that is helpful to the present project: "The one designates transcendence as the fixed, unmovable point, the other the human being's possible attempt to reach the transcendental by negating the external reality as the ironist does it, or . . . his own actuality, which happens if the human being has reached further in his spiritual development. Said in another way, we are here dealing with, on the one hand, God as the transcendental and, on the other hand, the human beings striving relation to transcendence." (p. 203).

Christianity has been reduced to a truth on par with other immanent truths, and as such it has lost its divine authority that has its ground in transcendence. If this is so, then its truth can be proclaimed by a genius who is qualitatively different from the apostle inasmuch as he is what he is by virtue of what he is in himself. In contrast, the apostle is what he is by virtue of divine authority. As Kierkegaard puts it in Authority and Revelation:

> The category of a genius lies within the immanent; therefore the genius may well have something new to bring forth, but it disappears again in a general assimilation by the race, just as the difference genius disappears as soon as one thinks the eternal. The category apostle lies within the transcendent, he has paradoxically something new to bring forth, the newness of which remains constant precisely because it is essentially paradoxical and not an anticipation in connection with the development of the race. An apostle remains eternally an apostle and no eternity's immanence sets him on an essentially equal level with all other human beings because he is essentially paradoxically different from all others.[59]

Thus an apostle or a prophet gains his authority to make proclamations from the transcendental. As Malantschuk adds, "thereby Kierkegaard has strongly emphasized the authority with which the transcendental can make itself manifest over against all knowledge that human beings can achieve within immanence."[60]

Speculative philosophy negates this difference and thereby Christianity becomes something one learns -- by rote, as Climacus laments. If it is merely something one learns, like algebra, then it is to be assumed that everyone learns it, that everyone is a Christian as a matter of course.[61] Climacus makes an ironic comparison that has significant political overtones.

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[59] Nutidens Religieuse Forvirring: The Book on Adler, p. 139; OAR, 105.

[60] Frihed og Eksistens, p. 222.

He compares speculative philosophy's understanding of what it means to be a Christian to what it apparently means to be Danish. It is something you become by birth -- or two weeks later -- automatically. Inasmuch as geography teaches that the Lutheran-Christian religion governs in Denmark, it follows one is not Jewish, nor Muslim, but a Christian (SV 9,47; CUP 49). The problem is that being a Christian is not a scientific question, nor is it a legal question. The community in which a single self resides does not make that single self what he or she essentially is. That, for Climacus, is to be objective.[62] From this perspective it is simply in bad taste not to be what everyone is -- as a matter of course. The conclusion is that in "Christendom" (Christenheden) Christianity has become a question of what is in fashion, what dominates public opinion, and then it has lost its authority in existential experience.[63]

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[61] Gadamer, Op. Cit. p. 37, does not believe Hegel forecasted the end of history, as suggested by Climacus, by claiming that it is through Christianity and modern history that we have arrived at the point where all are free. "The principle of freedom is unimpugnable and irrevocable. It is no longer possible for anyone still to affirm the unfreedom of humanity. The principle that all are free never again can be shaken. But does this mean that on account of this, history has come to an end? Are all human beings actually free? Has not history since then been a matter of just this, that the historical conduct of man has to translate the principle of freedom into reality? Obviously this points to the unending march of world history into the openness of its future tasks and gives no becalming assurance that everything is already in order."

Of course, being Danish is a legal question, but for Kierkegaard it has stronger connotations, as it does to be truly Christian. What he wants to show is that a personal investment in the "idea of community" is imperative for its actualization. By this "idea of community" he means a dedication to solidary relations as presenced in "love of neighbor as oneself."[64] This concept is strictly an existential concept, and therefore it is not accidental that Climacus in discussing speculative philosophy immediately turns to the one who does philosophy, to the thinker.

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[62] "Objective thinking is wholly indifferent to subjectivity, and thereby also to inwardness and appropriation; its mode of communication is therefore direct. . . . It can be understood directly and be recited by rote. Objective thinking is therefore conscious only of itself, and is therefore not a communication" (SV 9,65; CUP, 70).

[63] Chapter three will deal explicitly with the consequences of the loss of authority in existential experience. But it is appropriate to note here that Climacus almost wishes the situation back to those days when being a Christian stood in stark contradiction to the surrounding world both in an inward as well as an outward sense. Then being a Christian was a dangerous, but also an heroic undertaking. His point is that it was not difficult to know when you were truly a Christian. In "Christendom," on the other hand, the external nuances may be diminutive confusing the individual struggling to become a true Christian (SV 10,78; CUP, 341). Thus Climacus questions whether belonging to the visible church is serious evidence for whether one is actually a Christian suggesting "it is easier to become a Christian if I am not a Christian, than it is to become a Christian if I am that; and this decision is reserved for the one who has been baptized as a child," SV 10,64; CUP, 327.

II:2:2

To discuss speculative philosophy without a consideration of the philosopher engaged in this thinking is for Climacus to set the cart before the horse, or at least it is to neglect, perhaps negate, the most important part of the equation.

> As is well known, Socrates says that if one assumes fluteplaying, one must also assume a fluteplayer,[65] and consequently if one assumes a speculative philosophy, one must also assume a speculative philosopher, or several speculative philosophers" (SV 9,48; CUP, 50).

The question for Climacus is an existential question: What does this mean to the one engaged in this activity? Speculative philosophy, in contrast, "argues from the point of view of totality, from the state, from the 'idea of community' (Samfundsideen), from the scientific standpoint of geography to the single self." It follows as a matter of course that the single self is a faithful believer (SV 9,47; CUP, 50). No effort is necessary. No commitment or dedication required except to comply with public opinion. And most important, no existential movement grounded in inwardness is necessary. The single self merely assumes the posture of the (natural or basic?) self, a being consumed with cognitive intent: to know what is transcendent, an intentionality that lacks all existential concern. This would not be problematic if Christianity was something essentially objective. "But if Christianity is essentially subjectivity, then it would be a mistake if the observer is objective" (SV 9,49; CUP, 51).

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[64] The "idea of community" constitutes Kierkegaard's "corrective." This will be worked out in detail in chapters four and five.

[65] Cf. Plato's Apology 27b.

Climacus' category of subjectivity has brought much confusion, especially when he claims "subjectivity is the truth." The objective position is easy to comprehend. The truth or falsity of it is not dependent upon subjective conviction, is not dependent upon whether one is committed to it or not. To state the objective position requires no existential effort upon the part of the one speaking. To state the objective position in this manner, however, helps to clarify the subjective position.

In the subjective position the truth lies within the relationship of the single self to it. The question is located in the nature of that relationship: whether it is one of interest or disinterest. What Climacus is saying is that if the nature of this relationship is one of disinterest, then the truth is not for that single self. But if the relationship can be characterized as interested, and by interest Climacus means passionately interested, then truth is precisely expressed in that interest and is of decisive import to the single self -- the truth is. We can say, then, that truth is prescenced in how the single self comports itself toward the world, the truth is subjectivity.

The double implication that Climacus makes is important. He presents the point this way:

> When the truth is questioned objectively, then the truth is reflected upon objectively as an object [Genstand], to which the knower is related. One does not reflect on the relationship, but on whether it is the truth, the true, he is related to. When this to which he is related is only [blot] the truth, the true, then the subject is in truth. When the truth is questioned subjectively, then it is the individual's [Individ] relationship that is reflected upon; if only the how [Hvorledes] of this relationship is in truth, then the individual is in truth, even if it in this way was related to untruth (SV 9,166; CUP, 178).

In a footnote Climacus adds an important clause:

> The reader will observe that what is spoken of here is the essential truth, or about that truth which is essentially related to Existents, and that it is precisely in order to clarify it as inwardness or as subjectivity, that this oppostion is shown (Ibid).

II:2:3

What, we might well ask, is all the disagreement about? The problem, according to Climacus, is that the question has been posed incorrectly. It is really about how Christianity is to be perceived without prejudice, which is the same as to ask what Christianity is. Climacus warns that this question must not be confused with the objective question about the truth of Christianity (SV 10,68; CUP, 331). It is an existential question, meaning "Christianity essentially is about Existents, and to become a Christian is the difficulty" (Ibid). This means the question of Christianity significantly entails the relation of the single self to the transcendent being. That in turn requires an explanation of how such a metaphysical concept is to be understood, and Climacus accommodates this question.

Here we again find a stark opposition to Hegel who in Climacus' understanding transports all of the transcendent realm into immanence, as we have seen. "In pure thinking's heavenly sub specie æterni the distinction is suspended (hævet)" (SV 10,60; CUP, 323). The whole has been finitized into one totality.

For Climacus, however, the metaphysical or the ontological simply is (er), but it does not exist (er ikke til). There can be no totality, at least not a unified totality as Hegel wants it. "God does not think, he creates; God does not exist, he is eternal," while it is the task of the human being to think and to exist (SV 10,36; CUP, 296). Søren Holm elaborates:

> As the one who is, God cannot be an object of faith, but only one of assumption. "Eternally understood, one does not believe that the god exists [er til], even if one assumes that he exists," because eternal or pure being is simply a category of essence [Væsen] and not a category of being within the realm of factual being. In contrast, faith claims that the god has come into existence [er blevet til] within the realm of historical being whereby his eternal essence is inflected into the dialectical categories

> of becoming [Tilblivelse]. In this historical factuality, meanwhile, the god must be said to have come into existence, because we are now outside pure timeless being.[66]

Climacus' point is that faith concerns itself with being (Væren) rather than with essence (Væsen). The object of faith is the Incarnation, the god who became human and thereby became the ultimate standard for human existence by manifesting the divine dimension in the human species. As such, Christianity is a question not of the understanding, but of action, and therefore it is a question of Existents.

Religious thinking is for Climacus a question of how a single self is to comport him- or herself before the paradox of the epiphany and about the authority that paradox imposes on the life of that single self in this world. That is to say, by coming into existence, by showing itself, the eternal gains a sovereignty over the historical's claim on individual existence because by so doing it introduces the divine dimension of being human.

Climacus will concede this much to speculative philosophy, that if Christianity is to be a teaching, then, it is the kind of teaching that is to be understood as one that teaches that the task is to exist in it. Moreover, it is to be understood as that which teaches how difficult it is to exist in it, "what an enormous existential task (Existents-Opgave) this teaching posits for the learner" (SV 10,75n; CUP,

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[66] Op. Cit. p. 27-8.

339n).

This proposition that Christianity is an existential task would seem to clarify Kierkegaard's indirect approach in these pseudonymous writings as an advocacy for enactment rather than a positing of doctrinaire information to supply cognitive skills. They are not meant to be the subject of fact gathering. Rather they represent an indirect appeal to the reader not to read the text as an accomplishment in and of itself, but to urge a new beginning. In other words, "Christianity is not a doctrine, but an existential communication expressing an existential contradiction" (SV 10,75-6; CUP, 339) that cannot be mediated, but only endured. To understand this is for Climacus to understand Christianity proper, and if personally appropriated, to have become a Christian in the most genuine sense. As such Christianity distances itself from the (easy) requirement of Christendom which from Kierkegaard's perspective stands as a pathology of consciousness and hence as detrimental to Existents.

It is from this point of view that Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings can be characterized as a dialogue with the reader, a dialogue that reflects more than what is immediately available in the text.[67] This dialogue continues in Two Ages and Works of Love. Here, however, Kierkegaard engages in direct communication as he discusses the problematic of the symptomatic effects on practical thinking, a thinking that manifests itself on a political as well as on a psychological level.

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[67] I am grateful to Adriaan Peperzak for this insight.

Chapter III

A SYMPTOMATIC EFFECT: THE LOSS OF AUTHORITY IN PRACTICAL THINKING

> Since every development . . . is finished only with its own parody, it will become apparent that the political is the parodic in the world's development -- first the actual mythological (the God side), next the human mythological (the human side), and then the realization of the world's purpose in the world (as the highest), a sort of Chiliasm, which nevertheless brings the individual politicians, animated by abstract ideas, into contradiction with themselves.[1]

> If humanity had not with the speed of several hundred years and then by the passion of habit got stuck in the fixed idea that a tyrant is a single human being, it would be easy to recognize that to be pursued by the crowd is the most burdensome of all, because the crowd, after all, is the sum of individuals, so that each individual adds his little part, while the individual does not think of how much it amounts to when all individuals do it.[2]

Let us now turn to the problem of the symptomatic effects on practical thinking that follow from the separation of knowledge and experience, a separation brought about by philosophy's adaptation of scientific methodology. As with theoretical thinking, the problem manifested itself in the "objective tendency," that in the case of practical thinking was expressed numerically. That is to say, on a political level the focus turns from theoretical concerns to the problem of ideology.

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[1] PAP VI A 26 (JP 4108).

[2] PAP VIII 1 A 123 (JP 4118).

III:1:1

Ideology for Kierkegaard has mostly to do with a consciousness directed at totality, with encompassing everyone in mass movements that appear to swallow up individual human beings and all but annihilate any existential initiative.[3] This problem he treats extensively in Two Ages, but where Marx views mass society as epiphenomenal of economic structures, Kierkegaard (and Nietzsche) view their own time as engaged in a life-or-death struggle that is epiphenomenal of a spiritual condition. Merold Westphal suggests that this event of mass society is for Kierkegaard "intimately related to a parallel 'religious' event, the death of God, or, in Kierkegaard's language, the disappearance of Christianity from Christendom. The massification of society is the flip side of its secularization."[4]

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[3] "In the midst of all the exultation over our age and the nineteenth century concealed there sounds a hidden contempt for being human; in the midst of the self-importance of the generation there is a despair over that of being human. Everything, everything wants to attach itself; world-historically one wants to bewitch oneself in the totality. Nobody wants to be an individual existing human being" SV 10,55-6; CUP, 317.

[4] "Kierkegaard's Sociology" in Kierkegaard's Critique of Reason and Society (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), p. 43.

Here again the overall problem remains the same: the lack of a foundational ground and hence the loss of authority. Any authority that may exist is wholly relative and grounded in human consensus whether achieved democratically or in authoritarian ways. Indeed the concept of ideology as we have come to understand it would seem to imply just such a lack of absolute authority.[5] This is no more evident than in the liberal state that inevitably emerged as a consequence of the French Revolution[6] and which, for all intents and purposes, Kierkegaard accepted albeit with severe qualifications. In that political system as well as in those others of a more socialist nature that were being promoted at the time, he strongly rejected what he called "the deified positive principle of sociality [which] in our age is precisely the consuming, the demoralizing principle that in the thralldom of reflection transforms even virtues into _vitia splendida_"

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[5] See James Wiser's discussion of Karl Mannheim's _Ideology and Utopia_ in _Political Theory: A Thematic Inquiry_ (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1986), pp. 36-41. Wiser argues that since all ideological thinking according to Mannheim is basically opinion, there is no objective truth against which "the opinions in question may be tested. The ability of reason to do this [as in Plato] however, is precisely what Mannheim denied. Given this, it may appear that Mannheim's sociology of knowledge necessarily leads to a radical relativism." (p. 40).

[6] For a discussion of Kierkegaard's view of the emergence of liberal democracy in Denmark see chapter IV.

(SV 14,79; TA 86).[7]

Before we begin to unravel this statement a few preliminary comments on Kierkegaard's disposition toward the relationship between the single self (den Enkelte) and society seem appropriate. It is a relationship, as was noted in the introductory chapter, that has often been misinterpreted as non-existent. Many readings of Kierkegaard interpret his concept of the single self as other-worldly, removed from all political concerns. But to so understand Kierkegaard is to understand his concept of the single self abstractly, and hence to misunderstand it.

Johannes Sløk is correct when he states: "The point of departure for Kierkegaard is that there exists simultaneously a primary and dialectical relationship between the individual and society."[8] It is meaningless to understand the single self apart from society and equally meaningless to understand society apart from the single selves that make it up. That Kierkegaard analyzes one element of this unity separately, or almost separately, in much of his pseudonymous literature is merely a methodological question. It should not be construed as a conception of the single self as apolitical or asocial.[9]

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[7] Westphal, "Kierkegaard's Sociology," p. 46, reminds the reader reflection here signifies the attempt of thought to free itself from the idea of community. In other words, it is reflection "cut off from passion."

[8] Da Kierkegaard tav: Fra forfatterskab til kirkestorm (København: Hans Reitzel, 1980), p. 11.

But Kierkegaard, as we shall see in chapters four and five, does not understand this relationship between the single self and society in terms of external conditions such as those understood by consent theory.[10] Nor does he understand this relationship in terms of human law such as constitutional measures, although law as such plays a major role in his therapeutic "corrective." Indeed, Kierkegaard says somewhere he did not believe political authority or government should legislate moral behavior. Unlike Plato and Aristotle, then, he rejects the idea of the regime as an educational institution, and thereby he confirms his modern heritage. Nor does he present a theory of state that outlines the framework for how the wants of citizens are to be satisfied by a regulating state. To Kierkegaard, all such external concerns are ultimately arranged through policy decisions that speak only to material phenomena. Rather, he insists, the actual tension-filled dimension of the primary unity "individual/community" originates in consciousness and must therefore first be worked out in consciousness. As Sløk interprets him, "the socially qualified individual is conscious of himself."[11] That is to say, human beings are conscious of themselves as social beings, they are conscious of their need of society. This need is not to satisfy material concerns such as property or money,[12] but rather to enable each individual human being to actualize his or her potential as a socially qualified being. Kierkegaard makes this explicit in Works of Love when he acknowledges the universal claim that "[a]ll through the ages everyone who has thought deeply over the nature of man has recognized in him this need for community" (SV 12,150; WL, 153). This qualification is manifested in the existential requirement "You shall love the neighbor as yourself."

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[9] It is difficult to resist quoting Aristotle who said in the Politics 1253a3: "He who is without a city through nature rather than chance is either a mean sort or superior to man."

[10] See Bruce A. Ackerman, Social Justice in the Liberal State (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); Richard E. Flathman, Political Obligation (New York: Atheneum, 1972); Robert Nozick, Anarchy, State, and Utopia (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1974); John Rawls, A Theory of Justice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

For Kierkegaard this natural relationship of the single self to his or her community is not only the point of departure, but indeed, from the perspective of the present work, the raison d'etre of what is held to constitute his philosophy of political consciousness.[13] The aim is to become the right sort of single self.

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[11] Sløk, Da Kierkegaard tav, p. 13.

[12] "Alas, many believe that the eternal is imaginary, money reality: in regard to eternity and truth it is precisely money that is the imaginary. . . . What is the earnestness of life? If in truth you have considered this serious question, then remember how you answered it to yourself; or let me remind you how you answered it. Earnestness is a human being's relationship to God; everywhere the thought of God accompanies what a human being does, thinks, and says, earnestness is present; therein lies earnestness. But money is the world's god; therefore it believes that everything which has to do with money or has a relationship to money is earnestness," SV 12,306; WL, 295-96.

> Every serious person who has an eye for the conditions of this age will easily perceive how important it is, foundationally and in obedience to every consequence and under the weight of an enormous responsibility but also extended to every true extreme, boldly to oppose an immoral confusion that philosophically and socially wants to demoralize "single selves" ["de Enkelte"] with the help of "humanity" or imaginary societal qualifications. It is a confusion that wants to teach ungodly contempt for the primary condition of everything religious: to be a single human being (SV 18,161; POV, 126-27).

The category of the single self therefore needs to be worked through, and this is especially true under the conditions of a social system that tends to ignore the social aspects of this category and consequently tends to ignore the single self's need for community. That is to say, "the present age" needs to be problematized from just this perspective. It is this task Kierkegaard set for himself.

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[13] Sløk is correct when he emphasizes that the relation to "the world" is in this sense constitutive, that it is inherent to the unity which is the unavoidable point of departure: individual/community. The relation to God is constitutive in another sense, "that it is the presupposition for the mentioned point of departure, but a presupposition of the remarkable structure that one cannot begin in it. One has to arrive at it; one must in the establishing movement of existence collide with it [støde på den], but collide with it as something that in the same moment presupposes itself." Da Kierkegaard tav, p. 30.

Let us now look at the actual circumstances of liberal society that Kierkegaard considered problematic and in need of a "corrective." On the one hand, he insisted liberal politics had produced "the illusion of perfect equality" conjured up by "the false prophets of secularism in the name of Christianity" (SV 12,74; WL, 81). On the other hand, there was the obsessive preoccupation with worldly things generated by "the present age" and its unquestioned adherence to materialism. The combination of calculative reflection, a trend toward numerical equality, and the primary ranking of economic security, Kierkegaard feared could only result in envy becoming "the negatively unifying principle" (SV 14,75; TA 81). That is to say, envy would bring "people together on the basis of what they are against, rather than what they support."[14]

To Kierkegaard envy and its consequences meant the emergence of the principle of characterlessness, a pathology that will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. Essentially characterlessness expresses itself in the absence of genuine action or decision thereby numbing the need for societal relations and producing events that exude an air of artificiality (SV 14,66-7; TA, 71-2). As Kierkegaard laments, there was a general inability to translate the considerations of reflection and observation into deed. Insofar as the ethical can only express itself in action, this all important category of the human condition was negated and in its stead the principle of comparison was engendered. In turn, the principle of comparison is what generated envy.

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[14] Merold Westphal, p. 57.

Although there was nothing new about envy, here in modernity Kierkegaard believed it had taken on a different face. Where before envy had traditionally tended toward admiration, implying a recognition of excellence, in "the present age," he lamented, envy had turned toward leveling, a condition which "stifles and impedes; it levels" (SV 14,77; TA, 84). Substantively the ingredients that make up the framework holding society together may be the same, but they point in different directions, have taken on new colors, or more appropriately, they have lost their differentiating colors. Thus leveling renders individuals uniform, yet atomized, isolated, and impotent at a marginal distance from the relational core of human existence.

Under the sway of the leveling process the single self is left unconnected to fellow human beings and to the community as a whole[15] engrossed with computing the problems of the political relationship, but never actively engaging in it, never actively expressing citizenship. The leveling process initiates what might be called a negative intentionality that contradicts Kierkegaard's conception of human nature proper.

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[15] As Tocqueville described in Democracy in America, tr. George Lawrence, ed. J.P. Mayer (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969), p. 508: The individual is "forever thrown back on himself alone . . . shut up in the solitude of his own heart."

> The leveling process is the _counterfeit_ anticipation of eternal life, which has been abolished as other-worldly and now is to be realized here _in abstracto_. If everyone, each one separately, essentially is in the divine totality, then equality is the consumation. But if the dialectic turns away from inwardness and wants to restore equality by the negative principle that they who separately are not essential are equal in the union of externality, then this is the leveling process.[16]

When, in addition, human consensus is now seen to determine the relationship between the single self and the state, Karl Löwith may be correct when he suggests Kierkegaard agreed with Marx that the modern human being as bourgeois is not a _zoon politikon_; "as a citizen he is abstracted from himself as a private individual."[17]

The focus from the political perspective will first be on the problem of externality and its connection to the leveling process and the latter's eager promoter according to Kierkegaard: public opinion (_Publikum_). Secondly, the dissertation will discuss the political consequences of this pathological relationship.

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[16] PAP VII 1 B 135:15, emphasis added. For a sympathetic understanding of the leveling process around this same time see Tocqueville, _Op. Cit_. vol. II, part III, especially chapters 19 and 21. Kierkegaard was apparently not familiar with this greatest work of Tocqueville's.

[17] _From Hegel to Nietzsche_ (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 242-43.

Kierkegaard's major point, which contradicts the leading political theories of his day, is that the idea of sociality, to distinguish it from his "idea of community," is not what can save the age. A number of things appear to be happening simultaneously here. The two concepts appear to be alike, and that is precisely the problem as Kierkegaard sees it. They have been confused with one another; their differences have not been discerned. But their differences are essential, because the idea of sociality expresses quantitative measures, what Kierkegaard sometimes scathingly refers to as the "numerical" (SV 14,96; TA, 106). He concedes that this form of "association-principle" has its validity in terms of material interests, meaning for decisions on policy and the distribution of goods this principle will do. But these items are not the object of his discourse. In contrast, the "idea of community" expresses a qualitative measure, an experience of consciousness that allows the single self the benefits of community without the loss of its self-defining nature (SV 14,58; TA, 62).[18] Kierkegaard illustrates this idea by an astronomical analogy and then compares the two.

> "The harmony of the spheres is the unity of each planet relating to itself and to the whole. Take away one of the relations, and there will be chaos. But in the world of individuals the relation is not the only constituting factor, and therefore there are two forms. Remove the relation to oneself, and we have the tumultuous self-relating of the mass to

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[18] See introductory quotation to chapter IV.

> an idea; but remove this as well, then we have brutality (SV 14,58; TA, 63).

While the latter is the solution to the problem of modernity as will be shown in the following chapters, the former Kierkegaard perceived as the major ideological problem of modernity. But ingeniously he also recognizes it as an instrument of skepticism necessary for the right development of selfhood (SV 14,96; TA, 106). The idea of sociality serves a purpose, but ultimately it is negative inasmuch as in "the present age" it serves as entertainment, as an escape, or as an illusion; it does not fulfill a genuine need. Modern man has developed a series of artificial wants which he believes the numerical association can fulfill. Its dialectic is that

> as it strengthens individuals it enervates them; it strengthens by the numerical in the union, but this is ethically a weakening. Only if the single self despite the whole world has won an ethical disposition in himself, only then can there be talk of in truth uniting (SV 14,96-7; TA, 106).

There is a strong implication here that the single self who belongs to a group, or to "the many" whom Kierkegaard admits is his polemical aim,[19] is somehow different from the person who remains his own self. In that sense it could be argued that Kierkegaard sees a regressive movement to the animal stage on the part of the modern single self who adheres to the idea of sociality and its emphasis on external concerns. In The Sickness Unto Death this impression is strengthened by the following claim:

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[19] PAP VIII 1 A 23 (JP 5979).

> [T]he concept judgment corresponds to the single self; judgment is not made en masse. People can be put to death en masse, can be sprayed en masse, can be flattered en masse, in short in many ways they can be treated as cattle, but people cannot be judged as cattle, for cattle cannot come under judgment. No matter how many are judged, if the judging is to have any earnestness and truth, then each single self is judged (SV 15,172; SUD, 123).

The regression to the animal stage is problematic inasmuch as for Kierkegaard human beings are by nature both animal and spirit. Any attempt to examine the single self from that perspective Kierkegaard would consider reductionist. As Westphal has pointed out, the discussion is not about an evolutionary movement still to be completed. Rather,

> to become a herd is to sink, to fall below what one already is. But since we are spirit by nature we cannot become simply or merely animal, and the human herd will always be distinctively human. It presupposes, for example, envy which the animal herd lacks. . . . Mass society is a flight from spirit. It is a state in which those who are a polar tension of nature and spirit play the role of the animals they can never be. It is the shared bad faith by which individuals help each other sustain the illusion that they can shirk their spiritual destiny by joining the public.[20]

People find solace and power in numbers, but it is a power that can only satisfy their animal nature, and hence they are left individually incomplete. As Kierkegaard concludes this argument with scathing irony, "As long as we are many about it, then there is no wrong. It is nonsense and an antiquated notion that the many can do wrong" (SV 15,172; SUD, 123). Such is the wisdom of an age that determines all values by consent.

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[20] Westphal, "Kierkegaard's Sociology," pp. 48-9. References are to PAP XI 2 A 88 (JP 2986) and SV 14,75-7; TA 81-4.

It is clear that, inasmuch as the unity "individual/community" is the point of departure, Kierkegaard at least has certain requirements, if not an entire theory of state, for how that community should be structured. An appropriate subtitle for the work on which much of this section is based, Two Ages: A literary Review, would be "the impotence of politics." In this review of a novella of the same name Kierkegaard juxtaposes the two foremost political structures of modernity, that of revolution to win individual freedoms and the leveling process to assure equality both of which resulted in the loss of political authority. In the case of the former, the French Revolution had led to violence, anarchy, and riotousness (SV 14,58; TA 63), and in the case of the latter, the demand for equality had produced the leveling process. Both events happened, Kierkegaard claims, as the result of abuse of political power, and hence political authority had brought this nemesis of its own demise upon itself (SV 14,98; TA, 108).

This development meant that all relationships, be they political, social, or familial in nature, had been equivocated, i.e. the natural (conventional?) authority inherent to such relations had eroded. It had eroded because the essential third factor, the idea, had dissipated and there was no longer an object to which the parties could commit themselves. All points of direction had simply become blurred and unfocused leaving the relations intact but essentially meaningless.

> If the essential passion is taken away, the one consideration, everything becomes an insignificant externality without character. Then the flow of the spring of ideality is stopped, life together [Samlivet] becomes stagnant water, and this is crudeness. . . . The coiled springs of life-relationships, which are what they are only because of qualitatively distinguishing passion, lose their resilience; the distance of the differentiated from its difference in the expression of the qualitative is not the law for the relation of inwardness to each other in the relation. Inwardness is lacking, and to that extent the relation does not exist, or the relation is an inert cohesion (SV 14,58,72; TA, 62, 78).[21]

The loss of the idea in the political relationship means that the role of the citizen changes. Where before participation was the defining characteristic, spectatorship now characterizes the citizen. Kierkegaard says the citizen has become a third person (Trediemand), (not to be confused with the idea or "the third factor), meaning he no longer belongs in the relation. That is to say, the single self stands outside the relationship and becomes alienated toward itself.

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[21] It is unfortunate that the new edition of Two Ages translates det Forskjelliges Fjernhed fra sit Forskjellige as "difference between opposites." Being different does not mean being opposites, and "distance" has a meaning other than "difference." The possessive sit is important inasmuch as it implies an underlying assumption of these different entities essentially belonging together. That is the whole point of the third factor. They belong together in the idea. Thus by invoking the third factor, Kierkegaard has avoided questions regarding the type of relationship between the entities and thereby avoided such Hegelian prototypes as the "Master-Slave" pair.

The role of citizenship has been marginalized by the cautious (prudent) preoccupation with calculating the particulars of the relationship, and the political authority has been reduced to meaningless procedural manipulation (SV 14,73; TA, 79). The citizen no longer recognizes the bond to the political authority, a bond Kierkegaard says is natural (he uses the analogy of father and son (Ibid)), reminding us of his claim in Works of Love about the need of community natural to human beings.[22] If the naturalness of the political relation is unrecognizable to the single self, then the necessity for existential commitment to the political is also unrecognizable.

Kierkegaard is here pointing to the major problem of liberal theory, its inability to engender moral fervor especially toward any notion of the good of the whole. This is important to Kierkegaard inasmuch as this concern for the whole, this good is constitutive of his "idea of community."

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[22] Kierkegaard emphasizes this bond between the individual and the state when he comments in a journal note that the political relationship must engage each individual separately. "The excellent of Plato's Republic is precisely that he does not make the state higher than the individual . . . In order to describe the individual he describes the state; he describes a democrat, and in order to do that he describes democracy. He constructs a state for the individual, unum noris omnes -- this is the proper human ideality; otherwise we get the confusion about the many manifesting something entirely different by being many, than what each is separately." PAP VII 1 A 70 (JP 3327).

But in liberal theory such concern for the whole has been sacrificed for the sake of individual self-satisfaction, a satisfaction grounded in the rights to property and hence in externality. As Locke himself concedes, reason, by which he meant something like community or "natural love amongst men,"[23] has been sacrificed on the altar of self-interest.[24] In such a move the single self from Kierkegaard's perspective has paradoxically isolated itself from the shared morality that constitutes community. The single self has isolated itself from itself, inasmuch as it by nature needs community but instead sought refuge in the bosom of the crowd. "While both love of the ideal and the love of neighbor place constraints on self-love, there is a love that does not, and thus can be easily put in the service of pure self-interest. That is the love of the crowd."[25]

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[23] The Second Treatise of Government, #5.

[24] Ibid, #124 and #181. Also Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision (Boston: Litttle, Brown and Company, 1960), p. 332; and James L. Wiser, Political Philosophy: A History of the Search for Order (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1983), p. 222. Of course, one should be careful not to exaggerate the reality of a natural community in Locke. It is possible to read it as Locke's moral promise as we have done here and as is the tendency, for example, with Thomas Jefferson's "Declaration of Independence." However, M. Seliger, The Liberal Politics of John Locke (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1968), p. 92, is right to point out that reason does have a role in creating an "artificial" but real or rational society when he argues that "[w]hat is political and non-political [the state of nature] are comparable because a state of war exists wherever force is used without right whether there is, or is not, a common judge. What is political and non-political remains distinguished because the concerted appeal to heaven is occasioned by and directed against government, whereas in the hypothetical state of nature everybody is judged between himself and others. Herein lies the most important practical difference: political society minimizes the use of force."

Although he does not specifically say so, it is clear that Kierkegaard distances himself from liberal theory's appeal to the most basic human instincts and instead wants to appeal to what is best in human nature.[26] He insists all human beings possess a higher nature that has the capacity to transcend the givenness of mundane existence, and if they choose to activate this "second nature," in freedom, then the distances between the differentiated and its difference is fundamentally narrowed to where the relation can exist passionately. That is to say, the tension of the unity "individual/community" has regained its elasticity and hence its positive mode where self-identification becomes possible, that is, self-identification as a socially qualified single self "who accepts what through the differentiation is transparent."[27]

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[25] Westphal, "Kierkegaard's Sociology," p. 57. References are to PAP X 3 A 509 (JP 1789); PAP X 4 A 344 (JP 1799); and SV 18,156-57; POV, 118. As Kierkegaard suggests in a journal note, historical categories change and now the crowd has become the tyrant, PAP VIII 1 A 123 (JP 4118). For more on the relationship of the single self and the crowd see PAP VII 1 A 176 (JP 5948).

[26] Moreover, Kierkegaard who was an avid reader of Aristotle cannot have avoided Aristotle's reminder in the Politics 1254a35-1254b1 about who is under consideration: "It is in things whose condition is according to nature that one ought particularly to investigate what is by nature, not in things that are defective. Thus the human being to be studied is one whose state is best both in body and in soul -- in him this is clear; for in the case of the depraved, or those in a depraved condition, the body is often held to rule the soul on account of their being in a condition that is bad and unnatural." In chapters IV and V it will be shown how Kierkegaard applies this Aristotelian approach to analysis and appeals to what is best in human beings.

III:1:3

What has been said of the political relationship is to a large degree true of the social and the familial relationships. Kierkegaard compares the meaninglessness of all these relationships including the political relationship, in "the present age" to a grandfather clock that instead of striking the correct hour simply strikes once every hour. The clock works, as it were, yet it does not work. It expresses its function, yet its function is faulty for it does not give the correct time.

> And so it is in an enervating tension: the relationship exists (bestaae); with an abstract uninterruptedness that prevents the breakdown, something expresses itself that may be called the manifestations of the relations, and yet the relations are not only indicated imprecisely but almost meaninglessly (SV 14,74; TA, 80).

By not engaging actively in the political relationship, or in the other relationships that according to Kierkegaard are natural to the human condition, there is a breakdown in the unity "individual/community" which consequently loses its meaningfulness. Inasmuch as the purpose of the relationship, the third factor (the "idea of community"), the good, as it were, that outside the self which was supposed to bind individuals to each other while maintaining their individuality, their differences, that has ceased to exist. On the one hand, human individuals have lost sight of their true selves as social beings in need of community. On the other hand, they have lost sight of the moral dimension that expresses their "second nature," they have lost sight of the ethical, of the good. To lose sight of the good is for Kierkegaard to be in a state of passionlessness which he insists is a state that lacks the "investments of enthusiasm and inwardness in the political and the religious" (SV 14,69; TA, 74).

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[27] Sløk, Da Kierkegaard tav, p. 18.

With this pronouncement Kierkegaard has finally revealed that he considers the political and the religious to be the essential structures of the unity individual/community. But he is careful to add that this is not because the religious, i.e. Christianity, needs the political. Rather the political, i.e. the state, needs the religious, needs Christianity.

> Guizot says, the only politics for the state is indifference toward all religion.
> That suffices for the old Christianity which said, Christianity is indifferent toward any state constitution, can live equally well under all of them.
> Alas, but this inversion that it is now the state that wants to play the superior as if it did not need religion -- while it is religion that does not need the state.[28]

As Sløk explains, the aim of Christianity is to proclaim the

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[28] PAP X 3 A 679.

God-relation as the only justification for authentic existence. But inasmuch as that message in and of itself is incommensurable with the requirements of worldly existence, Christianity is indifferent to the constitution of any state. Although Christianity may establish itself as a state church which is an economic advantage as well as an advantage for its need for security, in its essence, in performing its duties, it does not really need such assistance.[29] Still, Kierkegaard is adamant in his stance against the call for religious tolerance which he regards as religious indifference. From his perspective there was only one god, the Christian God of the Incarnation, which he considered an historical concept making Christianity different from all other religions.[30] Therefore toleration would amount at best to disinterest and at worst to heresy.[31]

Christianity must proclaim its essence as the truth, but precisely for this reason neither can the state be tolerant toward religion, because it depends on it. That is to say, according to Kierkegaard religion performs an indispensable function in society. This function is not just on par with other institutions and organizations. It is not just a service rendered to those citizens who are especially religiously interested. "Christianity represents the new and undeniable condition of life . . . on the basis of which a human being can become an authentic and serious human being."[32]

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[29] Da Kierkegaard tav, pp. 42-3.

[30] PAP IX A 264. Also Sløk, Da Kierkegaard tav, p. 45.

[31] "Christianity has never been tolerant to the point where it would allow other people to be pagans or perish. No, it has been intolerant to the point where the Apostle would rather lose his life in order to proclaim Christianity to them. One forgets that intolerance is perhaps to want to rule over others, but that it certainly is not intolerance to want to suffer to help others." PAP VIII A 591.

Sløk concludes Kierkegaard's thought on the subject of the relation between the church and the state with a claim that bears unmistakable resemblance to Tocqueville's description of this relationship.[33] "The state . . . needs the church, and it is only in the church the procedure is carried out which sends the human being back into life in society as "good" citizens."[34] In other words, the church occupies a position different from and higher than other social institutions inasmuch as its function does not have a specific purpose. As Kierkegaard emphasizes in a journal note,

> While the church actually represents "becoming" [Vorden], the state represents existence [bestaaen]. Therefore it is so dangerous when state and church grow together and are identified. . . . When it [the state] is an existence [et Bestaaende], one has to be very careful about abolishing it precisely because the "state" is in the idea "the established" ["det Bestaaende"]; and perhaps one is better served by energetically maintaining a less successful establishment [Bestaaende] than reforming too

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[32] Sløk, Da Kierkegaard tav, pp. 43, 46. Also PAP III A 216.

[33] Op. Cit. vol. I, pp. 287-301.

[34] Sløk, Da Kierkegaard tav, p. 46.

early.[35]

precisely because Christianity looks to the future, it exists in order to provide the authenticity that makes it possible for human beings to develop their existence in the various institutions of the state. That is to say, it makes political life in the state humanly worthy.[36] Christianity thereby posits merely two obligations on the single self: to humble oneself before the requirements of the ideal, and "then for the rest" to be a good (Christian) citizen (SV 16,73; TC, 71).

III:2:1

The desire for immortality that has plagued the human disposition since time immemorial in its attempt to attain a godlike happiness is for Kierkegaard nothing but a prideful experiment in self-deification. It is an endeavor to negate what human beings are, mortal, and therefore imperfect. Because human beings can think the perfect, however, their existence is necessarily a struggle to reach perfection and suffering at not being able to complete the struggle. As Michael Henry suggests, "the self-deifying self is somewhat aware, the demand to be everything is a sign, not of superiority but of inferiority, for such a self actually lacks the strength and the courage to live with imperfection and existential tensions."[37] Hence on a psychological level, Kierkegaard insists negative categories dominate everyday existence rendering impotent human beings the victims of "externality."

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[35] PAP X 1 A 552.

[36] Sløk, Da Kierkegaard tav, p. 46.

Public opinion plagues the human condition as the self has become defined in terms of its public role based on superficial consciousness of social differentiations (SV 12,88-91; WL, 95-7).[38] It is because of this superficial level of consciousness that the leveling process becomes possible when envy engages the single self's imagination and in Kierkegaard's opinion apparently dominates it.

A state of envy is an alienated state, quantitatively justified, that implicitly denies all qualitative categories of community (SV 14,69; TA, 74). The consequence is abstract subjectivism which expresses itself in an atomization of individuals. In such separated individuals "the political and religious bonds, which . . . invisibly and spiritually hold states together, have been dissolved or weakened" resulting in isolation and hence a concentration on narrowly conceived self-interests.[39] According to Nordentoft, Kierkegaard compares this development to the transition of the Greek city state from a cosmological civilization permeated by the "God-consciousness," to an anthropological culture representing "the modern reflective and individualistic consciousness."[40] Kierkegaard suggests in his dissertation that this is symbolized by Socrates' lone voice of warning "which never concerns itself with the substantive interests of the life of the state."[41]

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[37] Michael Henry, "The Dostoyevskian Psyche and the Total Critique" in The Good Man in Society: Active Contemplation. Essays in Honor of Gerhart Niemeyer, eds. John A. Gueguen, Michael Henry, and James Rhodes (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989), p. 133.

[38] Kresten Nordentoft, Kierkegaard's Psychology, trans. Bruce Kirmmse (Pittsburgh: Dusquesne University Press, 1972), p. 244, explains: "In Works of Love social identity is discussed as 'the outer garments of differentiation,' which the individual binds firmly about himself and in which he mimics all his life, like an actor in his costume."

Kierkegaard diagnosed this illness of modern society as a pathology of consciousness, and inherent to this pathology is a denial of human nature proper. He characterized this condition as spiritlessness (Aandløshed) which is best described by what he called its philistine-bourgeois mentality (Spidsborgerlighed) lacking all potentiality, or possibility, as Kierkegaard prefers (SV 15,97; SUD, 41).[42] This pathology had resulted in a life "of meaningless externality devoid of character" (SV 14, 58; TA, 62), a life without passion (Lidenskab), without earnestness, without inwardness. In short, human existence had lost its fundamental ground necessary for the "idea of community." This loss was substituted with what he called a "dyspeptic, abnormal common sense" which has its ground in public opinion and which focuses exclusively on self-interested, calculative reflection. Summarily, human experience had lost its most essential dimension as a "tension of reflection . . . transformed the whole of existence into an equivocation, that in its facticity is, while privatization [privatissime], a dialectical fraud, surreptitiously inserts a secret way of reading -- that it is not" (SV 14,71-2; TA, 77).[43]

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[39] Ibid, p. 245. Nordentoft is quoting from Either/Or, vol. I, pub. Victor Eremita, trans. David F. and Lillian Marvin Swenson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944 and 1959), p. 139.

[40] Ibid.

[41] The Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates, trans. Lee M. Capel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), p. 188 (SV 1,195), hereafter known as CI. It should be noted that Kierkegaard here in his dissertation refers strictly to Plato's Apology and relies far too much on Hegel for his interpretation.

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[42] As we saw in chapter one, Kierkegaard embraces Aristotelian teleology with the categories of possibility and actuality, and underscores that it is a movement (kinesis) in the language of existence, not of abstraction (SV 10,45; CUP, 306). Both presuppose the presence of spirit: "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," SV 6,137; CA, 43. On the meaning of spirit see The Sickness Unto Death where Kierkegaard gives a profound characterization of spirit and simultaneously explains the meaning of "spiritlessness": "Every human existence that is not conscious of itself as spirit or personally conscious before God as spirit, every human existence that does not rest transparently in God but vaguely rests in and merges in some abstract universality (state, nation, etc.) or, in the dark about his self, regards his capacities merely as powers to produce without becoming deeply aware of their source, regards his self, if it is to have intrinsic meaning, as an indefinable something -- every such existence, whatever it achieves, be it most amazing, however intensively it enjoys life aesthetically -- every such existence is nevertheless despair," SV 6,102; SUD, 46. Spiritlessness, then, constitutes denial of one's nature properly speaking, meaning there is not even consciousness of potentiality, or to use Kierkegaard's (infamous) phrase, there is not even consciousness of the "possibility of possibility," SV 6,136; CA, 42.

Eugene Webb in Philosophers of Consciousness (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), p. 270, has suggested this movement (in the Aristotelian sense from potentiality to actuality) is a "process of actualization, of coming into existence in the proper sense," a metaphoric image Kierkegaard favored. As such it "has the advantage of emphasizing the dynamism of the actual rather than the stasis of the ideal" as is "the tendency of Voegelin's favored Metaxy metaphor [which] image[s] human existence as an inevitable deficiency longing for an unattainable sufficiency."

III:2:2

In a double sense Kierkegaard teaches that the true nature of the single self has been corrupted both in terms of what it naturally is and what is ethically possible or desirable. On the one hand, all individual judgment has been relinquished to public opinion, to group interests, to an aggregation of uniform beings. Then the single self stands in contradiction to its natural self as it acts prudentially in order to conform to the public's conception of what is sensible. It is a condition that expresses itself in endless computations that signify a general disinterestedness -- the very requirement of scientific methodology. From this it follows that the problem has been transformed from one of existential qualities to one of abstract formulations, i.e. doctrine, or ideology, as it were. On the other hand, by negating a differentiated self that has its ground in transcendence, values have been equivocated as the distinction between good and evil loses its requirement for decisiveness.

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[43] It is unfortunate that the new translation of Two Ages misreads this ingenious conceptualization by Kierkegaard and consequently mistranslates the latter part of this quotation. The dialectical fraud is not that the individual in the privacy of his own heart reads or reflects in secret ways that are unreal in some way, but that he understands his dialectical existence as a public/private bifurcation rather than as a transcendent/immanent differentiation.

From Kierkegaard's perspective this equivocation means the ethical demand of human existence, that necessarily follows from the proper conception of human nature, has been abandoned. In other words, there has been a loss of character in the sense that qualities like inwardness and commitment to the common good have come to be considered imprudent. The problem with prudential calculations is that they necessarily lead to comparisons and are ultimately skeptical as the question of either-or is incessantly asked, and only answered with another either-or. The question of pleasure dominates these calculations, and since pleasure cannot be measured and certainly cannot be measured in terms of the pleasure of others, indecision is necessarily the result. But human imagination, being what it is, will always believe the other's pleasure is greater, and this is how Kierkegaard envisions the single self becomes entrapped in the condition of envy and uncertainty, its own and that of others (SV 14,75; TA, 81).

From this perspective it sounds like Kierkegaard believed the modern single self has never grown up, has never reached the maturity of being truthful to the self in the sense that self-awareness is attained without the aid of comparison. In the Kierkegaardian vernacular, the modern single self has not learned to choose itself as is the obligation of each single self, has not asked the Socratic question of itself. Instead we live a philistine existence of superficiality as a product of what the given society and its culture inescapably will make a person into given his predisposition. As Johannes Sløk has so aptly interpreted Kierkegaard, a philistine lives in the illusion that he has freely made the principal decisions for his life which in reality external anonymous forces have made on his behalf.[44]

When uncertainty has taken this strong a hold of the single self, the decisions of life become dictated; Kierkegaard insists, we are then no longer capable of recognizing excellence, no longer capable of admiring it and evaluating it for its significance to society -- imitation is no longer a possibility for ordering society, learning by example is no longer an option.

The present age tends toward mathematical equality

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[44] Kierkegaards univers: En ny guide til geniet (København: Centrum, 1983), p. 28. Sløk brings out a point about the philistine bourgeois that would seem to indicate that Kierkegaard in fact had four major spheres of "existence" even though he did not have a fictitious author to describe and analyse this existence-sphere. The reason for that is, of course, obvious inasmuch as a philistine bourgeois would not be able to explain his own condition. Once a philistine bourgeois becomes aware of his own condition and what it means, he is immediately transformed into an aesthete -- "in Kierkegaard's specific meaning of the word." Ibid, p. 28-9.

> so that almost equally through all classes so many make one individual [Individid] (SV 14,78; TA, 85).

It is the age of the ascendency of the category of "generation over the category of individuality" (SV 14,78; TA, 84). If this is true, it is also true that the single self suffers from a disinterest in self-improvement and a disinterest in the betterment of the community. To Kierkegaard this spells both ethical and political impotence, and he considers such a condition utterly irrational.

The pathology is completed when envy, the consequence of uncertainty, instead begins to degrade excellence, to minimize its significance, until it actually is no longer excellence. Then "envy directs itself against the excellence that is, and against that which will come" (SV 14,77; TA, 84).[45] Envy establishes itself as an instrument of leveling, and from this nothing excellent can arise. The leveling process is thus impotent as it stifles and impedes initiative and is for that reason "abstraction's victory over individuals" (SV 14,78; TA, 84). Then the leveling process is maximized, the bottom of the abyss, which Kierkegaard likens to "deathly silence," is reached. Out of this "deathly silence" nothing can rise, and powerlessness (Afmægtighed) reigns (SV 14,77; TA, 84).

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[45] In the Danish text no italization appears in this short sentence as it does in the translation.

The juxtapositioning of excellence and leveling is deliberate on Kierkegaard's part. He wants to emphasize how the latter negates the former and, by so doing, negates human nature proper as intentionally oriented.[46] He defines graphically the emergence of this contradiction over time borrowing without blushing from Hegel's methodology.

The dialectic of antiquity oriented toward excellence, he says, implied a single great individual actively and hence interestedly participating in the affairs of the city and thereby fulfilling the requirements of his social nature. Still, Kierkegaard reminds the reader, there were many such as the slaves for whom this was not a possibility. Nor was it an alternative for women, something Kierkegaard omits from his consideration. The next step is the dialectic of Christianity oriented toward representation which implied the majority seeing itself in the representative and "liberated in the consciousness that it is them he represents, in a sort of self-consciousness" (SV 14,78; TA, 84). The participatory element has already been drastically reduced, which means the depravation of the single self has begun.[47] Finally, we have the dialectic of "the present age" which is oriented toward equality. At this level the participatory element of the human condition has been completely numbed by the leveling process which Kierkegaard insists is the logical implication of the generation's dominance over single individuals. Instead of concrete participation we get the abstraction of public opinion which tends to dictate human experience.

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[46] Here we should understand the intentional orientation to refer especially to the participatory aspect of human experience, a requirement of possessing a social nature.

[47] One might wonder whether Kierkegaard really means to say that the emergence of institutionalized Christianity is in fact the beginning of the individual's downfall. If so, that may indeed be the reason he places so much emphasis on achieving contemporaneity with the first generation which

As a member of the public, Kierkegaard explains that the single self remains an observer of existence, but does not engage in it. Public opinion is incapable of establishing community because its members lack contemporaneity, they lack presence. They lack the engaged non-spectator presence of the active person of inwardness who, for example, form the membership of majorities and minorities. While the latter are accountable to their membership, this is not true of public opinion which therefore lacks all integrity. Yet, it remains a dominant force upon the psyche of its members, even under the worst circumstances because public opinion can do no wrong. Public opinion is always "right," or it is not at all. In contrast, majorities may well lose their power if their membership lose interest (SV 14,84; TA, 92).

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passionately participated in the life of Jesus. See SV 6,53-98; PF, 55-110.

For a parallel argument see Eric Voegelin, The New Science of Politics (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 123: "The more people are drawn or pressured into the Christian orbit, the greater will be the number among them who do not have the spiritual stamina for the heroic adventure of the soul that is Christianity."

Kierkegaard suggests that the phantom of the public and the all pervasive power of public opinion emerges only in the absence of a strong communal life which gives substance to the historical single self's existential experience. What is lacking in modern society is such a strong communal life, precisely because the participatory element has been substituted by an emphasis on the self and the external interests of the self. Kierkegaard is drawing the obvious conclusion that also occurred to Tocqueville,[48] namely that only through the act of participation can single selves transcend their private reality in a concern for the good of the whole. Lacking this element of existence, people will suffer from the loss of a concrete foundation that reinforces and upbuilds the single self through experience, yet without shaping it in any determined sense. The result are single selves who have turned into anonymous uniform beings that lack all distinction.[49] Finally, membership in the public is demoralizing. While there are responsibilities connected with membership in the race, or citizenship in a state or community, none are needed for membership in the public. The public retains its status, for good or for bad, and requires nothing from its membership. Thus membership in the public dulls the people's sense of citizenship and community to the point where both are all but forgotten. To Kierkegaard such a state of mind constitutes a pathology of consciousness.

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[48] Op. Cit. vol. II, pp. 509-13.

[49] As Hannah Arendt would argue, it is only through participation in the political that the individual can distinguish himself, an axiom Kierkegaard apparently also subscribes to. The Human Condition, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 30-7. Also Glenn Tinder, Against Fate: An Essay on Personal Dignity (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), p. 36.

In a parallel description of public opinion Tocqueville phrases it well when he says in Democracy in America, p. 435: "The nearer men are to a common level of uniformity, the less are they inclined to believe blindly in any man or any class. But they are readier to trust the mass, and public opinion becomes more and more mistress of the world."

At this pathological stage public opinion has entirely corrupted individual rationality. Moreover, insofar as the single self's desire for applying the extreme formulation of the concept of equality, the leveling principle, to personal existence, it also signifies the downfall of the single self. It is thus an age of complete skepticism which apparently cannot be halted, because any attempt to halt the leveling process exemplifies the very principle of leveling. Kierkegaard refers to this as the "spontaneous combustion of the human race (SV 14,80; TA, 87), a pregnant phrase he also uses in Works of Love.

III:2:4

What we need to ask is what constitutes the underlying cause for this pathological condition, and Kierkegaard is very forthcoming and unambiguous on that point. In general he describes the problem as one of the world's self-deification.[50] Self-deification removes the authoritative element of transcendence and renders the world without a standard (Maalestok) by which to measure itself. One might ask whether standards must necessarily have a transcendent dimension. Nevertheless, for Kierkegaard, the lack of such a measure results in ambiguity and equivocation in existence, a condition that is especially articulated in the voluntary mediation of the principle of contradiction between good and evil.

For Kierkegaard the principle of contradiction constituted an axiom of existence. "To suspend [hæve = ophæve = the German aufheben] the principle of contradiction is the existential expression for being in contradiction with oneself" (SV 14,88; TA, 97). And to be in contradiction with oneself is to be separated from the idea the framework for which is the essential distinction between good and evil in action and decision (SV 14,61; TA, 66). To suspend this essential distinction is to be nothing at all. Or to put it in positive terms, it means that to be existentially, and hence to acknowledge the distinction, is to be in harmony with oneself, with who one is. It is to be at home with the self.

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[50] "If order is to be maintained in existence -- and God does want that, for he is not a God of confusion -- then the first and foremost thing to keep in mind is that every human being is an individual (enkelt) human being, becomes self-conscious of being an individual human being. If human beings are first permitted to run together in what Aristotle calls the animal category [Politics 1281a40-43 and 1281b15-20] -- the multitude -- then this abstraction instead of being less than nothing, less than the most insignificant individual human being comes to be regarded as being something -- then it does not take long before this abstraction becomes God," SV 15,167; SUD, 117-18.

The editors of the English translation are correct in suggesting that "if this is the portion [in Aristotle's Politics] to which Kierkegaard refers, he makes selective use of it, for Aristotle argues both sides of the mass/individual-expert issue," SUD, 180, note 65.

> The principle of contradiction strengthens the individual [Individ] in faithfulness to itself, so that he, like that steadfast number three Socrates speaks of so beautifully, will rather endure everything than become a number four or even become a very large even number. He will rather be something small in faithfulness to himself than all sorts of things in contradiction with himself" (SV 14,89; TA, 97).[51]

Not to be faithful to oneself or not to be in harmony with oneself expresses itself in a number of debilitating ways that are all grounded in the original suspension of the principle of contradiction. But common to them all is that they sharply differentiate between externality, a materialistic category that in Kierkegaard's opinion preoccupies "the present age," and inwardness, a passionate category he claims characterizes the age of revolution (SV 14,57-62; TA, 61-6).

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[51] Kierkegaard is, of course, referring to Plato's Phaedo 104c. But more importantly, he is also referring to the Gorgias 482c where Socrates says to Callicles: "It would be better for me that my lyre or a chorus I directed should be out of tune and loud with discord, and that multitudes of men should disagree with me rather than that I, being one, should be out of harmony with myself and contradict me." The translation is Hannah Arendt's, The Life of the Mind (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), p. 181. She emphasizes "being one" claiming it is frequently left out in translation. What is of particular interest in regard to this quotation is its relationship in the dialogue to philosophy's capacity to engender community as opposed to the efforts of rhetoric. As Socrates insists, "philosophy speaks always the same" (482b) while rhetoric caters to the people's divergent interests, not to their needs, which always are the same. Thus Plato performs a double move inasmuch as Socrates' love of philosophy not only creates harmony in his soul but also in the city. For Kierkegaard, to speak always the same is to acknowledge the principle of contradiction in its broadest implication. It means to be in character with oneself and to remain so, and hence to be faithful to oneself. Only by being in harmony with oneself is community possible.

To clarify this claim it is helpful to place the examples Kierkegaard uses in two columns, one that belongs to inwardness and one that belongs to externality, and then to name and describe what mediates and hence obscures their distinctiveness.

inwardness	being silent	speaking	externality
	private	public	
	form	matter	
	hiddenness	disclosedness	
	loving	dissolute	
	subjectivity	objectivity	

The "disjunction" between the first pair, being silent vs speaking, is suspended by *chatter*. To chatter is for Kierkegaard pathological inasmuch as he believes silence *is* inwardness. Without silence, without inwardness, essential speech and action becomes impossible. Here it should be remembered that Kierkegaard by essential means passionate political and religious inwardness. It is essential speech and action grounded in thoughtful silence that characterizes human beings as human, he says, but it is also speech and action that provides the framework for community. Thus

Kierkegaard speaks about "the more a person has ideality and ideas in silence, the more he will be able in his daily associations to regenerate [gjenføde] his daily life and the daily life of other people." In contrast, chatter can only expose emptiness as a ground and hence produce nothing essential, only thoughtlessness (SV 14,89-90; TA, 98-9). By chatter Kierkegaard, of course, means gossip which he considers all the more prevalent because "ambiguity is a titillating incitement and entirely differently verbose than the joy over the good and the abhorrence of evil" (SV 14,72; TA, 78).[52]

Chatter also suspends the distinction between public and private, and as a result we get a public whose only interest is what is most private (SV 14,91; TA, 100).[53] Kierkegaard is not so much concerned about a public/private distinction as such, as noted above. It is, nevertheless, a popular subject among contemporary political theorists who do not acknowledge the transcendent/immanent distinction which Kierkegaard considers a much more fundamental distinction. His concern is with the pathological consciousness of the single self. He suggests that with the creation of public opinion, a creation he insists can happen only in the absence of a strong communal life, nothing is sacred, everything is disclosed.[54]

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[52] The new translation at this point takes what would seem to be unnecessary freedoms. Apparently the word "equivocation" does not appear in the Danish text. We say apparently, because only one Danish edition of Two Ages has been available for this project. However, several English translations have been consulted from which it would seem an addition has indeed been made.

[53] Kierkegaard's analysis of the present age has an immediate bearing on contemporary times, and agreement with Westphal is easy when he suggests "Kierkegaard offers us a shoe that fits embarrassingly well. At times it appears that he knows us better than we know ourselves." "Kierkegaard's Sociology," p. 44.

Mediating the principle of contradiction also brings forth formlessness which suspends the distinction between what is referred to as form and matter [Indhold].[55] That is to say, according to his philosophical anthropology human beings are constituted by soul and body, but it is spirit that qualifies them (SV 6,138; CA, 44).[56] With formlessness, however, what is inner and what is outer becomes confused (ambiguous) and the principle of action becomes externally qualified. Then human beings begin to act strictly "on principle" (SV 14,92; TA, 101). To posit the principle of action or moral conscience externally, in the majority, as for example in Locke's theory of state,[57] or in accordance with the "Greatest Happiness Principle" as in Utilitarianism,[58] for the sake of supporting, on principle, the demand of the age, is to act calculatingly and in disregard of the needs of the whole community. It is to render the single self undifferentiated and hence without personal responsibility, and that is essentially to act in contradiction with the genuine self and therefore to act disharmoniously in regard to the self (SV 14,92-3; TA, 101-02).[59]

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[54] We might speculate that inasmuch as Kierkegaard himself was the object of much gossip or "chatter," it is not unlikely that a very personal feeling is emerging here. On the other hand, the tabloids of contemporary society had their equivalent in Kierkegaard's days (cf. The Corsair Affair, ed. and tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), and hence Kierkegaard's proposition cannot simply be dismissed as sour grapes.

[55] Strictly speaking, Indhold means content, but I believe Kierkegaard is taking his clue from Aristotle's formulation in De Anima 412a where he defines the body as matter and the soul as form, the actuality of the body.

[56] In his "Historical Introduction" to The Concept of Anxiety, p. xiv Reidar Thomte clarifies how Kierkegaard's philosophical anthropology should be understood. See chapter IV, p. 172, note 65.

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[57] Second Treatise of Government, ##95, 127-31.

[58] John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism (New York: New American Library, 1962), p. 319 and in passim.

[59] Cf. Sheldon Wolin , Op. Cit. p. 338: "As Locke's argument reveals, the growing distrust of conscience stimulated the search for a new kind of conscience, social rather than individual, one that would be an internalized expression of external rules rather than the externalized expression of internal convictions . . . to protect what a growing secular society most treasured; namely wealth and status, or more briefly, "interests."

It is also possible that Kierkegaard is referring to Kant in regard to the formless tendency of acting "on principle." Kant says in Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1959): "An action performed from duty does not have its moral worth in the purpose which is to be achieved through it but in the maxim by which it is determined. . . . Duty is the necessity of an action executed from respect for law" (p. 16). He continues, "Law alone implies the concept of an unconditional and objective and hence universally valid necessity" (p. 34, emphasis added). Inasmuch as the categorical imperative "contains besides the law only the necessity that the maxim should accord with this law . . . there is nothing remaining in it except the universality of law as such to which the maxim of the action should conform. . . . There is, therefore, only one categorical imperative. It is: Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (pp. 38-9, emphasis added). The

To be without personal responsibility, according to Kierkegaard, is to be superficial, and superficiality suspends the distinction between hiddenness and disclosedness. Inasmuch as "superficiality gives the appearance of being anything and everything," what is essential is not allowed to be thought through in hiddenness, and thoughtful intention is not allowed to emerge. Everything is hurriedly forced to the surface, undeliberated, and what is disclosed is characterized as emptiness. It is an emptiness which Kierkegaard says "nevertheless extensively wins the disappointing advantage of delusion over essential

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point for Kierkegaard is that one's duty in this case is to universal law and hence to something external to one's self. Duty is not to the good, not to the neighbor, not to God. It is to an abstract principle the goodness of which cannot be guaranteed, or at least is not guaranteed by Kant. As he says a little later, "A thing has no worth other than that determined for it by the law" (p. 54). Although this legislation which "determines all worth must therefore have a dignity, i.e., unconditional and incomparable worth" to which a rational being can have nothing but "respect" (p. 54), Kant also concerns himself very little about the effects of such a principle on the individual human being except, of course, to secure his autonomy. One could perhaps even argue Wolin's characterization would be accurate in the case of the categorical imperative as well.

For Kierkegaard, in contrast, "principium, as the word says, is the primary, that is, the substantial, the idea in the unopened form of feeling and inspiration that impels the individual by its inner drive" (SV 14,92; TA, 101). In other words, principle is what develops the concrete individual from within, forms character by its passionate inwardness, and moves the individual to do the good. For more on doing the good, or as Kierkegaard puts it, "willing one thing" see Purity of Heart, tr. Douglas Steere, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1956) in passim, and Jeremy Walker's excellent interpretation To Will One Thing: Reflections on Kierkegaard's PURITY OF HEART (Montreal: Mc Gill-Queen's University Press, 1972).

disclosedness which has the homogeneous essentiality of deepening" (SV 14,93; TA, 102). Rather than achieving transparency, this form of disclosedness only uncovers appearances. That is to say, psychologically, the single self is not tending to personal development in terms of its nature as essentially spirit.

When a person is caught in this publicness of disclosedness, he will instead resort to flattery (Leflerie) which suspends the distinction between loving and being dissolute or debauched (udsvævende). Flattery in this sense indulges in tangentially daring to touch evil and hence avoids realizing the good (SV 14,93-4; TA, 103). Kierkegaard must have in mind the Don Juan (Don Giovanni) of Either/Or, vol. I, whom he calls the incarnation of sensuousness. His character falls entirely outside of ethical categories and hence he is an actor of ultimate deception (SV 2,93-6; EO I, 98-102). While you can love only one person essentially, "what is a joy for the poet to hear and celebrate," flattery can be extended to many. While loving indicates a being for the other, the object of the love, flattery is extended to as many as possible in order to satisfy only the self.[60] To satisfy oneself necessitates prudent calculation and a rationalization of one's externalized existence. Or to put it in negative terms, "the aesthetic single self never has the dialectical within him but outside of him, or the single self is outwardly changed, but remains inwardly unchanged" (SV 10,121; CUP, 387).

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[60] Kierkegaard is anything but clear on this subject of loving just one. In a journal notation he seems to say that loving just one is essentially self-love, what he calls the "satisfaction of being-in-love (Forelskelse) and preference but basically also of self-love," PAP VIII 2 B 71:6.

All the distinctions between inwardness and exteriority that have been mediated by the act at raisonere (to reflect in a special way), at least in its Danish use.[61] To reflect in this sense, which Kierkegaard underscores by using this untranslatable word rather than "reflection," which is used throughout most of Two Ages, is to emphasize the Hegelian use as in speculative reasoning. This kind of reflection ultimately suspends "the passionate disjunction between subjectivity and objectivity," two categories that essentially encompass the pairs discussed above (SV 14,94; TA, 103). Here the reader should be careful not to misunderstand Kierkegaard. In the realm of pure thought and pure being, he agrees with Hegel that there is no either-

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[61] Alexander Dru in The Present Age and Of the Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), p. 76, has translated this word as "reasoning." The Hongs in Two Ages, which is being used in the present project, translates raisonere as being "loquacious." It is unclear why Kierkegaard would suddenly use a different word than the one he had been using generally although in a variety of forms throughout this work (see especially p. 88), inasmuch as that word, Reflexionen, translated as reflection at least in this work embodies all the connotations of the verb at raisonere. In the following we shall maintain the verb "to reflect."

or;[62] the mediation (reconciliation) is applicable. To abstract from concrete existence, however, as the speculative philosopher does, is for Kierkegaard a misfortune for the human race, because it means to lose out on (gaae Glip af) the essential categories of existence, to be deprived of political (ethical) and religious life (SV 10,14; CUP, 272). To think of Existents in the language of abstraction is to objectify what constitutes humanness. It means to ignore the difficulty inherent to Existents, that is, the difficulty of thinking the eternal as a process of becoming (Vorden), something one must necessarily do inasmuch as the thinker is, by the very act of thinking, in the process of becoming. In the present age, therefore,

> life's existential tasks have lost the interest of actuality, no illusion preserves the divine growth of inwardness that matures to decision. There is a mutual inquisitiveness; everyone waits unresolved and experienced in evasions for someone to come along who wills something -- in order then to bet his hand (SV 14,96; TA, 105).[63]

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[62] "The either-or of contradiction is ipso facto suspended when it is lifted out of the sphere of the existential and introduced into the eternity of abstract thought" (SV 10,13; CUP, 271).

[63] "To bet his hand" may be a little difficult to interpret without the advantage of the text that precedes this quotation. The Danish text reads: "parere hans Haand." It could also be translated as "toe his line," or "obey his signs." The implication then becomes clear that Kierkegaard means to say that the present age expects to be led by some charismatic figure such as a prophet as the text following the quotation indicates.

To wait unresolved, to live without decision, in the hope that someone special, perhaps an outsider,[64] will appear is precisely where the inconsistency of the age becomes glaring. How should a charismatic leader be able to emerge within a society where the leveling process is at work. Therefore, Kierkegaard warns, if a prophet should be hidden within the multitude, he must be careful not to distinguish himself. Where prophets of olden days would be in danger if they lost their distinctiveness, the prophet of the present age would be in danger if he should become distinguishable among the indistinguishable many. In other words, the present age waits for something impossible.

Kierkegaard (the prophet?) is telling the reader that in a self-deified social system which negates anyone who sets himself above society and yet does not call himself god, the problem must be engaged by the single self itself. This is emphasized by his insistence that political authority or government ought not engage in the moral education of its citizens. Consequently the cure for the pathology of consciousness lies within the single self, not outside of it.

Kierkegaard's genius becomes apparent when he makes the very problem of the age an instrument of its cure. Thus he takes the leveling process which he believes is about to destroy humankind and, so to speak, stands it on its head by turning it into a didactic taskmaster. He suggests that a deep analysis of the phenomenon of leveling may indeed educate the single self to inwardness and hence to genuine self-awareness of the deeper meaning of leveling. The deeper meaning of leveling is, of course, the principle of equality (SV 14,81; TA, 88). That is to say, the single self must gain an awareness that an existential act is necessary, and that in turn necessitates a separation from the group, from the superficial idea of sociality.

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[64] It is odd (or maybe not so odd) that Kierkegaard does not think of the possibility of an outsider of some sort.

The single self must penetrate to its most basic characteristic, its need for community. The call is for a courageous act, a leap of faith literally, and it is a heroic leap in the sense that it involves the risk of the world's displeasure. It is something the single self must risk on its own, precisely because it must learn to be satisfied with who it is, "satisfied with ruling over itself instead of over the world." In other words, the single self must learn to express "its equality with all human beings" (SV 14,81; TA, 89).

Without this kind of faithfulness to oneself, the "idea of community," which we are reminded is "the individual's telos and duty,"[65] is not possible inasmuch as it requires a transcendence of one's basic nature to a higher state of being, a "second nature." On this level of consciousness, the single self can concern itself with the idea. As a group member and hence as part of the dreaded numerical, I am but an animal who functions according to my instincts, but as a single self, self-directed in inwardness and hence defined as spirit in nature, I can live for the idea, an idea that according to Kierkegaard "makes unconditional and ultimate demands of our existence."[66] The aim is political consciousness, for without such a healthy state of mind, no "idea of community" can be actualized.

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[65] Westphal, "Kierkegaard's Sociology," pp. 46-7.

Throughout the last two chapters we have seen Kierkegaard contrast a thinking grounded in an authoritative truth that allows for existential transparency (Gjennemsigtighed) with a thinking qualified by mediation. The latter fails to explain existence and instead emphasizes abstractions that objectify categorical distinctions and thereby reduce them to meaningless relativities which prohibit decisive action. Mediation, therefore, constitutes a thinking entrenched in concealment or obscurity (Uklarhed) (SV 12,344; WL 332). As Kierkegaard puts it,

> It is, after all, one thing to think in such a way that one's attentiveness constantly is merely directed outward, in the direction of the object which is something external; it is something else to be turned in thinking in such a way that constantly at every moment one becomes conscious of one's self, conscious of one's own condition during the process of thinking, or how it is with oneself during the process of thinking. But only the latter

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[66] Westphal, "Kierkegaard's Sociology," p. 47.

> is essentially to think, it is precisely transparency. The former is an unclear thinking that suffers from the contradiction: that which in thinking clarifies something else is itself basically unclear. Such a thinker explains by his thinking something else, and see, he does not understand himself; externally in the direction of the object he perhaps makes a profound use of his natural talents, but in the inward direction he is very superficial, and therefore all his thinking, however fundamental it seems to be, is still basically superficial (SV 12,344; WL, 331-32).

Socratic teaching, as we saw earlier in this chapter, helps to establish the untruth of the human condition through self-examination. Thereby the door is opened to an even more fundamental teaching, namely the equality of all human beings achieved in freedom. It is this teaching that is constitutive of what here is called Kierkegaard's therapeutic "corrective." It makes the "idea of community" possible, an idea that will be explored in chapters four and five, and which expresses itself in the unconditional yet rational demand "You shall love the neighbor as yourself."

Chapter IV

A THERAPEUTIC "CORRECTIVE": THE AUTHENTIC SINGLE SELF AND THE "IDEA OF COMMUNITY"

> When single selves (each one individually) essentially in passion relate themselves to an idea and thereupon in unity essentially relate themselves to the same idea: then the relation is the perfected and the standard. Individually the relation separates them (each one has himself for himself) and ideally it unites them.[1]

> Although impractical, still the religious is eternity's transfigured representation of the political's most beautiful dream.[2]

In the last two chapters we have shown how the symptomatic effects of the separation of knowledge and experience negatively influenced both theoretical and practical thinking. The modern consciousness, which, in Kierkegaard's opinion had suffered from an interminable pathology because of this separation, was in serious need of a cure. The aim of this and the following chapter, and indeed of the whole project, is to demonstrate that Kierkegaard provided such a cure in the form of a therapeutic "corrective" -- albeit one entirely neglected by contemporary philosophers, political and otherwise. This therapeutic "corrective" constitutes what in this project is called a philosophy of political consciousness.

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[1] SV 14,58; TA, 62.

[2] SV 18,149; POV, 107. Apparently Kierkegaard was an avid reader of Cicero who in On the Commonwealth, trs. George Holland Sabine and Stanley Barney Smith (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1976), p. 112, made the following comment, "There is, indeed, nothing in which human excellence can more nearly approximate the divine than in the foundation of new states or in the preservation of states already founded."

But first it seems appropriate to explain what is meant by political consciousness. We do not seek a particular label by which to denote this concept such as patriotism or the like. Neither are we looking for ideological orientations such as liberal or conservative. We want to argue that Kierkegaard's political philosophy transcends such characterizations. Rather the intent is to lay bare from Kierkegaard's writings a particular human attitude expressed in his concept of _Existents_: the comportment of the single self (_den Enkelte_) toward the other and toward the world. The aim is to understand the relationship of the single self to the other and to its community and to understand the inherent responsibilities of such relationships which, by their very nature, are ethical and/or political. Said in another way, and emphasizing a more phenomenological aspect of Kierkegaard's theory of the single self, it is our aim to understand the relationship of a concrete consciousness to the world in which it happens to find itself.

The parameters of this relationship insofar as it pertains to Kierkegaard's "idea of community" we understand as citizenship, and the requirements for there to be what we would consider citizenship are all grounded in existential character or in personality. Unlike the emphasis on rights in liberal theory as we understand it from Locke, Kierkegaard's political philosophy of citizenship and character emphasizes obligations, that is, the obligations of the relationship between the single self and the community -- not a particular geographical community, but any community constituted by human beings. As such Kierkegaard's "corrective" has universal application, although, as his categories show, it is quite clear that they are thoroughly and exclusively grounded in Western thought.

IV:1

To begin, Kierkegaard is eager to avoid misunderstandings in terms of his approach. In an accompanying paper to a short account of his authorship[3] he comments on his methodological approach to a critique of "the established order."[4] There he insists that his calculation (Bestik) has considered "the single self with polemical aim at the numerical, crowd, and the like" (SV 18,75; POV,156), all of which had produced a depersonalized single self and a disorderly society. Still, he insists his methodology has not been to attack, since his aim was never to have been in or conjoined with the opposition that wanted to do away with "government" (Regjering).[5] Rather his approach was to deliver a therapeutic "corrective" which implores that rulership be left to those called upon and therefore presumably best suited believing, somewhat dogmatically, "that they, fearing God, would stand fast, willing only one thing, the Good" (SV 18,76; POV,156).

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[3] "About my work as an Author" was published in 1851 but, according to the editors of Søren Kierkegaard's Samlede Værker, was written in March 1849 as a precursor to the larger essay, The Point of View for my Work as an Author: A Report to History (POV) (published posthumously by Kierkegaard's brother Peter Christian Kierkegaard in 1859) which was of a much more personal character than the shorter account.

[4] The reader should understand that Kierkegaard by " the established order" is referring to both the ecclesiastical as well as the political leadership. He can address the two together because the Danish Lutheran Church was and is a state church ultimately governed by the political regime.

The successful implementation of the "corrective" depends to a large degree on the present political system remaining intact. Only then will the therapy have its desired effect which is to engender healthy single selves whose character express the conscious "idea of community" (the Good).[6] In other words, Kierkegaard does not believe in radical surgery as in revolution, but rather adheres to a medicinal approach as in a reformative process from within the political order.

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[5] "Instead of all these hypotheses about the origin of the state, etc., one should occupy oneself more with the question: given an established order, how can new points of departure be provided religiously." PAP X 4 A 72 (JP 4205).

[6] In a footnote, Kierkegaard demonstrates that he is operating on several levels while writing when he insists that it cannot be directly affirmed that this is a defense of the established order inasmuch as the form of the communication is doubly reflected which makes contrary interpretations equally possible. Kierkegaard concludes that the one judging will be revealed by his judgment (SV 18,76; POV,156).

As early as in 1835 Kierkegaard in a speech in the Student Union in Copenhagen elaborated on this view claiming that political development must embody continuity, and that the importation of foreign revolutions (e.g. the French Revolution) is unhealthy. Indeed, Kierkegaard's speech demonstrates that he is opposed to any political leaps whether backwards or forwards. Echoing Edmund Burke,[7] he insists that natural developments do not happen by leaps and bounds, and that "life's earnestness will judge any such move ironic even if it is momentarily successful."[8]

In this speech Kierkegaard is concerned about the "aesthetic" jockeying for position by the liberal leaders. They appear to him to be more concerned about the personal advantages this political development has to offer, meaning their attitude demonstrates superficiality where earnestness is needed. His critique of the liberal leadership was directed at their apparent lack of concern for the political future of the Danish people. Instead they manifested their personal concerns with image. That history was in the making was evident to everyone, including Kierkegaard, for whom the development was a development of consciousness.[9] But, and again he echoes Edmund Burke,[10] the natural historical step forward had been seduced by the aspirations for practical consistency with theoretical principles, forgetting the tendency of the practical to become extreme when transformed without modification. Consequently the original idea had been lost sight of. The mediator, through which we come to have the idea, that is, ideology, had grown too powerful, and this is what in Kierkegaard's opinion "in the political world produces revolutions"[11] -- the tail is wagging the dog rather than vice versa. The fact that the eventual transition from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy (for all intents and purposes, a liberal democracy) took place without violence, in what Hannah Arendt would characterize as a political movement of reason,[12] would seem to justify Kierkegaard's claim. Had the monarch been completely opposed to the liberal developments of his time, it seems reasonable to argue that some blood would necessarily have been shed. By initiating the change from within government itself which, according to Kierkegaard, perceived the need for social and political change, he understands the emergence of liberalism as a natural development that underscores the continuity of Danish political history.

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[7] Reflections on the Revolution in France (New York: Penguin Books, 1969), especially pp. 92-3, 119-125, 152-154, 194-95.

[8] PAP I B 2, p. 172 (JP 5116). See also Frithiof Brandt, Den Unge Søren Kierkegaard (København: Levin & Munksgaards Forlag, 1929), pp. 54-5. Here Brandt suggests the author Henrik Hertz in his novel Stemninger og Tilstande (Moods and States)(1839) has captured Kierkegaard's attitude quite correctly when he has "the translator" (Kierkegaard) say: "When it is demanded that Denmark follows the rest of Europe in the struggle for the new liberal ideas, I completely agree. But this struggle must develop out of the given, out of the way in which we so far have been governed, out of the spirit that has animated the people under this government."

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[9] PAP X 3 A 527.

[10] Burke, pp. 89-90.

[11] PAP I B 2, p. 172.

[12] On Revolution (New York: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 95 and in passim.

This historical digression assists in the general understanding of Kierkegaard's choice of methodology which he refers to as a therapeutic "corrective." It is intended to address not a local condition, but rather the entire European situation as he understood it. The principles that follow from this "corrective" are meant to embody a universality that renders them respectable.

Kierkegaard, like any serious political philosopher draws on personal experience to formulate the necessary steps to correct what in this case represents a diseased political society,[13] namely liberal democracy. He embraces a naturally developed liberal democratic form of government (SV 9,10; CUP, 4) with certain qualifications. Immediately, however, and before this new form of regime is historically in place within his own sphere of existence, he has some reservations about its various aspects (as was shown in the previous chapter). For this complex reason it is important to understand precisely what Kierkegaard means by "corrective." The reader is assisted in this understanding by several notations in Kierkegaard's journal wherein he comments on this particular approach to a critique of "the established order."

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[13] For an analogous approach see Plato, The Seventh Letter, tr. Walter Hamilton (New York: Penguin Books, 1973), 325d-326a.

First it should be noted that Kierkegaard everywhere chooses a spelling of the word "corrective" (Correctiv) which is not properly Danish. He substitutes the letter "C" for the letter "K" twice, a substitution that lends a Latin sort of legitimacy to the word thereby underscoring the significance of this word to Kierkegaard.[14] Here it is interesting to note that in the Danish spelling, Korrektiv according to the Danish dictionary means to "improve (forbedre), to rectify (berigtige), or correct something else, especially: a guiding addition."[15] According to the Oxford English Dictionary a second meaning of "corrective" reads as follows: "Something that tends to set right what is wrong, to remove or counter an evil." Kierkegaard appears to have all of the above mentioned meanings in mind when he uses the word "corrective."

In a journal note from 1849 which is entitled "My productivity regarded as 'the corrective' of the established," the determination "corrective" is considered as a reflective determination that has to indicate the weak points of the established order and "onesidedly posit the opposite."[16] In positing the "corrective," the one doing so, Kierkegaard concedes, must adopt an attitude of resignation inasmuch as the "corrective," as soon as somebody else posits another corrective, the first corrective becomes part of the established. The implications of this statement are twofold. On the one hand, it could indicate on the part of Kierkegaard that he has no illusions about the longevity of his therapeutic "corrective." Indeed, he would seem to be confirming the general weakness of correctives, especially those that address a pathology of consciousness in an age spellbound by material concerns. On the other hand, by showing that another corrective would locate the initial corrective within the established, Kierkegaard has demonstrated that reform indeed emerges from within the governing order. The point is, Kierkegaard did not see the role of his "corrective" as a destroyer of the political and ecclesiastical order, but as one "constantly to inspire it with inwardness."[17] And what the age of speculation needs according to Kierkegaard is a dose of Socratic ignorance modified in the spirit of Christianity, and that, he insists, would represent maturity.[18] Thus he distinguishes between what the age demands and what it needs.

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[14] I am indebted to John Llewelyn for this insight.

[15] Ordbog over det danske Sprog, ed. Verner Dahlerup (København: Gyldendal, 1929).

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[16] PAP X 1 A 640 and X 3 A 527.

[17] PAP X 2 A 193.

[18] PAP X 1 A 679.

> The misfortune of our time is just this that it has become simply nothing else but "time," a temporality which is impatient of hearing anything about eternity (SV 18,150; POV, 108).[19]

From all these observations about Kierkegaard's approach to a critique of the new political order it seems reasonable to conclude: first, that he accepts the liberal democratic form of government arrived at through natural means, and second, that it suffers from a variety of defects (as elaborated above in chapters two and three) that need to be amended. The "corrective" is thus intended to improve upon the new form of political society by reintroducing ethical (political) categories and thereby provide a higher quality of life for the single self as well as a more permanent social order. In so doing, Kierkegaard will dispel a few illusions that liberal theory has operated under. By dispelling these illusions, however, he does not intend to undermine liberal theory, but rather to strengthen it. Hence the reader should not think of Kierkegaard's "corrective" as standing in opposition to liberal theory, but as a mending of it, as a "corrective."

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[19] For an excellent discussion of Kierkegaard's concept of time, temporality, and eternity see Johannes Sløk, Kierkegaard: humanismens tænker (København: Hans Reitzel, 1978), ch. 5.

Kierkegaard's "corrective" consists in all its simplicity of his "idea of community" expressed in recognition of the law's demand to love the neighbor as oneself. In the following this concept and its political implications will be analyzed in terms of its constitutive elements which, taken individually, express the developmental particulars of the formation of character, and taken in its totality express the manifestation of political consciousness, what the title of this project also refers to as citizenship.

The "corrective" focuses primarily on two concerns that in Kierkegaard's opinion has led liberal theory astray. On the one hand, liberal theory insists on collapsing the realms of the religious and the political, or, in more abstract terms, liberal theory has conjoined the divine and the human when it claims to "deduct" from nature's law which is of divine origin, a condition of freedom and equality.[20] Kierkegaard objects, insisting

> No politics has been able to, no politics can, no worldliness has been able to, no worldliness can, think through to its last consequence or realize this thought: human equality (Menneske-Lighed) (SV 18,149; POV, 107).

On the other hand, in so conjoining the immanent with the transcendent, time and eternity has become one, what Kierkegaard refers to as temporality, which dominates human existence. By making the eternal immediately present, it is not at all. Instead it has been subsumed by the temporal dimension (SV 18,150; POV,108) thereby denying what for Kierkegaard is essential: a differentiated human experience, but also denying what the world is demanding, namely genuine equality.

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[20] John Locke, Second Treatise of Government, Ch. 2, #4 and #8.

The horizon of a one-dimensional existence is time, and such an existence will necessarily concentrate on the desire for pleasure, a desire that can only be satisfied by private property, which liberal theory intimates is divinely sanctioned.[21] But what the age needs, according to Kierkegaard, is eternity. The age needs to emphasize the activity of consciousness, or said more bluntly, it needs to focus on essential thinking, expressed in pursuit of the good. Such thinking expresses the "idea of community" or the good of the whole. As such it constitutes what will restore health to concrete consciousness, and hence restore authenticity to the single self. The irony is that community as such, presupposes that the other is perceived as equal, what the world demanded, but to do that necessitates precisely an experience of transcendence, what the world rejected. By taking back what the world needs, namely consciousness of the eternal, it can acquire what it demands, equality. In Kierkegaard's opinion, then, it is only through transcendent experience human equality be achieved, in a manner of speaking.

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[21] Locke, Second Treatise of Government, ch. 5, #25-6, #32 and #34.

It is clear to Kierkegaard that by nature human beings are not equal (in spite of what liberal theory insists). But because he is more than willing to provide what the age demands, though not in an illusory form, he posits the therapeutic "corrective." It teaches that "the divine, the essential, the non-worldly, the true [is] the only possible human equality" (SV 18, 150; POV, 108). In other words, human beings, who by nature according to this "corrective" exist in untruth, regard each other in apparent terms only and hence as differentiated or unequal. For that reason, Kierkegaard says, they are unable to set themselves free, meaning they are unable to see each other as they truly are in their essential constitutive structure.

In order to rectify this problem of being in untruth, human beings must turn to the teacher who alone can provide the condition (Betingelsen) and hence enable the truth of their essential being to reveal itself (SV 6,19-20; PF, 14-5). By undergoing this conversion experience (Overgang) in freedom, a move Kierkegaard refers to as rebirth (Gjenfødelse) (SV 6,23; PF, 19), they literally untie themselves from the naturally given, remove themselves from or overcome the exclusion from the truth that all human beings are essentially equal. As will become clear, to love the other is to see the other as essentially equal, and only the works of love, that is, God's works, can occasion this condition.

Kierkegaard thus infuses liberal theory with a moral dimension which was always implied, but which had been obscured by the adage of property as a natural right. By making property a natural right, liberal theory removed the whole idea of freedom and equality to an empirical dimension that on a theoretical level occasioned skepticism about the moral grounding of these principles.[22]

Therefore what perhaps is of most interest to political science is that Kierkegaard takes exception to the general assumption that the cherished tenets of Liberalism, freedom and equality, have political rather than existential significance (SV 12,43; WL, 53).[23] For Kierkegaard such declarations underscore precisely the unnatural or revolutionary aspect of the liberal development. It is unnatural not only because it is practically disruptive, but, more importantly, because it posits a form of society where the truth of matters is concealed by an accumulation of (scientific) knowledge that has the stamp of human approval as Rousseau, for example, suggested, when he spoke of human equality.[24] The problem for Kierkegaard is that such determinations make these rights political in form, when in fact they are ethical in an existential sense.

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[22] As David Hume noted, "A man's property is some object related to him. This relation is not natural but moral, and founded on justice. It is very preposterous, therefore, to imagine that we can have any idea of property without fully comprehending the nature of justice, and showing its origin in the artifice and contrivance of men. The origin of justice explains that of property." "Treatise of Human Nature" in Hume's Moral and Political Philosophy, ed. Henry D. Aiken (New York: Hafner Press, 1948), p. 60.

[23] Also PAP VIII 1 A 598 (JP 4131). For a parallel argument see Kresten Nordentoft, "Hvad Siger Brand-Majoren?" Kierkegaards Opgør med sin Samtid (København: G.E.C.Gad, 1973), 93; hereafter known as Brand-Majoren. Nordentoft does not emphasize this novel interpretation of freedom and equality but merely sees it as a further indication of Kierkegaard's absolutist conception of the state. Interpreting Kierkegaard he says: "The state can and ought only give individuals freedom in the negative sense that it must secure them against encroachment from other sides. But legal security is not the same as freedom. Freedom cannot be imposed by decree personally. Politics and freedom have nothing to do with each other in a positive sense, but certainly in a negative, inasmuch as by imposing a free constitution the people can be made to believe that they possess freedom, that

The ethical for Kierkegaard defines how the single self comports itself in action and in its relationships, its character, its willingness to commit itself in freedom to the other as equal, to the whole, to the good. What that means is that my good is inherently bound up with the good of the other as well as with the good of the community. From this perspective Kierkegaard's ethical dimension can be understood to have political meaning.

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is, made to forget that they do not possess it." Nordentoft's reading of Kierkegaard on the state appears very mechanical and tends to contradict what Kierkegaard is attempting to achieve, namely the individual's passionate appropriation of Christianity and thereby community. This chapter expects to demonstrate that Kierkegaard's conception of freedom and equality is not as apolitical as Nordentoft wants to argue.

[24] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men," The First and Second Discourses, trans. Roger D. and Judith R. Masters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), p. 92. Also "Discourse on the Sciences and Arts," Ibid, in passim.

Here we must caution that Kierkegaard himself understood the political more in terms of "politics" by which he meant institutional structures as well as collective movements. In his own mind he is thus mired in the modern tradition that, unlike classical Greek philosophy, tends to separate the ethical from the political precisely because the political had been submitted to ideological infusion and thus had lost its essentially moral dimension. But in spite of Kierkegaard's own understanding of "the political," his "idea of community" is ethical inasmuch as it embodies the relationship to the other. It is political because in this relationship to the other is reflected a relationship to all human beings and hence a political consciousness that engenders action in a concern for the good of the whole.[25]

To continue, then, Kierkegaard argues that freedom and equality are principles that are ethical in nature, and therefore they represent something to be achieved -- not just once and for all as with Plato's caveman who undergoes the periagoge, the turning around experience, only once,[26] but with a constant vigilance. They are tasks (Opgaver)[27] the single self, not the state, must undertake in order to fulfill who it is by nature, that is, by its "second nature," and thereby realize the "idea of community" (SV 12,43; WL, 53).

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[25] In support of this claim we refer to such compelling sources as Eric Voegelin, The New Science of Politics (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952) in passim, as well as to his Anamnesis, tr. Gerhart Niemeyer (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978) in passim. For a rather different conception of the political, yet exalted as in our perception, see Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition, especially chapter 5: "Action."

[26]. Plato, The Republic, 515c-d, 518d, 521c.

This interpretation of the categories of freedom and equality posits no direct demands for specific political circumstances such as is the case with rights perceived as political. On the other hand, it necessarily requires political circumstances that allow for such individual pursuits. Kierkegaard's approach in the form of a "corrective" would appear to coincide with the requirement of a liberal state, albeit one modified to admit the impetus for an existence that includes an ethico-religious dimension. Thus he shows prudence by referring to his interpretation of these tenets as a "corrective."

Generally speaking, the "corrective" understood as the "idea of community" differs from other conceptions of community, such as the visions of socialist collectivities that were flourishing throughout Europe at this time.[28] By insisting on a third element that unites and separates single selves in the relation, individual integrity is maintained, while at the same time the benefits of solidarity are enjoyed (SV 14,58-9; TA 62-3).

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[27]. As will become clear below, the dual meaning of the Danish word Opgave (task) is significant here, because it also denotes a "problem," as in something which needs to be worked out.

[28] Kierkegaard was familiar with socialist movements and ideology only through newspapers according to the editors of the Danish edition of Works of Love. They also note the interesting coincidence that Marx's Communist Manifesto was published in February 1848 and hence just four months after the publication of Works of Love. In Kierkegaard's journals there is a notation to ch. VII of Works of Love that explains that the concept of mercifulness is "rightly turned" against

> When single selves (each one individually) essentially in passion relate themselves to an idea and thereupon in unity essentially relate themselves to the same idea: then the relation is the perfected and the standard. Individually the relation separates them (each one has himself for himself and ideally it unites them (SV 14,58; TA, 62).[29]

In other words, for Kierkegaard it is important that the desire for unity does not gain the upper hand, for that would compromise the uniqueness of every single self. How he works this out will become clear in the following, but in a journal note he ponders the idea as he attempts to differentiate between an aggregate of people which he refers to as a crowd (Mængde) or the (spectator) public (Publikum) and community (Menighed), which, strictly speaking, means "congregation".

> In the (spectator) public and the like the single self is nothing, there is no single self, the

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Communism and toward a Christian understanding. PAP VIII 1 A 299.

[29] Compare Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 52: "To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time. The public realm, as the common world, gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak. What makes mass society so difficult to bear is not the number of people involved, or at least not primarily, but the fact that the world between them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and to separate them." It is uncanny how Arendt has captured Kierkegaard's meaning of the "idea of community" whether intentional or not.

> numerical is the constitutive and the law for coming into existence (Tilblivelse) of a generatio aequivoca; detached from the public the single self is nothing, and as part of the public, he is, more basically understood, actually nothing either.
>
> In community the single self is; the single self is dialectically decisive as the presupposition for forming community, and in community the single self is qualitatively something essential and can at any moment also become higher than "community," especially as soon as "the others" fall away from the idea. The cohesiveness of community consists of each one being a single self and then the idea; the connectedness of a public, or its looseness consists of the numerical being everything. Every single self in community guarantees the community; the public is a chimera.[30]

To freely enter into such a concrete relation as community is for Kierkegaard the ethical task, the goal of which is to establish one's equality with every other human being on a conscious level.[31] It means the single self has chosen him or herself (in freedom) as an essential self and thereby gained identity.[32] Kierkegaard insists this is possible for every human being, because every human being is precisely equal in the capacity to be ethical.

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[30] PAP X 2 A 390 (JP 2952).

[31] For a contrary understanding of Kierkegaard see Alastair MacIntyre, After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), p. 41. MacIntyre interprets Kierkegaard to say that we develop the ethical for no reason.

[32] ". . . the person who chooses himself ethically chooses himself concretely as this particular individual . . . [who] becomes selfconscious (sig bevidst) as this particular individual with these talents, these inclinations, these drives, these passions, influenced by this particular social milieu, as this particular product of a particular environment. But when he becomes self-conscious in this way, he takes upon himself responsibility for it all (SV 3,232; EO II, 250-51).

Although at this stage equality is strictly formal, it nevertheless has an anthropological characteristic as pointed out by Kresten Nordentoft. He argues

> the task could not be set were it not possible for human beings to realize it. . . . [Thus] every human being becomes conscious of himself in concern for himself, because his existence takes place upon conditions of ambiguity, in time, in hope or fear.[33]

The possibility of equality, then, lies precisely in this awareness of one's position in a contingent world, and from it derives the condition of possibility for authentic selfhood or self-actualization. The trick is not to be caught up in this contingency, but to transcend it _qua_ the "idea of community," that is, allow transcendence to interact dialectically with one's experience in the world. To do that is for Kierkegaard to be in _Existents_.

IV:3

Kierkegaard argues in _Works of Love_ that when worldly wisdom deemed it desirable that all men be freed from the "abominable" bonds of serfdom, this craving for freedom and equality not only manifested itself physically, but also consciously.

> Just as nowadays attempts are made in so many ways to emancipate the people from all bonds, also beneficial ones, so also attempts are made to

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[33] _Kierkegaard's Psychology_, tr. Bruce Kirmmse (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1978), p. 77.

> emancipate the emotional relationship between human beings from the bond that binds one to God and binds one in everything, in every expression of life (SV 12,115; WL, 119).[34]

It is a freedom that is without divinity in the world (Ibid). The bond to transcendent experience has become inconvenient for the modern single self. Instead it has been dethroned as the focus of human existence and replaced by the self-deification of humanity, and the consequence is the obviation of all authority. It meant, according to Kierkegaard, that the rights of man (Menneskets Rettigheder) were misconstrued as rights given to man by man, when in truth they were already divinely granted (SV 12,115; WL, 119). The problem as he sees it, is that man has imposed himself upon the domain of transcendence "transforming all existence into doubt or into a vortex," meaning into an unstoppable confusion (SV 12,115; WL, 120).[35]

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[34] Kierkegaard puts it more bluntly in his journal and gives the argument a slightly different turn when he notes that the idea of genuine equality, that is, essential equality, which he in Works of Loves insists has always been present, has now been abandoned. Instead equality has become a political question discussed throughout Europe where it has engendered a new form of tyranny, what we today refer to as totalitarianism, what Kierkegaard aptly labels the tyranny of "people-fear" (Menneske-Frygt).

[35] In Letters and Documents, p. 262, Kierkegaard has commented on the meaning of this vortex in a letter to Kolderup-Rosenvinge. Therein he explains how he sees what is happening in Europe as a vortex that is spinning out of control. But, he says in the letter, where there is motion, the category of stoppage belongs. The problem lies in how the ground of this stoppage is perceived. For Kierkegaard it is a teleological argument. It is commonly believed, he explains, that if one has a fixed point for a goal, the movement toward it is not out of control. In that case the movement is not

But the transcendent dimension is necessary because only it possesses the true standard (Maalestok), a standard by which Kierkegaard believes political movements must measure their aims. Thus he asks, if man has become deified, who defines the law's demand that "You shall love the neighbor as yourself?" (SV 12,23; WL, 34).[36] Kierkegaard does not believe this question, which emerges out of revelation with its

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assumed to be an unstoppable vortex. Kierkegaard questions this assumption suggesting that the fixed point must lie behind the movement in order to control or steer it, in order to integrate the motion. He is distinguishing between a purely political movement such as the ideological movements that were sweeping Europe at the time and a religious movement whose teleological aim is safely posited before the fact, so to speak. The problem with a political movement that entirely lacks a religious dimension, he argues, is that it has posited the goal in the future -- the secularized eschatological expectation. In that case there is no control over the means to achieve this end. (No doubt Kierkegaard has the "Reign of Terror" in mind and by implication totalitarian systems in general). Kierkegaard goes on to suggest such a movement eventually will come to realize its need for religion as the only way to stop the vortex, will need a Socratic gadfly, (and here we may speculate), will need a Kierkegaard. (According to the editors of Letters and Documents, Kierkegaard is playing on the Danish word for gadfly, Bremse, which means both a "brake" or "to brake," as well as a gadfly or botfly). The religious movement Kierkegaard has in mind is very much one of his own development but with close similarities to the simplistic form of Christianity of Pauline teaching. Thus his understanding of a religious movement should not be confused with the religious movements described by Norman Cohn in his Pursuit of the Millenium (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961, 1970) where he makes it quite clear that even political movements with a religious dimension, what he refers to as "revolutionary millenarianism" presumably with a fixed point controlling its movement, have flourished throughout Western history, but especially during the dark Middle Ages, spreading much violence in pursuit most often of some ideal conception of social reform (p. 284 and in passim).

[36] Kierkegaard is quoting Matthew, 22:39.

"divine origin" (SV 12,30; WL, 41) can be settled by decree or by human consensus (SV 12,115; WL, 120). Since the new order of the world leaves human beings as essentially responsible for their own selves and in that sense equal, the answer would be left to arbitrary determinations that in an attempt to compete, and as in political campaigns "win a following for it" (WL, 120; SV 12,115), would compromise the law's demand. In other words, revelation would be subjected to willful interpretations with ideological overtones, just as the single self's decision with whom to side would be dictated by arbitrary self-interest.

The upshot of Kierkegaard's argument is that the form of the action by the single self, that is, how the law's demand would be interpreted, would be dependent upon the historical circumstances of his time. Consequently the universal authority implied in the law's demand would be entirely relativized, because temporality now dominates the life of such a single self and hence would dominate its actions. In other words, to love the neighbor as oneself would be historicized and would soon lose its effectiveness.

The relativization of the law's demand and hence its essential weakening is precisely what happens to this ethico-religious and rational criterion in liberal theory where it plays a central role in the fictitious but rational state of nature,[37] but gives way to material self-interest in the theory of political society, and in fact entirely disappears. It is this form of an ethically undirected existence that Kierkegaard in his critique of modernity (above in chapter III) diagnosed as a "philistine-bourgeois mentality" (SV 15,97; SUD, 41).[38] It is this falling away of the law's demand that he attempts to restore with his therapeutic "corrective."

IV:4

The law's demand must have a transcendent ground and thereby gain unconditional authority and hence universality. By grounding it beyond the realm of human decision-making capabilities, the command "to love your neighbor as yourself" gains the respectability of being universally applicable and of being generally known and appropriable by anyone who chooses to act according to its precepts. Works of Love thus posits the category of freedom as something to be existentially chosen, not as something granted. Either the single self chooses to become a philistine bourgeois or it chooses to become a person of character, which for Kierkegaard is to chose to become a Christian.

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[37] Locke, Second Treatise of Government, Ch. 2, #5.

[38] Johannes Sløk, Kierkegaard's Univers: En ny guide til geniet (Centrum, 1983), p. 28, in this introductory reading to Kierkegaard's works has accurately described the philistine bourgeois as someone who "without reservation and exhaustively, but without any inkling of this, is a product of what the given society and its culture invariably will make a person into given his presuppositions. A bourgeois philistine lives in the illusion that he has freely made the decisions that in actuality anonymous forces have made on his behalf.

It is from the perspective of this conception of the grounding of the law's demand that Kierkegaard's "idea of community" becomes comprehensible. In turn, it is from this understanding of the "idea of community" that we derive his conceptualization of freedom and equality. These, then, cannot be viewed as political rights, but must be understood as existential obligations to the law to which every single self can and must respond. In other words, what liberal theory views as rights, the fulfillment of which is expressed in terms of material acquisitiveness,[39] Kierkegaard perceives as duties that essentially engage each in a common purpose without suppressing "the original individuation idea."[40]

What Kierkegaard objects to is the givenness of the natural rights of freedom and equality that liberal theory posits.[41] Instead he wants to distinguish between what Isaiah

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[39] John Locke, Second Treatise of Government, Ch. 5, #25, 26.

[40] Nordentoft, Brand-Majoren, p. 50.

[41] Locke, Second Treatise of Government, Ch. 1, #4 and #5. Also Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality of Men, Preface, and "On the Social Contract" in The Basic Political Writings, ed. and trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1987), Bk. I, chs. 1-2.

Berlin has differentiated as negative and positive freedom.[42] But Kierkegaard goes further, meaning he finds it necessary to transcend the human realm in order to properly ground social existence. To put your faith in the "great, matchless common undertaking, the great achievement of the human race," as he sarcastically remarks, is to make the category of the others capricious.

> If what the law demands is merely a human determination of what the law demands (but not by the individual human being, because we thereby become involved in pure arbitrariness, as indicated), how then can the individual come to begin to act, or is it not left to chance to decide where he happens to begin instead of everyone having to begin at the beginning? (SV 12,115-16; WL, 120).

Thus Kierkegaard even rejects an interpretation of the law's demand by society as a whole as, for example, in Rousseau's "general will. "Inasmuch as the law's demand constitutes a universal claim, Kierkegaard is concerned about the human inferences made from it in accordance with some collective determination. His fear is that by so deifying the others, the ethical has become "an accidental matter" allowing the wrong to possibly be right (SV 12,117; WL, 121).[43]

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[42] Four Essays on Liberty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), ch. III. Berlin's essay "Two Concepts of Liberty" is helpful in understanding the direction of Kierkegaard's thought.

[43] Also SV 16,88-95; TC, 86-95.

The fixed point of departure is still on Kierkegaard's mind. At the same time something else is revealed. Where others have interpreted Kierkegaard to require the single self to withdraw or "die away" from the world,[44] in Works of Love the dialectic of human existence and hence Kierkegaard's true intentions become evident. On the one hand, the single self is required to sharply differentiate between the finite worldly and the infinitely eternal. Yet, on the other hand, his life in temporal existence must be governed by transcendent standards that unarguably require him to attend to obligations that embody authoritative claims. Thus when Kierkegaard makes the infamous claim that the single self must "renounce the worldly," he does not mean for the single self to withdraw to a cloister, a solution he sharply distances himself from (SV 12,141; WL, 144). Rather, his point is that the single self must not succumb to the temptation of worldly distinctions. To do so would mean to emphasize differences and thereby reject true equality.

To reject what Kierkegaard considers the only possible form of equality is also to reject the movement of freedom required to achieve this state of equality, and hence it is to reject not only the authentic self but also the very foundation of the "idea of community."[45] From this rigorous perspective, freedom and equality become ethical categories to which the single self is existentially related. To recapitulate, to be existentially related meant the single self does not merely stand in a cognitive relationship to these ethical categories. Rather he passionately relates to them, meaning he expresses a dynamic personal interest.[46] It is what Kierkegaard means by inwardness. In other words, the self is a relating self,[47] and not, as David Burrell reminds us, the relation which relates. The choice is in the acting self to become the authentic self he or she is. "Each one of us can only do this himself." Such a person feels and is felt to be "at home with himself."[48]

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[44] For a discussion of this perception of Kierkegaard and references see "Introduction," p. xxii and note 18.

For this self-directed single self the choice in which the ethical is expressed is two-dimensional. As in Sophocles'

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[45] The movement of freedom will be further delineated below.

[46] Cf. Plato's Theaetetus, tr. Francis MacDonald Cornford (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1957), 152b-c, where Socrates pronounces that no truth can be reached independently of its relation with the perceiving subject. Also Eric Voegelin, The World of the Polis, vol. II of Order and History (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), p. 298.

[47] The ideal position is that where despair has been rooted out: "[R]elating itself to itself and in willing to be itself, the self rests transparently in the power that posited it" (SV 15,74; SUD, 14).

[48] "Kierkegaard: Language of Spirit," Exercises in Religious Understanding (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), pp. 165-66.

Antigone[49] the single self is confronted with a dilemma. Antigone either buries her brother and thereby conforms to the unwritten laws of the gods, a choice that will make her subject to the king's punishment; or she refrains from burying him and conforms to the laws of the city as defined by the king, a choice that will make her subject to the wrath of the gods. Interpreting Kierkegaard, Johannes Sløk has suggested that Antigone's dilemma expresses the seriousness of existence: the definite meaning of the choice and the absolute incommensurability between the opposite possibilities, the either/or of the economy of life. Thus Kierkegaard subscribes to the principle of contradiction between good and evil as the foundation of thinking (SV 14,88ff; TA, 97ff) a principle that formulates a philosophy of life. As we saw above in chapter three, this philosophy of life constitutes the standard by which a person of self-conscious awareness chooses his or her existence (Tilværelse).

> When Antigone chooses either to bury her brother or not, then it is not merely this single isolated act she either chooses or not chooses; she chooses those principles that legitimate either the one or the other possibility, she chooses -- as Kierkegaard would express it -- her idea or that category under which she will live her life, the mode of her existence, the standard, finite or infinite, she wishes to establish.[50]

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[49] Either/Or, pp. 137-64.

[50] Sløk, Kierkegaard: humanismens tænker, p. 81.

In the very choice to bury her brother Antigone embraced the principle that defined her as an authentic self and defined her action in accordance with Kierkegaard's understanding of Existents.

In the same manner, Kierkegaard insists each single self must choose freedom and equality and thereby choose the standard for its existence. Each must personally embrace or appropriate these categories in the actions it undertakes, inasmuch as those very categories express genuine humanity and thereby authenticate the single self. The opposite kind of existence is that of the philistine-bourgeois, whose life is not even governed by aesthetic concerns, although one would have to say that such a life is governed by the desire for pleasure. That life, therefore, is ultimately influenced by fate. It is the kind of life where the contrasting possibilities and their analogous consequences make choice impossible. When choice becomes impossible skepticism has done its work and nihilism makes its presence in what Kierkegaard characterizes as a meaningless form of existence.[51]

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[51] "Marry, and you will regret it. Do not marry, and you will also regret it. Marry or do not marry, you will regret it either way. Whether you marry or you do not marry, you will regret it either way. Laugh at the stupidities of the world, and you will regret it; weep over them, and you will also regret it. Laugh at the stupidities of the world or weep over them, you will regret it either way. Whether you laugh at the stupidities of the world or you weep over them, you will regret it either way. Trust a girl, and you will regret it. Do not trust her, and you will also regret it. Trust a girl or do not trust her, you will regret it either way. Whether you trust a girl or do not trust her, you will regret it either way. Hang yourself, and you will regret it. Do not hang

What must now be determined, therefore, is whether Kierkegaard defines the categories of freedom and equality strictly in ethical terms and hence as distinct from political meaning in the way modernity has come to separate these categories of human existence,[52] or whether indeed his therapeutic "corrective" aims at reforming, if not politics, then at least the single self's relationship to the political. The latter would result in what is here referred to as a condition of political consciousness. What we are looking for, then, is the single self's disposition or comportment toward the world. To make this determination, we have to analyze the movement Kierkegaard's single self (den Enkelte) must undertake. It is, significantly, a movement of love as indicated in the law's demand.

IV:6

Love, the most fundamental human characteristic according to Kierkegaard (WL, 153; SV 12,150), is the dynamic force underlying the essential experience of achieving freedom and equality and hence community (WL, 53; SV 12,43). Love exists, before it is practiced, because love is the presupposition.

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yourself and you will also regret it. Hang yourself or do not hang yourself, you will regret it either way. Whether you hang yourself or do not hang yourself, you will regret it either way. This, gentlemen, is the quintessence of all the wisdom of life." Either/Or, vol. I, pp. 38-9.

[52] Cf. Nordentoft in Brand-Majoren.

Love is the essence of the single self, indeed is being itself in an ontological sense (SV 12,150-51; WL, 153-54). This condition defines the single self in its natural state in which the human being exists and which it can only avoid if it ceases to exist as a human being.[53]

Kierkegaard can make the claim that love is a presupposition inasmuch as he acknowledges the sociability of human beings, their inherent need for community as attested to throughout the ages. He expresses this fundamental need in the profound words of wonder which introduce the obligation of every single self to love the person he sees: "How deeply indeed is the need for love grounded in human nature!" (SV 12,150; WL, 153). The whole "idea of community" is embedded in this sentence which emphasizes that love is not an accidental happening, something that may or may not have significance. Love is precisely grounded so deeply in human nature that the single self can be defined by it. As Sløk interprets, "Man is qualified passionately as love [and] therefore this passion expresses itself entirely elementary and irrefutably in a need for companionship."[54] Kierkegaard continues, "throughout all ages anyone, therefore, who has thought deeply about human nature has acknowledged this need for companionship" (SV 12,150; WL, 153).

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[53] Johannes Sløk, Kierkegaard: humanismen's tænker, p. 138.

[54] Ibid, p. 139.

From this perspective of love as an inherent characteristic of human nature, it follows that for Kierkegaard human nature is given, its constitutive element is fundamental and permanent. It is also the faculty of human nature that expresses the eternal dimension, but only in its acquired form.

> The concealed life of love is in its most inward state unfathomable, and still, in turn, is in an unfathomable coherence with all of existence. . . . In this way the life of love is concealed, but its concealed life is in itself a movement and has the eternal within itself (SV 12,15-6; WL, 27).

This thesis of love as the dominant element of human nature pervades the discourse which can be characterized by the often repeated sentence, "So deeply is this need grounded in human nature, and so essentially does it belong to being human" (SV 12,150; WL, 153).

The form of love that Kierkegaard promotes in Works of Love is love transformed in the Christian sense of the word. But love as such is a passion that can take many forms.[55] In this work Kierkegaard emphasizes the distinction between the two higher forms of passion (Lidenskab), between erotic love

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[55] On the title page of Either/Or, vol. I, there is a quotation from Edward Young, The Complaint or Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality, that indicates Kierkegaard's readiness to do battle with the Enlightenment as well as with speculative philosophy and install passion as a legitimate function of the human condition. This, of course, will necessitate a redefinition of passion as well as of its place and function, and consequently it will necessitate a redefinition of the human individual. (Sløk, Kierkegaard: humanismens tænker, p. 97). The quotation asks, "Is reason then alone baptized, are the passions pagans?"

(Elskov) or friendship both of which he refers to as spontaneous (umiddelbar) or preferential love (Forkjerlighed), and love (Kjerlighed) as expressed in love of neighbor. Erotic love as in eros is characterized as an appetite, a yearning desire, which is aroused by the attractive qualities of its object. Here the prime example would be Plato's "heavenly Eros."[56] In Kierkegaard's configuration, this form of love is aesthetic. In his earlier pseudonymous authorship and most especially in Either/Or, vol. I, Kierkegaard referred to the lower form of this passion as a desire for pleasure. He called it pure sexuality as with Don Juan (SV 2,83-98; EO,I, 87-103), or simply self-interest as with Johannes the Seducer (SV 2,279-410; EO,I, 301-445).[57] In Works of Love, however, all the latter seem to be integrated into his conception of erotic love or friendship both of which are bound by the rules of the worldly, and both of which have preference as the middle term (SV 12,62; WL, 70). Love as in Kjerlighed or love of neighbor also has a middle term, namely transcendence, but it is a response to a commandment, and hence it is controlled.[58]

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[56] "Translator's Preface" to Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, tr. Philip S. Watson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. viii.

[57] For an informative chart of these different manifestations of the passion of love see Sløk, Kierkegaard: humanismens tænker, p. 140. It is important to note that these several forms of the passion of love do not annul previous forms as will be discussed below. In other words, they are not mutually exclusive.

The worldly rules that are especially offensive to Kierkegaard's project are those that promote differentiation between people which necessarily leads to comparison and competition.[59] The categories of comparison and competition necessarily express a concern with the self that can never overcome the distinctions between human beings in order to love the neighbor as oneself. Moreover, spontaneous love and friendship have a tendency to change because of their inherent dependency on external objects and hence on fortune (SV 12,36; WL, 46). Significant to this change is what Kierkegaard refers to as "spontaneous combustion" which can be easily ignited by comparison and competition (SV 12,40; WL, 50). The point is that spontaneous love can turn into its opposite, hate, or into jealousy, or it can simply turn sluggish and become "exhausted in the lukewarmness and indifference of habit" (SV 12,41; WL, 50). In other words, spontaneous love can turn into something by which it becomes unrecognizable as love. The fact that it is spontaneous means that it can turn off just as suddenly as it had turned on, something we, of course, are still unable to explain, but which is an important consideration for Kierkegaard's conception of genuine love.

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[58] This form of love has some affinity with Anders Nygren's conception of agape when he says that "neighborly love loses its specifically Christian character if it is taken out of context of fellowship with God," meaning it cannot be reduced to a simple ethics. Op. cit., pp. 95-6. Nygren goes on to say neighborly love is only genuine when it "springs from the same root as love for God -- that is, from . . . experience of God's agape (p. 75). To some degree, then, human beings can learn to love as in agape. But their concepts differ when Nygren characterizes agape as "spontaneous and unmotivated." For Kierkegaard love of God is a duty, and must be a duty so as not to be dependent upon accident. It is a response to a commandment that requires obedience. In that sense love cannot be characterized as spontaneous.

[59] "It is unbelievable how tragic and weakening the change that takes place in a human being as soon as he has included comparison in the economy of life. Comparison is a damned guest whom no one can fulfill, because it craves more and more, and takes food from the children. Comparison is an unruly dweller in what before was a calm house; comparison sleeps neither night nor day." PAP VIII 2 B 37:5.

What bothers Kierkegaard is spontaneous love's capacity for change and hence its unreliability. This is a circumstance, he notes, that even the worldly rules have attempted to overcome by eliciting promises from the partners in love or by the partners constantly testing each other (SV 12,38; WL, 48). The problem is that spontaneous love is not consciously grounded in transcendence, it has no ethical dimension.[60] Although its dependency on fortune -- and good fortune may have some longevity -- enables it to demonstrate a lack of change and hence it can claim existence (Bestaaen), it nevertheless does not acquire constancy (Bestandighed), and that is its main problem.

> Insofar as it has existence, it exists, but insofar as it has not won constancy amid change, it cannot

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[60] We should differentiate this claim in Works of Love from Kierkegaard's early work, especially Either-Or vol. II, wherein he suggests the erotic (as in Plato) can be taken to a higher level where it acquires an ethical dimension. (SV 3,34,49; EO II, 30,47). In Works of Love he has entirely abandoned such gradations. Here all the existence spheres have been reduced to the possibilities of a more definitive either-or.

> become contemporaneous with itself. Then it is either happily ignorant about this incongruity or disposed to sadness. Only the eternal can be and become and remain contemporaneous with every age; temporality, in contrast, separates within itself, and the present cannot become contemporaneous with the future or the future with the past, or the past with the present (SV 12,36-7; WL, 46-7).

The consideration of constancy is important to Kierkegaard inasmuch as he defines human nature as a synthesis of the temporal and the eternal.[61] On the one hand, the human being is an historical being active in and subordinated to the determinations of time. On the other hand, the single self also has an ontological foundation in transcendence, meaning it is also subordinated to the determinations of the eternal. Here the discussion has to proceed with some caution because Kierkegaard, in the words of Vigilius Haufniensis, the author of The Concept of Anxiety, differentiates between time and temporality.

Time Vigilius defines as an infinite succession of moments "passing by" and hence as an "infinitely contentless present" (SV 6,174; CA, 85-6). This means that time cannot be defined as the present, the past, or the future, because this distinction appears only through the relation of time to eternity and through the reflection of eternity in time. In other words, time cannot be stopped at some fixed point that would enable such a division, meaning the present only represents "the abstract in-between of past and future and such an abstract in-between is a nothing."[62] The point Kierkegaard wants to make is that a life lived exclusively in time, meaning sensuous life, "and is only of time, has no present (Nærværende)," and, as the Danish word also indicates, "has no presence" (SV 6,175; CA, 86). In contrast, the eternal is the present, Vigilius explains, meaning thought can annul the succession of time and, so to speak, attempt to stop it. Thereby the present acquires fulness, it acquires presence.[63] But this means that neither can the eternal be divided into the past, the present, or the future. As Johannes Sløk points out, inasmuch as time and eternity are defined "as each other's contradiction" and hence with the help of a common conceptual device, it suggests "that it is possible to think a relation between them."[64] That conceptual device is precisely temporality, and it is differentiated from time insofar as it relates to the eternal.

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[61] The central concept here to be kept in mind is that according to Kierkegaard human nature consists of several syntheses. Thus it is also a synthesis of psyche (soul) and body sustained by the spirit, of infinitude and finitude, and of possibility and necessity. These syntheses will be discussed below.

Temporality realizes this possible relation through one of Kierkegaard's favorite concepts about the present, the now, the moment (Øjeblikket). But the reader is cautioned not to think of the moment as a determination of time just because it separates out the past and the future from itself, since the determination of time, we are reminded, is that which "passes by." Rather, "the moment is that ambiguity in which time and eternity touch each other," something that happens in time. "With this the concept of temporality (Timelighed) is posited, whereby time constantly intersects eternity and eternity constantly pervades time" (SV 6,177; CA, 89). Or as Kierkegaard posits this problematic in Works of Love in terms of genuine love thereby distancing himself from the impoverished capacities of spontaneous love:

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[62] Sløk, Kierkegaard: humanismens tænker, p. 188.

[63] "For representation it is a going forth that nevertheless does not get off the spot, because the eternal is for representation the infinitely contentful present," SV 6,174-75; CA, 86.

[64] Sløk, Kierkegaard: humanismens tænker, p. 190.

> Consequently if the eternal is in the temporal then it is in the future . . . or in the possibility. The past is the actual, the future is the possible; eternally the eternal is the eternal, in time the eternal is the possible, the future. Therefore we call tomorrow the future, but we also call eternal life the future. The possible as such is always a duality and the eternal relates itself in possibility equally to its duality. On the other hand, when the human being to whom the possible is relevant relates himself equally to the duality of the possible, then we say: he expects. To expect contains in it the same duality which the possible has, and to expect is to relate oneself to the possible simply and purely as such (SV 12,240; WL, 234).

The human being is a synthesis of temporality and eternity we are now told in Works of Love, and from Vigilius' explanation of these terms, as well as from that of Kierkegaard himself, it would seem the eternal in a double sense relates itself to time.[65] Here it becomes necessary to remind ourselves of Kierkegaard's philosophical anthropology which claims human nature is constituted by body and soul united in spirit (SV 6,137; CA, 43), something that must necessarily be cognitively acknowledged if his philosophy of political consciousness is to be comprehensible.[66]

This brings us back to the problem of spontaneous love being able to claim existence but unable to exact constancy. What Kierkegaard is talking about is precisely the kind of existence that spontaneous love lays claim to, namely a lack of presence and hence a life without what Vigilius (ironically yet biblically) refers to as "the fullness of time" (SV 6,178; CA, 90). Presence necessitates the eternal dimension, necessitates transcendence, according to Kierkegaard's understanding of authenticity, and therefore spontaneous love cannot provide authenticity, cannot lead to genuine humanity, much less to human equality. Erotic love or friendship contain no ethical task, a transcendent category, but is entirely dependent upon chance, a category of immanence. One may have to be grateful for one's good fortune, but "the task can never be that one ought to find the beloved or to find this friend" (SV 12,55; WL, 64).

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[65] Ibid, p. 191.

[66] Reidar Thomte explains how Kierkegaard's philosophical anthropology should be understood in his "Historical Introduction" to The Concept of Anxiety, p. xiv: "Historically, the psychology with which Kierkegaard worked is quite different from present day psychological research. His is a phenomenology that is based on an ontological view of man, the fundamental presupposition of which is the transcendent reality of the individual, whose intuitively discernible character reveals the existence of an eternal component. Such a psychology does not blend well with any purely empirical science and is best understood by regarding soma, psyche, and spirit as the principle determinants of the human structure, with the first two belonging to the temporal realm and the third to the eternal."

What has been shown here is that Kierkegaard's dialectic defines the single self as qualified by empirical necessity, and hence subject to change and to chance, as we have seen, but this single self also has a consciousness that renders it independent of time and hence free. That is to say, Kierkegaard insists on the distinction of the worldly life and the spiritual life with the only connection between the two being located in the existential enactment of the requirement, that is, in the ethico-religious moment. Hence the concreteness of the self is precisely expressed by making itself infinitely present to itself and to see this as its task, as its primary ethical obligation (SV 12,55; WL, 64).

IV:7

Kierkegaard opposes spontaneous or preferential love (Elskov) to what we have chosen to call simply love (Kjerlighed). The latter implies a transformation of the passion expressed as erotic love or friendship into a kind of love that can claim Existents implying among other characteristics constancy, yet without annulling love of the beloved or friend. If that were a requirement, Kierkegaard insists, the category of neighbor would be a fraud (SV 12,65; WL, 73). However, love as an obligation is not dependent upon the mysteriousness of "falling in love." "By coming into existence, by becoming a self, [the single self] becomes free, but in the next moment it is dependent upon this self. In contrast, the obligation makes a person dependent and in the same moment eternally independent" (SV 12,43; WL, 53). Love, then, is not dependent upon accident or fortune, upon the notion of "falling in love," something over which human beings have no control. It is a constant inasmuch as the command of the law is eternally posited. It is universal inasmuch as revelation was meant to speak to all humankind.

Love of neighbor is not an erratic passion qualified by emotional and sensuous desires. Rather it is a love of the spirit "which in earnestness and truth is inwardly more tender than erotic love is in the union and more faithful in the sincerity of solidarity than the most famous friendship" (SV 12,49; WL, 58). Kierkegaard is content to suggest that natural inclinations cannot be counted on to initiate the "idea of community." Therefore we get the law's demand which elicits an obligation, something human beings can control.

This transfer of control is possible inasmuch as his philosophical anthropology showed the human individual to be a two-dimensional being making a dialectical life experience possible. The point is that the single self must love in a different way, in an ethical way, and that is an obligation constitutive of its (second) nature. In other words, Kierkegaard's authentic self is a responsible being, responsible to the other, to the community, and to the self.

In this chapter we have seen how Kierkegaard begins to implement his therapeutic "corrective" by differentiating the categories freedom and equality from how they are conceived by liberal theory. To Kierkegaard these most important principles of the modern experience have been incorrectly understood as political rights. This misunderstanding was caused by the self-deification of man -- a symptomatic effect of the separation of knowledge and experience -- resulting in a materialist conception of these principles and indeed of the single self. It meant that the dialectic of immanent and transcendent experience, traditionally understood by classical philosophy to render a differentiated human existence, had been confounded. Consequently the single self had been reduced to an undifferentiated being who in its egological condition experiences only estrangement and envy, and thus a being reduced to its lowest common denominator.

Kierkegaard's "corrective" aims at revising this mistaken interpretation of the single self and the principles that governs its existence and thereby provide the possibility for a higher form of existence. He does so by emphasizing the ethical nature of freedom and equality, meaning they are tasks to be achieved and as such will express the "idea of community." He wants to remind people of the possibility of a differentiated self that acts in the world in terms of its most genuine characteristic which is love. Kierkegaard differentiates this form of love, whose basic trait is constancy, from erotic love which he considers generally unreliable because it is subject to change. Kierkegaard overcomes this problem by positing the possibility for a higher form of love, for transcending this passion of love in its most basic expression and become a love that understands freedom and equality as obligations fulfilled by love's obedience to the demand of the law.

In the next and final chapter we shall look closer at the law that is the foundation of the command "You shall love the neighbor as the self," and we shall take a closer look at Kierkegaard's concept of neighbor. More specifically, however, we shall investigate his concept of love with its unique characteristic of upbuilding as its fundamental task. As such we shall come to understand why it is that love must transcend its basic self and become a higher form of love that has the capacity to love the other as the self and hence the freedom to acknowledge the other as the equal of the self.

Chapter V

A THERAPEUTIC "CORRECTIVE": LOVE AS UPBUILDING

> The only actuality there is for an existing being is his own ethical being; all other actualities he is only knowledgeable about, but true knowledge consists in a translating within possibility.[1]

> See, now the discourse has stopped by that which it wants to make the object of its considerations. The commandment about being obliged to love the neighbor turns out to be synonymous with that of being obliged to love oneself. Our intention has not been to talk about love of neighbor. Rather we wish to talk about
>
> **that love is duty**, that
> we **ought to love** the neighbor;
>
> for this is precisely the mark of Christian love that it includes this apparent contradiction: that to love is duty. And yet it is only this type of love that discovers that the neighbor exists, and, what then comes to the same, that everyone is that [an existing neighbor]. If it was not a duty to love, then there could be no talk of loving the neighbor; the concept neighbor corresponds to loving as duty.[2]

By making the imperative that one should love the neighbor as oneself the foundation of love, Kierkegaard creates a higher form of love by constituting it as an obligation. This he understands as an act of obedience. As such it is not plagued by the vicissitudes of erotic love, but rather engenders a constancy in existential experience that renders harmony in the self. Moreover, by so constituting love, he is able to institute the concept of neighbor as a relational quality of the self, something that was alien to classical Greek philosophy.

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[1] SV 10,22; CUP, 280.

[2] PAP VIII 2 B 30:4.

In this chapter we shall look at how Kierkegaard qua his "corrective" reveals a space for human action that transcends the mundane egological reality of the single self. Here we should take careful note of the fact that the possible implied in this obligation to the law's demand to love the other as the self is possible, and therefore it is a higher reality than any the inauthentic single self may have created for itself. It is only possible, however, if the single self freely chooses it. By choosing to love the neighbor, and by extension all of humankind, in that special sense, the single self has committed itself to a stance, that is, to a level of political consciousness that expresses a concern for the good of the whole thereby manifesting the "idea of community." By choosing to love in a sense that incorporates the unique characteristic of being upbuilding, the single self has created a space in which transparency can be achieved. It is a transparency that unconceals the single self acting according to its understanding of citizenship, a category that in and of itself unconceals the particular human being as a single relating self of character. It is the experience of Existents.

V:1

Kierkegaard's emphasis on the law (SV 12,23-48; WL, 34-57) has a two-dimensional aspect to it. As Bruce Kirmmse has pointed out, it is both rational inasmuch as it posits a command to respond to the universal standards of ethical conduct, and doctrinaire insofar as it demands obedience to Mosaic Law or the Christian Law of Pauline teaching. In its broadest sense Kierkegaard's conception of the law is meant to "summon up both its Enlightenment philosophical sense and its traditional New Testament dogmatic sense."[3] The latter becomes necessary inasmuch as Christianity as a religion of grace speaks to the single self as it really is according to revelation: weak and sinful. For that reason the single self is in need of "a religion more absolute, outgoing, and personal than the religion of rational, universal, ethical statements (the Law)," which expect rationally perfected and hence abstract beings for its fulfillment.[4]

But there is more to the differentiation than this. The problem for Kierkegaard is that, for example, with respect to

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[3] Kierkegaard's Politics: The Social Thought of Søren Kierkegaard in Its Historical Context. Ph.D. dissertation (University of California, Berkeley, 1977), p. 592.

[4] Ibid.

Kant's categorical imperative the autonomous individual acts on principle. Kant's only concern is the validity of the principle. In the case of the principle of utility, one acts in accordance with a merely mechanical principle. The problem is that acting "on principle" is to act in accordance with something external which means to engage in something inherently detrimental and disharmonious to the self. Ultimately, as we saw in chapter three, this is to be in conflict with the principle of contradiction. Before we jump to the conclusion that the principle of contradiction also is an external principle, however, it must be remembered how Kierkegaard understands this Aristotelian principle in its moral application: to discern between good and evil. It is an ethical qualification and therefore existential in nature.

In the cases of the categorical imperative and the principle of utility the duty is to universal law; it is not to the other nor to the self in the strict sense. As Climacus comments in the Postscript, "[w]hen an individual [Individ) abandons himself in order to lay hold of something great [outside himself], his enthusiasm is aesthetic; when he forsakes everything to save himself, his enthusiasm is ethical" (SV 10,85; CUP, 350).

One might argue that the commandment to love the neighbor is equally external to the single self, especially as Kierkegaard defines it: as the law's demand (Fordring), as an obligation that is not natural to the basic self. The point is that the obligation is entered into freely and only when faith has become the actuality of the consciousness of the single self, i.e. the possibility that is possible for every single self. Moreover, faith cannot be categorized as external to the self as it constitutes inwardness (Inderlighed). The law that obliges the single self to love the neighbor as the self is a priori in the sense of being a law written on the mind, and in that sense is innate within the self. But the law also comes from without in the form of the commandment to which the self is obliged, and inasmuch as this means to become genuinely consistent with that deeper self, it is constitutive of selfhood. Conceived in this manner, obedience to the law's demand constitutes Existents.

The purpose of the law is to compel the single self to love the neighbor as itself, which for Kierkegaard is the highest good. He insists Christianity teaches the shortest way to find this good is through grace (SV12,56; WL, 64). And since law addresses the single self as it is, no human being can claim exemption from the law's demand. There is no requirement for the single self to be what it is not, i.e. there is no requirement for a specific talent or super human effort. There is only the requirement that it, through grace, wills to see the neighbor as its equal. Therefore, as Paul Müller has pointed out, the relation to transcendent being "is the unavoidable (uomgængelige) condition for the human individual becoming a loving, social self."[5]

A relationship to Christianity must therefore be sober in an eternal sense, meaning it must attain a self-renunciating stance, which is precisely where it sets itself apart from worldly love which essentially is self-love. To be obedient to the law's demand is to enter into a sober existence, while an irreligious life implies the intoxication of self-feeling since erotic love and friendship are the very height of self-feeling. As such they represent the height of self-intoxication (SV 12,60; WL, 68). It is a delicate dialectical move Kierkegaard engages in here. His intent is to assure that the worldly -- neighborly love can obviously not be practiced anywhere but within a social arrangement -- must be carefully balanced yet differentiated from the transcendent experience of the standard (Målestok) that is embodied in the law, and to which the single self can never be equal. It is in this carefully balanced differentiated experience that Kierkegaard's intentionality is rooted.

The law demands that we love the neighbor. Kierkegaard promotes an interesting thesis about the concept of neighbor. He suggests that erotic love and friendship as conceived by "the poet" are categories that belong to paganism, while love of neighbor is strictly a Christian concept. Among the pagans there was no concept of neighbor, only a poetic celebration of erotic love and friendship. But in the New Testament the poet will find no such celebration, only repeated celebrations of the concept of love of neighbor. Here Kierkegaard makes a rare judgment on revelation as such placing it and its message of "the true love" (den sande Kjerlighed) above pagan (poetic) teaching. Kierkegaard concedes that although it is true that people listen more to the poet and his worldly promises than to the words of the preacher, Christianity should not attempt to ban poets or poetry reading. We live in that world, but as Christians we understand everything differently from the non-Christian; we know how to make the distinction between worldly and non-worldly promises (SV 12,52; WL, 61). The Christian may speak the same language, but by his words he means something entirely different.

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[5] "Kierkegaard som social og politisk tænker" in Kierkegaardiana, 13, (1984), p. 124.

V:2

Because the single self resides in the world, its language contains a dialectical dimension that both endangers and harmonizes existential experience. Thus belief also becomes an attitude. One should not believe evil but good about one's neighbor. That is to say, the knowledge we have about others is interpretation. Therefore, how we interpret the neighbor is in the knower, not in the neighbor (SV 12,219-20; WL, 214-15). It is a matter of the condition of the consciousness of the single self. As Kresten Nordentoft comments, "To live is to interpret the uninterpreted given, not in an arbitrary pleasing of itself, but in a continuing interpretation of the ambiguous."[6]

Kierkegaard here posits the basic framework for reading Works of Love, a framework that differs rather dramatically from his earlier authorship. There, and especially in the indirect communications of the pseudonymous authorship, he laid out the three existence forms: the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious.[7] But here in the direct communication of his later authorship, Kierkegaard in a sense, but only in a sense, goes back to where he started, he again posits the either/or. Now there are only two existence forms, and the one unambiguously excludes the other, in contrast to the earlier tripartite division where one existence form did not necessarily exclude the others. Thus in Works of Love Kierkegaard is not operating on the abstract levels of the aesthetic, ethical, and religious existence forms that belong to the indirect communication of his pseudonymous authorship. Now the communication is direct; the choice has become concrete: either you are a Christian or you are not.[8] The requirement is that the whole being of the single self responds to this demand for choice.

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[6] Kierkegaard's Psychology, p. 339.

[7] There are a variety of intermediate stages that have been discussed in much detail in the secondary literature. See for example Steven Dunning, Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Inwardness (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985; John W. Elrod, Being and Existence in Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Works (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Mark C. Taylor Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Authorship: A Study of Time and the Self (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Josiah Thompson, The Lonely Labyrinth: Kierkegaard Pseudonymous Works (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967; James Collins, The Mind of Kierkegaard (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953.

The choice to be a Christian does not mean a withdrawal from the world -- it is tempting to say that the opposite is indeed true.

> Erotic love and friendship relate themselves to passion; but all passion, whether it attacks or it defends itself, fights in one manner only: either -- or: "Either I exist and am the highest, or I do not exist at all, either all or nothing" (SV 12,50; WL, 59).

From this it would seem to follow that human passion embraces its own self-critical dimension[9] that requires it to progress to its highest dimension in terms of its own self-understanding. Christianity, according to Kierkegaard, presents the highest form of differentiation to which therefore passion must direct its efforts. That would mean that obedience to the command to love the neighbor as oneself, a command that never ceases, is considered a higher form of passion than that expressed by spontaneous and essentially unreliable love.

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[8] As Kierkegaard remarked in his journal: "The whole pseudonymous production, and my existence in virtue of it, was in a Greek mode. Now I must elicit the characteristic Christian form of Existents. For more on this change in Kierkegaard's presentation of existence forms see Sylvia Walsh Utterbach, "Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Christian Existence," Ph.D. dissertation (Emory University, 1975), pp. 1-8.

[9] Not unlike Hegel's concept of spirit which also progresses toward higher self-development by the self-testing inherent to consciousness, what in traditional terms was referred to as "the quest for truth." Hegel's Science of Logic, p. 55.

But, of course, there is more to the story than that. Love of other is seen as a higher form of passion than love of self -- even worldly love recognizes some forms of self-lessness (SV 12,123; WL, 127).[10] But love of other, before self, that is, the immanent self, is not a natural inclination. Love of the neighbor does not come naturally to human beings. Natural or spontaneous love is ultimately love of self, while the law that issues the "love-commandment" (Kjerligheds-Budet) is essentially aimed at self-renunciation.

But this would seem to contradict the very language of the law which says to love the neighbor as the self. Kierkegaard should here be approached with much caution when he says that "this commandment will teach each person how he is to love himself" (SV 12,65; WL, 73-4). To obey the command to love and hence to comprehend love as a duty is to acknowledge the self as essentially spirit. In this sense, the "love-commandment" promises eternal life (Ibid).[11] The spirit is thus constituted as love, that is, as in love of other. To love the other is therefore to love oneself (as essentially spirit). To love oneself in this sense is to practice Christian self-denial, while its absence is to succumb to the "intoxication of self-feeling," meaning immanent self-love. Self-denial is precisely this transformation of the self from one sensually-psychically-spiritually qualified, to a self "purely qualified as spirit and the neighbor a purely spiritual qualification" (SV 12,61; WL, 69). It is a transformation, as Kierkegaard says, "by which a human being becomes sober in an eternal sense" (SV 12,60; WL, 68), i.e. he acknowledges the differentiated reality that constitutes a concretized life. It is in this sense Kierkegaard talks about an ethico-religious existence as it concerns the relation between the self and the other, the self and the world.

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[10] Kierkegaard is somewhat ambiguous on the world's perception of self-lessness. See, for example, SV 12,119-20; WL, 123-24.

[11] This is one of the few, if not the only place in Works of Love where Kierkegaard hints at eternal salvation. Such reluctance would appear to suggest that although that may be the ultimate benefit to the believer, the struggle to achieve the truth of one's self is for immediate purposes, to fully concretize or existentialize experience. According to Kierkegaard, such a life constitutes a higher form of happiness. See discussion above in chapter I.

The perspective of the single self understood as essentially spirit, revelation, the commandment, and the universal authority embedded in this command gain significance, but a balanced significance. Bruce Kirmmse may be correct when he claims that this is the death of natural man,[12] as long as we understand that this abolishment does not imply an abandonment of the differentiated experience, that Kierkegaard has so carefully developed, and make the single self a religious fanatic. Thus Kierkegaard is very careful to add that to love in this sense does not prevent engagement in erotic love and friendship, but now these relationships take place on a higher level than before inasmuch as the beloved and the friend are not just loved as unique human beings, they are loved as neighbors as well (SV 12,65-6; WL, 73-4).

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[12] Kirmmse, Op. Cit. p. 592.

V:3

The understanding of differentiated experience developed above suggests that Christianity also represents a paradigmatic change in how human beings theoretically relate to each other (SV 12,30, WL, 41).[13] For Plato and Aristotle the obligation was grounded in the political relationship of the _zoon politikon_ toward the city, toward the whole, in an organic conception of that relationship.[14] At times,

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[13] As Eric Voegelin suggests in _The Ecumenic Age_, vol. 4 of _Order and History_ (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), p.232: "Revelation is not a piece of information, arbitrarily thrown out by some supernatural force, to be carried home as a possession, but the movement of response to an irruption of the divine in the psyche."

[14] We hesitate to use the organic conception to characterize the political relationship as depicted in the political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle inasmuch as this would be an incorrect definition of the philosopher's relationship to the political dimension of the city, especially as we understand it in Plato's _Republic_. That, however, would not constrain us from characterizing it as a necessary relationship, but the category of necessity is not connected to the organic conception in this case. Rather we want to argue, fully realizing the conflicting opinions of other interpretations, that Plato insists that the philosopher returns to the cave, because he sees that it is the good that wisdom rules in the city. The relationship of philosophy and politics is therefore a necessary relationship. _The Republic of Plato_, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968), 517c, 519c-d, 520b-c, and especially 540a-b. It is,

Kierkegaard sounds as if he conceives of the political relationship in somewhat the same manner, for instance when he as a twenty-three year old makes the following statement:

> When the dialectical (the romantic) is world-historically lived through (a period I perhaps could very appropriately call the age of individuality -- something which can also quite easily be demonstrated historically), social life must again come to play its role to the highest degree, and ideas such as the state (for example as the Greeks knew it; church in the older Catholic meaning) must necessarily return richer and fuller, that is, with all the content that the transmitted diversity of individuality can give the idea, so that the single self as such means nothing, but everything is as a link in the chain.[15]

But the concept of the neighbor puts a whole different light on Kierkegaard's thinking. For one thing, it posits human relationships based on conscience rather than on conventional mores (SV 12,133; WL, 137), meaning authority is now located within rather than externally. Yet in spite of its religious connotations, it urges a political understanding.

Kierkegaard's concept of neighbor not only dates him, but the "deduction" he makes from this concept of categories such

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then, a rational qualification that governs the relationship between philosophy and politics from Plato's perspective. On the other hand, when Plato argues in Book IV of the Republic that "each of the other citizens too must be brought to that which naturally suits him -- one man, one job -- so that each man, practicing his own, which is one, will not become many but one; and thus, you see, the whole city will naturally grow to be one and not many" (423d), then Plato is indeed characterizing an organic relationship. For a similar account in Aristotle see The Politics, trans. Carnes Lord (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 1252b25-35, 1276b15-35.

[15] PAP I A 307 (JP 4070).

as equality and freedom, humanity and community, firmly establishes him as a political thinker in the modern tradition. There is no trace of any organic conception of the state left in the picture his understanding of the concept of neighbor reveals. That, however, should not be construed as an introduction to a Kierkegaardian theory of state. What concerns him is how (hvorledes) the single self is disposed to the larger whole, what throughout this project is referred to as political consciousness. Kierkegaard is much less interested in the what of things, and therefore we do not get a theory of state from him outlining the institutional structures of procedural governing.[16] We might add that a philosophy of consciousness does not necessitate a theory of state, while a theory of state necessarily presupposes a philosophy of consciousness.[17]

V:4

Kierkegaard entitles one of the chapters of Works of Love "You shall love the neighbor." It is time to find out who this neighbor really is. First, Kierkegaard does not say "your neighbor" as it has heretofore been translated. In fact, the Danish word he uses does not mean neighbor in the ordinary sense at all. Neighbor in Danish is Nabo. The word Kierkegaard does use is Næsten which is derived from neahgebur (near-dweller),[18] and which incorporates within it the definitive article. Literally it would mean "the next one." This is precisely the meaning Kierkegaard draws from it when he says the neighbor worthy of your love is the next person you see, "the neighbor is the one who dwells nearer to you than all others, but not in a preferential sense" (SV 12,26; WL, 37), "the neighbor is every human being" (SV 12,64; WL, 72). Kierkegaard asks whether the neighbor is closer to you than you are yourself and answers in the negative. The neighbor is as near to you as you are to yourself, and in that sense "the neighbor is actually a doubling of your own self; the neighbor is what the thinkers would call the other, that by which the selfish in self-love is to be tested" (SV 12,26-7; WL, 37).

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[16] As we have already seen and shall see later, there are other more compelling reasons why Kierkegaard does not provide a political theory as such, the most important being that he in fact accepted the natural emergence of liberal democracy and its governing structures which in Denmark took the form of a constitutional monarchy.

[17] We are grateful to Joseph Roberts for reminding us of this truth.

Kierkegaard is struggling to explain what "as the self" could possibly mean without collapsing the concept of love of other into an egological conclusion. The "doubling" is manifested by the word of the commandment, and it is a doubling "the selfish [erotic lover] unconditionally cannot tolerate" (SV 12,27; WL, 38). His burning passion would prohibit him from giving up his love if the beloved should demand it. It would mean to deny what his passion dictates, and this he is unable to do. "Consequently the lover does not love the beloved "as himself," for he is demanding [fordrende], but this 'as himself' contains precisely the demand [Fordringen] to him -- alas, nevertheless the loving one believes still to love the other person higher than himself" (Ibid, emphasis added). In that sense the other is as close to the truly loving self as it is possible to be without attempting to change him or her in any way; the egological move would be to succumb to the temptation of being demanding, succomb to the temptation to try to change the other.

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[18] Cf. Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking" in Poetry, Language, Thought, tr. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), pp. 146-47.

Using a Heideggerian interpretation, we can say that Kierkegaard understands the law's demand (the only point where demand apparently is appropriate) that "You shall love the neighbor as the self" to mean to let the other be.[19] Inasmuch as you choose to remain indifferent to the differences in the other, the other can be whatever he wants to be. To be indifferent to his alterity is an act of letting-be.

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[19] Ibid, p. 151: "Dwelling presences the fourfold by bringing the presencing of the fourfold into things. But things themselves secure the fourfold only when they themselves as things are let be in their presencing. How is this done? In this way, that mortals nurse and nurture the things that grow, and specially construct things that do not grow." Also Discourse on Thinking, tr. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966), pp. 55-6 (Gelassenheit, pp. 24-5): "Releasement [or letting-be, Gelassenheit] toward things and openness to the mystery [that which shows itself and at the same time withdraws] belong together. They grant us the possibility of dwelling in the world in a totally different way. . . . What great danger then might move upon us? Then there might go hand in hand with the greatest ingenuity in calculative planning and inventing indifference toward meditative thinking, total thoughtlessness. And then? Then man would have denied and

In the direct communication of Works of Love Kierkegaard is less concerned with the phenomenology of the ethical relationship and more concerned with its practical possibility. On the other hand, the political in this concept of other becomes dominant when Kierkegaard adds: "To be sure the neighbor is in itself a multitude, for the neighbor means all people (alle Mennesker)" (SV 12,27; WL, 37). Thus he embodies the political in the ethical in a way reminiscent of this unity in Plato and Aristotle. As the single self is obliged to the neighbor, in the same way he is obliged to all of humankind. As is suggested, Christianity relates itself, not to cognition, but to action thereby "imprisoning" (fange) a questioner to the ethical, just as Socrates did to knowledge (SV 12,97; WL, 103). One might argue that Kierkegaard posits a universal responsibility for the state of the world on each single self. He thereby enlarges upon the duties of the individual of liberal theory whose aim was merely to aggrandize his own lot in accordance with political rights to

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thrown away his own special nature -- that he is a meditative being. Therefore, the issue is the saving of man's essential nature. Therefore, the issue is keeping meditative thinking alive. Yet releasement toward things and openness to the mystery never happen of themselves. They do not befall us accidentally. Both flourish only through persistent, courageous thinking."

which no apparent obligation is attached.[20]

Kierkegaard's philosophy of political consciousness not only posits a responsibility for the neighbor, but it also posits the criterion for this relationship, which is especially captured in his comparison of the self to the other. The relationship is precisely grounded in the "likeness" of the two entities which rules out any apparent differences in terms of talent, social position or economic advantage or disadvantage. In other words, the neighbor is simply any person that appears before you, and importantly the neighbor is "the absolutely true expression for human equality" (SV 18,156; POV, 118).[21] Hence justice becomes the qualifier for the relationship of the self to the other, the neighbor, meaning justice is the aim of love. In this sense not only love, but justice as well, form the foundation of Kierkegaard's "idea of community," the task to which every individual consciousness is called.

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[20] John Locke, Second Treatise of Government, ch. V, #49. Locke is remarkably scarce in his language in terms of attaching obligations to the rights of possession "which may be hoarded up without injury to any one." (Emphasis added).

[21] Although very different from Kierkegaard, it is difficult not to be reminded of Emmanuel Levinas' "face to face" encounter: "My relationship with the other as neighbor gives meaning to my relations with all the others. All human relations as human proceed from disinterestedness. The one for the other of proximity is not a deforming abstraction. In it justice is shown from the first." Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981), p. 159. See also his Totality and Infinity, trans. Alphonso Lingis, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), pp. 212-14.

The relationship of love and justice (Retfærdighed) as Kierkegaard understands it, finally compels us to accept that his philosophy is anything but removed from the world of action. Indeed this relationship underscores how the single self is related to the state, and why the single self must come before the state, (as Kierkegaard admires in Plato). It also explains why all of his energies are focused on the single self -- the elementary unit of the state -- rather than on the structures of the state.

V:5

Ideally, the relationship between the single self and the state is grounded externally in justice and internally in love. Under the authority of justice, during peaceful times, proprietary interests would be safeguarded, and the state would have no rights of intervention (SV 12,255; WL, 248). That is to say, the difference between what is mine and yours is unambiguous. Everyone has what is his or hers and if someone attempts to defraud (fravende) another what is his, justice will intervene.

The problem with this idyllic picture is that sometimes calamitous events occur such as "revolution, war, earthquake," and everything becomes confused (Ibid). Then justice may vainly attempt to secure to each what belongs to the single self, may vainly attempt to "emphasize the difference between what is mine and yours" (Ibid). But in the confusion justice is unable to maintain its balance. Its blindfold may momentarily have slipped off, and as Kierkegaard argues, justice despairs. The result is social chaos. Political authority has lost control and is unable to live up to its foremost responsibility: "regulating and preserving property," to use the words of Locke's description of the obligations of the minimalist state.[22]

The problem with justice is in Kierkegaard's opinion its inability to maintain stability. The reason for this is its emphasis on proprietary rights. More fundamentally, the problem with justice is its inherent concern with external differences, the difference between what is mine and yours. With emphasis on difference, any form of authority, whether it is considered just or not, will be forced to choose sides, and hence its legitimacy is compromised. Its legitimacy is compromised, most fundamentally, because its focus is on externality, and therefore it is relatively easy to unbalance.

Love (Kjerlighed), in contrast, although it within itself represents change in its transformed expression as love of other, nevertheless embodies a posture that dissolves/elevates or suspends (ophæver) the distinction between mine and yours, and the more so the deeper the love.

> Its perfection depends essentially on that it does not reveal the original and continual difference between mine and yours that is fundamentally hidden;

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[22] Second Treatise of Government, Ch. I, #3.

> consequently it depends essentially on the degree of the revolution (Omvæltning); the deeper the revolution is, the more perfect is the love (SV 12,256; W:, 249).

So rather than succumbing to distinctions, love decisively and undauntedly expresses the "idea of community" even in the face of calamities. As such love is more reliable with regard to maintaining social stability where justice, in Kierkegaard's opinion necessarily fails. In this sense love is essentially political and necessary expressing the fundamentally political nature of the single self.

V:6

The love of neighbor, as we have shown, represents much more than a utopian and otherworldly conception of the relationship between the single self and the world. But there are other reasons for why Kierkegaard would appeal to the concept of neighbor and thereby bring to fruition his "idea of community."

On the one hand, Kierkegaard is well aware that people are naturally disinclined to care for anyone beyond their immediate circle of family and friends. To care for strangers and to devote oneself to their needs is in worldly terms considered strange, something reserved for 'saintly' people. The point is, no one would naturally love his neighbor if the neighbor, as Kierkegaard insists, is merely the next person

(Næsten) you see.[23] On the other hand, Kierkegaard is fighting the illusion promoted by the "wellmeaning . . . but . . . false prophets of secularism" (SV 12,74-5; WL, 81-2) who by mechanical means claim to bring about "likeness in the world among human beings, to apportion the conditions of temporal existence equally, if possible, to all human beings" (SV 12,75; WL, 82). The earthly distinctions that modern man clings to as much as the citizens of Plato's Republic are unchangeable, Kierkegaard insists, and no ideology is going to improve on that condition.

> From the distance of superior condescension the distinguished person understands equality between human beings; from the distance of concealed superiority the scholar and the gentleman understand

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[23] Plato had the same problem and therefore we get the often misinterpreted and ill labeled "noble lie." The Phoenecian Tale has a twofold purpose. It wants to explain the naturalness of the division of labor in spite of which the people of the city in speech are all brothers. That is to say, Plato engages in the tale in order to get across the reality of an uncomfortable truth that will stand up against the "dream images" which express the natural and conventional differences (Republic 414d). Or to put it more bluntly, people were comfortable with the worldly divisions, but would abhor the call by Socrates, the physician, to brotherly love among all the citizens unless it was couched in an "unbelievable big lie." See Eric Voegelin, Plato (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), p. 105. For a notorious contrasting interpretation see Karl Popper, The Open Society and Its Enemies, vol. I (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962, 1966), pp. 138-141. Note that Popper does not mention Plato's insistence on the brotherhood of all men although it appears twice in the tale (Republic, 414e, 415a). Kierkegaard says much the same as Plato when he comments: "It is veritably true, then, (what is already evident in what has been developed, where it was shown that the neighbor is the pure qualification of mind), the neighbor one sees only with closed eyes or by looking away from the distinctions. The sensual eye always sees the distinctions and looks to the distinctions. (SV 12,71-2; WL, 79).

> equality between human beings; from within the concession of a little advantage the one whose distinction is to be as most people are understands equality between human beings -- at a distance the neighbor is recognized by all, but only God knows how many recognize him in actuality, that is, up close (SV 12,82; WL, 89).

Thus he charges the modern secular movements with attempting to fool the people into believing that the natural condition can somehow be altered by technical means. In other words, there is an appeal to ideology to promote brotherhood based on the results of scientific progress. The implication is that what was not possible before, resulting in humankind being plagued by caste and class systems, can now be remedied thanks to modern technology. But brotherly love, Kierkegaard warns, cannot be grounded in external illusions. It must have its foundation in the truth promoted by Christianity that spiritually human beings are all equal and are therefore able to love one another in spite of the worldly differences. By being Christian the single self is not "exempted from the difference, but by being victorious over the temptation of distinction" (SV 12,73; WL, 81), he accomplishes the law's demand. Thus Christianity wills that every single self carry its difference loosely in order to allow its likeness to shine through, thereby revealing the "essentially other, that which for everyone is common" (SV 12,90; WL, 96). In that sense, then, Christianity again represents a paradigmatic change in

Kierkegaard's view.[24] From this it follows that Kierkegaard's concept of neighbor in its proper application is not only what is going to promote equality and the "idea of community" and consequently the single self's fulfillment. Importantly, for Kierkegaard, it will also restore Christianity to its proper role as the standard (Maalestok) for human conduct in the world. Essential to this standard is the concept of love as upbuilding.

V:7

What appears to be unique about Kierkegaard's concept of love is its upbuilding (opbyggende) quality. By this Kierkegaard means that through love

> the loving one [den Kjerlige] presupposes that love is in the other person's heart, and by this very presupposition he builds up love in him -- from the ground up, provided, of course, that he lovingly presupposes it in the ground (SV 12,210; WL, 206).

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[24] Kierkegaard is either incredibly insensitive or equally incredibly oblivious to the reality of the European and American history of slavery, not to mention the history of the world. Thus he claims even the non-Christian is grateful to Christianity for having "saved humankind from the evil" which in pagan times had expressed itself in such "inhuman" institutions as slavery and the caste system (SV 12,72,77; WL, 80, 84). He seems to forget that neither disappeared after the emergence of Christianity. Of course, in a theoretical sense he is correct inasmuch as Christianity did "imprint the kinship between human beings because the kinship is secured by each individual's equal kinship and relation to God in Christ" (SV 12,72; WL, 80). But inasmuch as Kierkegaard himself refers to historical conditions, he has opened himself up to such criticism.

Kierkegaard explains that this upbuilding quality is like nature's secret. Nature edifies inasmuch as its magnificence compels one to reflect on its hidden but very present order (SV 12,211; WL, 207). In the same sense love has an ordered presence as its ground, be it ever so hidden. Kierkegaard reflects on this ordered presence, conceding the incomplete presence of eternal love in any one human being (Ibid). Nevertheless, love transformed, in Kierkegaard's unique reading, possesses a nurturing quality that establishes the other's worth thereby constituting the ground of community. That is to say, love builds up the other in order to allow the possibility of fulfillment in the other. As such, to love would mean to be essentially responsible for the other. That is the task.

The capacity to love in this way is present in every human being inasmuch as it is not an

> exclusive superiority based on individual talents, such as knowledge and poetic talent and beauty, and the like . . . Quite on the contrary, every human being by his life, his conduct, by his behavior in the everyday, by his association with those equal, by his word, his expression ought to and could build up and would do it if love rightly were in him (SV 12,206-07; WL, 202).

Kierkegaard is quite sure that the fulfilled life is not the life measured by a given ordinary standard which essentially would abolish the eternal dimension. Such a life, entirely externally directed would only fulfill itself in institutional, associational, or organizational entities, all of which express as their prime feature sheer number and thus make self-deepening impossible and unnecessary. In other words, the love expressed in such political and social relationships, measured only in relative terms, would not have the upbuilding quality required, would demonstrate neither the possibility nor the necessity of "the effort as well as the self-deepening that develop the God-relationship in a human being in the most difficult collision of infinite misunderstanding." (SV 12,223; WL, 217). That kind of life is too easy, Kierkegaard insists, reminding us that genuine love implies sacrifice and hence suffering.[25] It is not stimulated merely by reward as earthly love tends to be and which therefore is essentially self-love. Here the reader must be careful not to misread Kierkegaard.

As Roy Martinez has explained, the problem lies not with the world as such or even the institutions. They are depicted unfavorably only because human beings tend to revert to them in times of stress. Then they will attempt to unburden themselves of personal responsibility and will refuse to act according to their own conscience. The "outside" world they turn to is what Kierkegaard refers to as externality, and inasmuch as it is the natural thing to seek help outside oneself in rough times, this externality stands as differentiated from what Kierkegaard refers to as inwardness (Inderlighed). Inwardness is that which emphasizes the conscious life of the authentic single self. Conscience is that which links the single self directly to the eternal. Insofar as the eternal's concern is with the truly good, the single self must dialectically respond to this command and relegate "pleasure, pain, and desire to peripheral roles in his existence."[26] Martinez continues,

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[25] "One must actually have suffered a great deal in the world and have been made very unhappy before there can be any question of beginning to love the neighbor. The "neighbor" only comes into existence [blive til] in self-denial's dying away from earthly happiness and joy and good times. Therefore the spontaneous person [den Umiddelbare] cannot really be censured for not loving the neighbor, because the spontaneous person is too happy for "the neighbor" to exist [være til] for him. Anyone who clings to earthly life does not love his neighbor --that is to say, for him the neighbor does not exist." PAP VIII 1 A 269 (JP 4603). It would be interesting to pursue this concept of suffering as an inherent and perhaps necessary part of human existence, a concept modernity, and especially liberal theory, has distanced itself from believing all human existence must somehow hover in infinite happiness.

> What is involved in inward deepening is a growing capacity on the part of the single self not only to distinguish between his organic dependence and his spiritual independence, but the sustained effort to live out this recognition.[27]

Kierkegaard's point is that because of our natural tendencies to resort to externality, to seek pleasure, the claims of the eternal are expressed in terms of commands, such as the command to love the neighbor. Such commands force the single self to search deep within the self for the appropriate response and thus recognize "that the dynamism of his essence issues from, and points towards, a transcendent source and goal."[28] It bears repeating, then, that Kierkegaard is not positing a requirement to abandon the world or withdraw from it. That, of course, would negate the thesis of this project. The point is precisely to commit to the concreteness of a daily life governed by the self's transcendent dialectic.

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[26] Roy Martinez, "Kierkegaard's Ideal of Inward Deepening" in Philosophy Today, 32 (Summer 1988), p. 112.

[27] Ibid. Cf. SV 12,344; WL, 332.

From this perspective, to presuppose love in the other is to place a duty on oneself. As such this constitutes a work of love. Kierkegaard warns, however, that the other is not loved in an upbuilding sense in order to transform the other or to force love to the surface in the other. The tendency to dominate must be avoided -- we must learn the act of letting-be -- just as the tendency to tear down or to destroy, a tendency which is commonly associated with building up, must likewise be avoided. As Kierkegaard notes in his journal, such love presupposes that even if a wrong has been committed, there has been no break, for only then is love upbuilding.[29] "When the loving one builds up, then it is the direct opposite of tearing down, because the loving one does something to himself: he presupposes that love is present in the other person -- which certainly is the very opposite of doing something to the other person" (SV 12,212-13; WL, 208). Where upbuilding usually implies a lack of something -- Kierkegaard uses the examples of the teacher who presupposes the ignorance of the student or the disciplinarian who presupposes the corruption of the other person -- but eternal love has no other choice but to presuppose love as the ground in the other. In this way the Good is elicited as love is encouraged, as love is nurtured, in the other.

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[28] _Ibid_, p. 113.

[29] PAP VIII 2 B 50:6.

Unlike the teacher and the disciplinarian, however, both of whom can show results, "the love that builds up has nothing to show inasmuch as its work is merely to presuppose" (SV 12,211; WL, 206). To presuppose love as the ground in the other, yet have no visible results to show for one's commitment is to practice humility and hence to build character. "For it is more difficult to master one's mind than to capture a city, and more difficult to build up as love does than to execute the most astonishing undertaking" (SV 12,211; WL, 207). Therefore we get the analogy to nature's secret work which never stops, yet is never seen, but precisely in its invisibility lies its upbuilding quality.[30] It forces the single self to reflect on the wonders of nature and the creative force behind it.[31] In the same way, by presupposing love in the other, the single self communicates invisibly the foundation of the relationship which is the Good, a Good that may be concealed,[32] but which nevertheless is expressed in loving the other as an equal. By insisting that love is presupposed as the ground in the other, the other is seen not for his apparent distinctions, for true love refrains from all comparison, but for his likeness (Ligelighed). The aim of the relationship is unity, not differance, for community can only exist where unity makes a presence.

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[30] Kierkegaard reminds us of the gentleness with which nature asserts itself on all people indiscriminately: "Imagine that nature were as we human beings are, severe, domineering, cold, partisan, petty, capricious -- and imagine, yes, then imagine what would become of the beauty of the field [Markens Dejlighed]" (SV 12,259; WL, 252).

[31] These paragraphs in Kierkegaard's Works of Love lend themselves to thinking about the question why it is we are destroying the very environment on which we depend. Is it possibly because we have forgotten how to wonder about that

Kierkegaard asks the reader to imagine the kind of person that would be preferred if indeed another person were to build one up. Although the reader may at first opt for such characteristics as insight and knowledge, talent and experience, decisive would be that we all would want such a person to be reliable and loving. "Knowledge puffs up. And yet knowledge and the communication of knowledge can also be upbuilding, but if it is, it is because love is present" (SV 12,208; WL, 204).[33] What kind of love is this, Kierkegaard asks? "Love is to presuppose love; to love is to presuppose love in others, to be loving is to presuppose that others are

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which we cannot see?

[32] As Hannah Arendt has commented, the Good never sees the light of day, for then it becomes tarnished and/or perverted. On Revolution (New York: Penguin Books, 1963 and 1965), p. 98. Cf. Glaucon's argument in Plato's Republic 361b-c.

[33] Cf. Paul, First Corinthians 8:1: "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up."

loving" (SV 12,216; WL, 211). To presuppose love as the ground in the other is thus constructive, yet concealed.

Self-determination is uppermost on Kierkegaard's mind. Only by choosing the qualitative life can the single self be genuinely free in Kierkegaard's radical conception of freedom. Hence any external support or build up must remain concealed because the recipient must not be made to feel that he or she is in debt, must not lose the self-defining character of his or her being. Therefore the loving one must, like Socrates, act as a spiritual midwife. He must maintain a certain distance from the recipient inasmuch as "the person who does not freely appropriate does not subjectively appropriate." The recipient must grasp the truth on his own.[34] The element of separation within the unity is evident here. The other should know only that standing on one's own is one's own achievement. In Kierkegaard's view that would be the greatest benefaction one person could give to another. (SV 12,264-68; WL, 257-60).

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[34] Evans, Op. Cit. p. 103. Evans goes on to remind the reader of the difference between the Socratic and the Christian maieutic as presented in the concept of "neighbor-love": "When Socrates has helped the other, he can take a certain ironic satisfaction in observing the other stand alone -- with his help. This satisfaction is bound up with Socrates' own independence. The Christian maieuticist, on the other hand, is bound to the one helped in a way that Socrates was not. For the Christian both the one who is helped as well as he himself stand alone -- with God's help. The helper and the one helped are independent of each other but totally dependent upon God. In thus sharing a total dependence on God's love they are bound together in a way. This binding does not compromise their independence of each other. The divine love they share is infinite and eternal; it does not make distinctions or draw boundaries around its love. It is this love that the Christian grasps as the truth, and it is this the Christian wants to communicate to others" (p. 110).

By implicating Socrates, Kierkegaard wants to remind the reader that this passion of love is, on the one hand, latent within the single self and merely needs to be recalled. This, however, relegates the teaching of Socrates to merely historical interest inasmuch as the truth he awakens in his student is already within the student and therefore can be recalled by the student herself. (SV 6,17; PF, 12). On the other hand, the transformation of the innate passion to a love of the neighbor necessitates a different kind of teaching that not only brings the truth of what love means, but provides the condition for its acceptance and for understanding it.

By receiving the condition and the truth the single self becomes a new person; there is a qualitative difference, a new consciousness. Such a transformation, Kierkegaard claims, can only be accomplished by transcendent manipulation, by "the god." (SV 6,19, 22-3; PF, 14,18-9). But even here the Socratic principle applies inasmuch as the single self's consciousness is awakened to the fact of his being untruth, that is to say, untruth is discovered through self-examination. "I can discover my own untruth only by myself, because only when I discover it is it discovered" (SV 6,19; PF, 14). But "discovery" implies untruth was present all the time (Kierkegaard's conception of original sin) thereby concealing the need for truth by exclusion. That truth, according to Kierkegaard, can only come from outside the single self.

Therefore this teacher, in contrast to the midwifery of Socrates, must bring both the truth as well as the condition, that is, grace, for its appropriation. (Ibid).

With truth and as truth the single self is able to presuppose love in the other. To presuppose love in the other involves a decisive act of self-consciousness which expresses the single self's comportment towards other human beings.

V:8

Kierkegaard distinguishes between the powers of faith and those of knowledge. Knowledge by itself, he says, is incapable of performing the same feat. That is, speculative knowledge can only operate in the category of possibilities. Its inherent impersonal indifference prevents it from making choices, and thus it sets itself outside "the actuality of existence in possibility" (SV 12, 223; WL, 218). Knowledge is incapable of producing commitment, indeed its perfection is precisely to remain uncommitted.

Why is knowledge bound to this stand? Kierkegaard suggests this is because speculative knowledge keeps company with skepticism (Mistroiskhed) which is the exact opposite of love inasmuch as it believes nothing. For it truth and falseness have the same value, honesty and dishonesty carry the same weight. Thus while knowledge remains non-committal and hence is not to blame especially since it provides a valuable cognitive service, acts of judgment, decision, and choice must come either with skepticism which believes nothing or with love which believes all things.

> Precisely because existence (Tilværelsen) has to test "you," test "your" love, or whether there is love in you, precisely for this reason and with the help of the understanding existence confronts you with the truth and the deception in the equilibrium of the opposite possibilities so that as "you" now judge, that is, as you now in judging choose, what dwells in you must become disclosed" (SV 12,220; WL, 215).

Before the decision, love and skepticism partake equally of knowledge (SV 12,223; WL, 218). But existence demands a conclusion, life demands a decision, and then they become opposites. Skepticism chooses not to choose in its distrust of all judgment. As such it can never function as a mediator of human relationships, for ultimately its message is nihilistic. If it is nihilistic, it can never be upbuilding, and that was the criterion for such a mediator.

In contrast, love, inasmuch as it believes all things, can presuppose love in the other and thus in its upbuilding capacity it has laid the foundation for individual character and the disposition toward human community. "When knowledge in a person has placed the opposite possibilities in equilibrium and he is obliged or wants to judge, then who he is, whether he is mistrustful or loving, becomes apparent in what he believes about it" (SV 12, 223; WL, 218).

To love in this upbuilding way is to be genuinely human (Menneskelig). It is to express one's true humanity (Menneskelighed). Kierkegaard has thereby demonstrated the goodness of his scheme, for it has indeed concluded one's nature as essentially love. It is the fullest demonstration of what Kierkegaard defines as passionate inwardness and consequently it is a demonstration of character, of what Robert Musil would call the qualitative life. Moreover, inasmuch as Christianity demands self-renunciation, yet we are born with the need to love, it follows that love must be directed away from the self and toward someone external to the self, namely toward another human being who as neighbor, as "the person you see," universalizes the condition that expresses the idea. That is to say, when spontaneous love is confronted with a demand and thereby commanded to a duty, its source is now the demand and not the object. It is for this reason that love cannot now stop. The beloved can fail or disappoint, but the loving one (den Kjerlige) will nevertheless love inasmuch as he shall love (SV 12,56-7; WL, 65). As Johannes Sløk expresses Kierkegaard's induction,

> Because man in an ontological sense is love, he is already at the outset on an errand of love. The command 'You shall love your neighbor' -- and it is this command that from a purely dispositional perspective dominates Works of Love -- is consequently a command that at the outset is in agreement with that which man is by nature.[35]

Here it may be useful to recall that immediate or spontaneous love may have existence, but can claim no constancy. If it does exist, it is purely accidental because it can change at any time. Spontaneous love only has the eternal within it in the imagination of the poets, but it is not consciously grounded in the eternal and hence it cannot become contemporaneous with itself. That is to say, it is not possible while it exists to say that it exists, because it can change; only afterwards, when it is all in the past, only then can one perhaps say about it that it existed.[36]

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[35] Kierkegaard: humanismens tænker, pp. 138-39.

> Just as self-love in the strictest sense has been characterized as self-deification, so erotic love and friendship (as the poet understands it, and with his understanding this love stands and falls) is idolatry. For in the last instance, love of God is the decisive; from it derives the love of neighbor" (SV 12,61-2; WL, 69-70).

With erotic love and friendship preference becomes "the middle term," but with love transformed, a transcendental dimension becomes "the third person" in this equation, becomes the possibility (Muligheden) for "seeing" the neighbor as oneself, and in the neighbor every human being as oneself. In these words we thus find the ground both of the ethical and the political, for the concept of neighbor is a representation of all humankind. It is not appearances, then, that will define the relationship. The neighbor's hostility or receptivity is not the ground of this relation of love, but rather oneself. "To love the neighbor is therefore the eternal equality in loving" (SV 12,62; WL, 70), it is an expression of the essential quality of human relationships and hence a manifestation of genuine human equality (Menneske-Lighed) (SV 12,64; WL, 72). As Kierkegaard tersely states in a journal note: "Hvad er Menneskelighed? Det er Menneske-Lighed. Uligheden er det Umenneskelige." (What is humanity? It is human equality. Inequality is the inhuman").[37]

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[36] Also Ibid, pp. 205-06.

V:9

In his analysis both of the human condition and Christian teaching Kierkegaard has found that the only source of true equality is within the single self, in its inwardness with its transcendent appeal. As such equality represents a foundational consciousness of Kierkegaard's "idea of community" with its constitutive elements as laid out above. The "idea of community" requires that the single self not cling too tightly to the temporal differences, but instead lets the eternal equality shine through. This is to allow the meaningfulness of its commonality with its fellow human beings to emerge and make it want to do what it "shall" do: love the neighbor as the self (SV 12,92; WL, 98). Ultimately the "idea of community" represents freedom in the truest sense. By achieving a disposition or comportment toward the world in terms of genuine equality is, on the one hand, to achieve freedom from all physical and social determinations (Bestemmelser), and, on the other hand, to achieve freedom to be equal in a relationship of love (Kjerlighed) with all of humanity.

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[37] PAP VIII 1 A 268.

The dialectic of Kierkegaard's single self (den Enkelte) is thus embodied in the thinking that the "idea of community" is something that must emerge from within before it can truly express itself in the world. The difficulty lies in that first step which signifies the conception of freedom as understood by Kierkegaard.

Freedom is not a disposition like temperament, nor is it a property handed down. Freedom only exists in the transition from possibility to actuality, what Anti-Climacus phrases in the language of becoming: "the self [which] has the task of becoming itself in freedom" (SV 15,92; SUD, 35).[38] Consequently the synthesis expresses both the single self's independence as well as the eternal's demand on it. The single self is free, yet obligated -- not to fulfill divine providence, as it were -- but to fulfill the requirements of its own constitutives which compose the authentic self.

The constituent requirements of the authentic single self call for the existential appropriation of the "idea of community." As Johannes Climacus promises in the Postscript, the ethical constitutes "even in solitude the reconciling fellowship with every human being" (SV 9,126; CUP, 136). This accomplishment, then, constitutes the concretization of the single self, constitutes what both Climacus and Vigilius refer to as actuality. Inasmuch as the single self is then prepared to express its human equality (Menneske-Lighed), it is prepared to express its humanity (Menneskelighed). From this it would follow that the act of citizenship -- how the single self is disposed toward the "idea of community" -- presupposes a relationship to the transcendental which makes it possible and, indeed, is not indifferent to it.[39]

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[38] Cf. Sløk, Kierkegaard: humanismens tænker, p 158.

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[39] PAP VII 1 A 20 (JP 4110). Kierkegaard does not usually entitle his journal notes, but in this case he made an exception: "The Dialectic of Community or Society Is As Follows: . . . The individual is primarily related to God and then to the community, but this primary relation is the highest, yet he does not neglect the latter." Robert Dale Bonser in "The Role of Socrates in the Thought of Søren Kierkegaard" Ph.D. Dissertation (University of California, Santa Barbara, 1985), pp. 118-19, argues good citizenship is merely a by-product of the Christian concern for salvation inasmuch as Kierkegaard in agreement with Socrates does not stand indifferent to things secular, but consider it a matter of priorities. Proper concern with the highest things first would lead to the proper ordering of the other aspects of life. But Works of Love, a book Bonser has omitted from consideration, would seem to suggest not only a relationship of necessity in each act as has been shown above, but apparently also a necessary relationship between the two acts. Thus Kierkegaard explains: "The matter is quite simple. The human being shall begin by loving the invisible, God, for hereby he himself shall learn what it is to love. But the fact that he then really loves the invisible shall be indicated precisely by this that he loves the brother he sees" (SV 12,156; WL, 158), meaning that he does not love what is apparent before him, but rather, he loves what is concealed in the other, the other's equality (Lighed) with himself. Of course, this could be read as if to love the other is only for the purpose of demonstrating one's love of God. But if such an interpretation were to capture Kierkegaard's intent, not only would it be a negation of what he has so carefully constructed in Works of Love, but his critique of the present age and the positing of a "corrective," an undeniable event as we have tried to show, would be nonsensical.

In contrast, by granting freedom and equality, Kierkegaard charges what "the world honors and loves under the name of love" is engendered (SV 12,119; WL, 123). Then the world becomes dominated by collective and united self-love which demands the sacrifice of any transcendental relation for the sake of secular solidarity and hence essentially for the sake of appearance.[40] The happiness that follows from such love is dependent upon good fortune and is always subject to change (SV 12,55,36; WL, 64,46), echoing Aristotle's differentiation of friendship based on utility or pleasure from friendship grounded in a common love of a greater good.[41] That the world itself is confused as it, on the one hand, regards self-love as the soundest "practical wisdom," yet at the same time also regards a more noble love as praiseworthy (SV 12,118,256; WL, 123,249), is an irony Kierkegaard most profitably exposes. More seriously, however, where Liberalism grounds freedom and equality in enlightened self-interest,[42] it follows that the single self needs only prudently to act on his or her self-understanding of these interests to achieve fulfillment. In this case an appropriation of the political dimension of human existence is diminished insofar as individual freedom is expressed in proprietary acts that owe nothing to society.[43] In contrast, Kierkegaard argues freedom and equality are grounded in acts of self-determination expressed as obligation to a law. Inasmuch as these acts originate in love, which is an inherent attribute of human nature that essentially seeks satisfaction in community (SV 12,150-55; WL 153-58), it follows that political consciousness becomes a necessity for the completion and fulfillment of human experience. Thus Kierkegaard's "corrective" posits a love as duty which does not deny the tension within individual experience, but which does assist in overcoming some of these contingencies and misconceptions of modern political life that he claims has confused modern individual experience. From this perspective it can be concluded that Kierkegaard's conception of community as an external social arrangement presupposes an internal transformation of human nature, presupposes character.

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[40] Kierkegaard distinguishes between "self-love" by which "every man has in himself the most dangerous traitor of all," and love of self "in the right way," which he says "corresponds perfectly" to loving one's neighbor (SV 12,28; WL, 39).

[41] Nicomachean Ethics, bk. VIII, 1156a6-1158b10.

[42] L.T. Hobhouse, Liberalism (London: Oxford University Press, 1964) pp. 33-4, 66, 69.

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[43]. As T.H. Green expressed it in his essay on "Political Obligation" in The Political Theory of T.H. Green, ed. John R. Rodman (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1964), p. 123: "That active interest in the service of the state, which makes patriotism in the better sense can hardly arise while the individual's relation to the state is that of a passive recipient of protection in the exercise of his rights of person and property." Also James L. Wiser, Political Theory: A Thematic Inquiry (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1986), p. 101: "By positing the existence of certain natural rights, liberal politics secures a grounding for the worth and dignity of the individual, which is believed to exist independently of any specific social custom;" and Leo Strauss, Natural Right and History (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1950, 1953), pp. 245-46.

To come to understand oneself and hence to undergo the necessary transformation means to reveal one's true nature as a social being. The achievement of such self-consciousness is the achievement of genuine actuality. Kierkegaard complains that all too often human beings "find escapes in order to avoid -- this happiness," and instead they "manufacture deceptions -- in order to deceive themselves or to make themselves unhappy" (SV 12,152; WL, 155). What he means is that in such single selves love in its true sense is utterly lacking inasmuch as they find no one worthy of their love. For them there is no actuality, no community, because they are unwilling to love in the unconditional way required by the law's demand. Such people, unwilling to commit to an authority chosen in freedom, Kierkegaard points out, would rather attempt to transform human society, transform the person seen, but that is utopian and hence superfluous.

Kierkegaard's point is precisely that it is a duty to love the person one sees, thereby transcending objectionable differences (SV 12,156-57; WL, 159). It might be argued that this is not an act of freedom. But Rousseau argued that freedom is precisely to place oneself under a necessity which is self-imposed.[44] To place oneself under the demand of the law, is to freely choose the act of self-deepening, to embrace the highest level of existence human capacity can aspire to. This requires that the single self maintains a constant dialectic vigilance, that has a twofold dimension.

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[44] "Removing all morality from his actions is tantamount to taking away all liberty from his will." "On the Social Contract," in The Basic Political Writings, bk. I, ch. 4, pp. 144-45; also ch. 6, p. 148.

In order to understand one's true nature and hence to understand love as a duty, it is necessary to actively engage in the transcendental relationship. However, satisfying one's social nature requires the act of community, meaning there has to be a continuous recognition of 'the other' as a distinct human being, namely the person one sees. Kierkegaard thus embraces the plurality of givens characteristic of modern society inasmuch as it poses no hindrance to the "idea of community."[45] Simultaneously the other must be recognized as a neighbor, and hence as an equal whom one must love. The single self must acknowledge the tension of its experience and balance the desire for transcendent experience with its immanent obligations.

Kierkegaard anticipates character in the single self to uplift political and/or social life as he or she acts out the "idea of community." That is to say, if human beings did not act in different ways, unlike animals, and we therefore could be judged in terms of a universal criterion, the transcendental relation (inwardness) would fall away and human existence would express itself entirely in externality, that is, exclusively in political or social terms. Then the required deepening of the self would be neither possible nor necessary. From that perspective the political or social would not have the capacity for upbuilding the self nor for judging another person.

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[45] PAP 1 A 139 (JP 4062).

Kierkegaard's point is that knowledge places contrasting possibilities in equilibrium -- what the single self believes in becomes apparent, its character is revealed: whether it is skeptical or loving. In other words, the question is whether the judgment of the single self is grounded in the acknowledgement of love, or whether it is grounded in knowledge which can only judge in general terms and is not able to distinguish human differences in terms of love. It is a decision between good and evil, he says, between loving and skepticism or nihilism (SV 12,226; WL, 220).

It is this form of self-control that in Kierkegaard's opinion will engender a more genuine and therefore longer lasting social order. The competition for goods will be superseded by the higher criterion of reciprocal response to the law's demand (SV 12,212,216; WL, 207,211). From that perspective it becomes clear that Kierkegaard's "corrective" merely re-constructs what self-interest has torn down in liberal theory, the rational argument to love the neighbor as oneself, which Locke, quoting the "judicious Hooker" considered a "natural duty."[46] In that upbuilding sense, therefore, love constitutes a philosophy of political consciousness. That is to say, freedom and equality become acts of self-determination in Kierkegaard's thought underscoring his acknowledgement that, in addition to the immanent world of particularized concerns, "there is also another reality that enters into each moment" of human experience necessitating the self-defining act.[47] Søren Kierkegaard's "corrective" thus transcends the problem in liberal theory which perceives of political society as a mere convenience,[48] and instead posits the political as a necessary requirement for human fulfillment.

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[46] Locke, Second Treatise of Government, Ch. 2, #5.

[47] John B. Cobb, Jr., "God and the scientific worldview" in David Tracy and John B Cobb, Jr., Talking About God (New York: The Seabury Press, 1983), p. 53.

[48] Locke, Second Treatise of Government, ch. 7 #90,91; ch. 8, #95.

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