A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RELATION OF FAITH TO REASON IN KIERKEGAARD WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON SPHERES OF EXISTENCE AND APPREHENSION OF TRUTH

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FAITH AND REASON IN KIERKEGAARD

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INTRODUCTION

I

The rediscovery of the works of Soren Kierkegaard, by twentieth century philosophers and theologians, has proved to be one of the most disturbing features of the modern intellectual climate. Kierkegaard's work is difficult because it is expressed in a peculiar elusive style that is literary as well as philosophic. It is a maze full of discontinuities, long digressions, and parables. As a result, the casual reader is prone to lose sight of a dominant theme that unites the outward diversity into a coherent whole. The blazing vitality of spirit that pervades Kierkegaard's many-levelled mind, compels the discerning student to view Kierkegaard's writings as a "whole" rather than as a series of fragmentary perspectives. Furthermore, one must bear in mind that Kierkegaard battled against Hegelianism, and in so doing, acquired some of Hegel's terminology as well. Kierkegaard does not lend himself to a fully systematic approach, an approach which many students of philosophy and theology are wont to pursue. Should this approach be followed, the reader is apt to overlook the organic unity of the variety of themes of human life that Kierkegaard's works contain.

On the other hand, the variety and richness of Kierkegaard's thought account for its profound impact on the diverse components of human thought. Psychoanalysts,[1] literary men,[2] philosophers[3] and theologians,[4] have found Kierkegaard's writing to be a rich hunting ground for material in support of their particular views. He has been studied and analysed by both enemies and friends. Some have placed him in the Catholic tradition, others have found him a thorough going Lutheran, and still others have singled him out as a forerunner of modern existential philosophy. Also some interpreters disparagingly refer to him as a psychologically disturbed romantic who advocated logical paradoxes and radical irrationalism.[5]

Whatever the advantages or disadvantages of other views, the present study maintains that Kierkegaard is best approached and judged from within, on his own grounds, without fitting him to a preconceived dogma or a specific

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[1] Especially representatives of the rather recent school of Existential psychoanalysis: Cf., Hendrik M. Ruitenbeek (ed.), Psychoanalysis and Existential Philosophy (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1962).

[2] Such as Rilke, Kafka, W.H. Auden, Camus and Sartre.

[3] For instance, Jaspers and Heidegger.

[4] Such as Tillich, Unamuno and Barth.

[5] Instances of the above will show later on in the essay.

point of view. The spirit is that of free thought and examination, regardless of any denominational category that emerges from this study.

Also in view of the variety of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous[1] works, his multifarious ideas, his rejection of 'system', this essay presupposes that: (a) Kierkegaard continues to evade total classification[2] and cannot be understood without effort and patience. (b) to assess

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[1] See appendix for a brief account of the problem of pseudonymity in Kierkegaard.

[2] Cf., Cornelio Fabro, "Faith and Reason in Kierkegaard's Dialectic," A Kierkegaard Critique, ed. Howard Johnson, Niels Thulstrup, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962) pp. 157-158. Referred to, later, as Kierkegaard Critique. Also Ibid., p. 160. Fabro says: "It is easy to get lost in the forest of Kierkegaard's writing, so complex are the terms and so subtle are the analyses and the dialectic." The writer agrees with what Paul Holmer says: "Kierkegaard made many droll remarks about the scholars and scholarship, some of them are downright derogatory... Kierkegaard obliged the scholars by writing a literature about his literature, ... But he did not do it according to the scholar's rules! In fact, "his point of view" so describes the logic and form of the literature as to make this... "metaphysics of learning" irrelevant.... This is not to deny of course, that books can properly be written about Kierkegaard's life and literature... if Truth is a seamless robe, if it is One, if everything is related to everything... then Kierkegaard's literature is as worthless as his every argument is mistaken.... Therefore, one is obliged in writing about Kierkegaard to do one of two things: (a), write historical literature about his deeds, his books... or (b), write a critical literature in which one engages the argument, religious and philosophic. In the first instance there is no ./...

Kierkegaard's thought by a rigorous dissection, is to render Kierkegaard too clear to be himself.[1] (c) the difficulty may be resolved by a fairly systematic study of Kierkegaard's thought, and by the 'enlargement of the reader's vision', to comprehend the diverse richness of his ideas in a clearly outlined perspective. Kierkegaard was aware that he will be subjected to a systematic study, yet he was distasteful to it. In an entry to his Journals called 'Melancholy' he says the following:

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promise of a systematic consequence... in the second instance one writes not about the man and his books as much as one translates his language and thoughts into one's own." Ibid., pp. 42-44. Also Mr. Jolivet holds a similar stand: "As for the systematic introduction, which sets out to synthesize everything by main force, to impose a logical order upon the factors involved, it promises everything and achieves nothing whatever." Regis Jolivet, Introduction to Kierkegaard, trans. W.H. Harber (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1946), p. 111.

[1] For example, Mr. H. Thomas translated the bulk of Kierkegaard's thought in a framework of radical linguistic analysis that: (a), almost literally drained the richness and singularity of Kierkegaard's thought; (b), yielded an impoverished, though clear outline of the man's ideas; (c), this clarity, and especially the thought content, is not dominantly Kierkegaardian in as much as it is an attempt to place him in framework of a tradition that is not his. Cf., J. Heywood Thomas, Subjectivity and Paradox (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957).

> "Somewhere in The Psalms it says of the rich man that he collects a treasure with great care and "knows not who shall inherit from him": and so too I shall leave behind me, intellectually speaking, a not so little capital; alas, and I know at the same time who will inherit from me, that figure which is so enormously distasteful to me, who up till now has always, and will continue to inherit all good things: the Don, the Professor... it is part of my suffering to know that, and yet continue quite calmly in my endeavour which brings me toil and trouble, the profit of which will be inherited by the don.... For the don is longer than the tape-worm..."[1]

Resentful as he is, to academicians and their approaches, still a <u>fair</u> academic[2] study of Kierkegaard remains indispensable.

Important as they are, when writing about a thinker like Kierkegaard, biographical matters are excluded from the present essay. They can be found in other sources. This work, however, presupposes previous familiarity with the essential Kierkegaardian terminology and literature. Bearing this in mind, the reader is directed from the outset to the heart of Kierkegaard's thought that has direct relevance to the present undertaking. Furthermore, it is perhaps

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1 Alexander Dru (ed. and trans.), <u>The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard</u> (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 471, year 1852, sec. 1268. Henceforth referred to as <u>Journals</u>.

2 This should be understood to mean an organized exposition of Kierkegaard's thought, in so far as his thought lends itself to organization.

necessary to mention that our interest in Kierkegaard is more of a philosophical rather than a theological nature.

II

This study is an exposition as well as a critical appraisal of a central problem in Kierkegaard's writings, namely, the problem of the relation of faith to reason. It endeavours to investigate and bring to light the varied dramatic tension between faith and reason in the different phases of development in Kierkegaard's thought. The ensuing discussion, therefore, will venture to answer the following: How far, if at all, is faith supported by reason? How much cognition is entailed in Kierkegaard's concept of faith? Better still, does the category of faith extinguish reason or pronounce its complete downfall, as is popularly held about Kierkegaard?

Due to the labyrinth of Kierkegaard's thought, the answer to these questions is best effected by emphasizing and eventually examining two of his fundamental concepts:

that of the Spheres of Existence and that of the Apprehension of Truth. These two concepts can afford the possibility of clarifying and focusing the different ideas of Kierkegaard's thought on the problem of faith and reason without a possible distortion.

Our inquiry, therefore, will be divided into two main parts. Part I is a point of departure for the whole essay. It examines the movements of faith and reason in the Spheres of Existence and the category of the Leap between the spheres. Part II is devoted entirely to Kierkegaard's concept of apprehension of truth in so far as it bears on the problem of faith and reason. In both parts one should be very careful not to thrust Kierkegaard into either rationalism or irrationalism and interpret his thought in terms of either.

While answering the foregoing questions, the present essay tries to show that Kierkegaard has been unjustifiably considered an irrationalist, and that both rationalism and irrationalism are not the sort of terms to be predicated of him without doing violence to language. This is, in very much the same way, as sleeping or insomnia cannot be predicated of stones or buildings. In other words,

contrary to the popular contention, Kierkegaard is not an apostle of logical paradoxes and an enemy of reason. The belief that Kierkegaard depreciates reason is a mode of thinking which, in as much as it is unjustified it is also "unkierkegaardian". What Kierkegaard was stressing is the inadequacy of reason as a sole means of acquiring faith, and not its inefficiency and unreliability. Kierkegaard has no quarrel with "objective" endeavours as long as they do not encroach on matters of faith. Furthermore, when Kierkegaard maintains that reason should be employed in order to know its own limitations, he is no more an irrationalist than Kant is in his epistemology. On the other hand, Kierkegaard does not deny, but explicitly asserts, that reason is conducive to faith; yet reason unaided does not in the final analysis lead to it. This helps us to demonstrate that there exists in Kierkegaard's concept of faith a certain amount of cognition whose ground is not zero.

The connecting link between Parts I and II, with their respective chapters, is the above mentioned thesis that is being established on the basis of evidence from Kierkegaard's literature.

However, when writing about Kierkegaard, one should guard against the possibility of isolating passages

from his works that are not essentially in harmony with his fundamental conclusions. That he lends himself to such a possibility is beyond question. For example, such statements as "Faith is against the understanding"[1] and "where the understanding despairs faith is already present..." [2], as well as others, are occasionally extracted from his profuse literature to vindicate the popular view that Kierkegaard is an accomplished radical irrationalist. To make faith contingent upon the demands of reason is to demolish the very grounds of faith. This is the common contention which is either known by reputation or held by writers who read him in too cursory a fashion. Reaching such assertions without probing the total web of Kierkegaard's ideas is to run the risk of falling into gross distortions and misinterpretations of the meaning of Kierkegaard's thought.

III

Another point is worth mentioning here; namely, the fact that secondary sources had to be consulted too, did call

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[1] Soren Kierkegaard, For Self-Examination and Judge for Yourselves, trans. Walter Lowrie (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 101.

[2] Soren Kierkegaard (Johannes Climacus), Concluding Unscientific Postscript, trans. David F. Swenson, Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 209. Henceforth referred to as Postcript.

for a critical evaluation of some of them. However, this is done only within the framework of the present essay. Refutations here are not made for the sake of refutation therefore; but in so far as they illustrate the central theme of our purpose.

These evaluations and criticisms are not grouped together in a separate section. For in so doing, they are removed from their suitable context and might lose their immediate cogency. Consequently, evaluations are made whenever the sequence of the discussion demands, either in the main text or in the form of footnotes.

IV

Chapter I is intended to clear the way for the rest of the essay. It deals with Kierkegaard's concept of the three Spheres of Existence, not as contents, but, as a formal structure on whose grounds the unity of his works may be established.

Chapter II is an attempt to expound Kierkegaard's category of the Leap. This is a necessary outcome of what is charted in chapter I; since the spheres are possible modes

of existence, the passage from one to the other is not a matter of mediation but of a leap. To elicit this concept one has to dwell on Hegel's principle of identity, against which Kierkegaard violently rebels, and try to delineate the fundamental differences between Hegel and Kierkegaard on this point. Many points bearing on the relation of faith to reason are here unveiled.

Chapter III undertakes to investigate the movement of faith and reason in the three Spheres of Existence, not, however, as structure but as contents. This is significant because it is simpler and clearer to have chapter I deal with the spheres as forms and then deal with them here as contents. For if we were to approach them as forms and contents, at one and the same time, we may betray the purpose of this essay by losing sight of the richness of the respective roles of faith and reason. Therefore, for the sake of sequence, and to complete the picture of what Kierkegaard calls the "Single One", this chapter attempts an adequate exposition in terms of contents of what Kierkegaard means by the aesthetic and ethical spheres of consciousness. The religous spheres is intentionally left out here, only to be stressed later on in part II as a whole.

Chapter IV constitutes the second part of the essay. It is an exposition, as well as a critique of Kierkegaard's

concept of Apprehension of Truth. This concept is an essential aspect of Kierkegaard's treatment of faith, and comprises the heart of the Philosophical Fragments. The main theme here is the distinction between Philosophical Idealism and the Christian Faith. Kierkegaard chooses Socrates as his point of departure and as the representative of the Greek Platonic, and German Hegelian, philosophies. He observes that reason (Socratic Method), at its best, can serve as a maieutic relationship between man and man. For the begetting of truth (faith) is, in the final analysis, restricted to God. Therefore, this chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section deals with Truth as Subjectivity. The second section deals with Kierkegaard's Method of Indirect Communication, and the third section is devoted entirely to Kierkegaard's concept of Apprehension of Truth. The first two sections should be discussed first in order to show later how, according to Kierkegaard, truth is apprehended. While attempting the preceding we shall, along the lines of this thesis, show that Kierkegaard does not depreciate objective validity and is not an enemy of reason. He is, simply, giving reason and faith what is due to each.

PART I

FAITH REASON

AND THE PRINCIPLE OF

THE THREE SPHERES OF

EXISTENCE

CHAPTER I

THE THREE SPHERES OF EXISTENCE AS A PROGRESSIVE STRUCTURE FOR THE UNITY OF KIERKEGAARD'S WORKS

The chapter that follows, is an attempt to show why Kierkegaard did not adhere to an abstract systematic presentation of his ideas, and why his theory of the stages[1] is a possible account for the progressive unity of his works. When this is established, the problem of the relationship of faith and reason can be examined at length.

(a) Existence and System:

Kierkegaard in his voluminous writings is not the sort of philosopher[2] that one can grind his mind upon, as one could with an Aristotle, a Kant, or a Wittgenstein. He is not so because of his violent concern with man's contemporary situation. His doctrinal commitment, his existential (actual) struggle between faith and reason,

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[1] The terms "stage"and "sphere" are used interchangeably hereafter.

[2] Kierkegaard continuously refers to himself as a religious thinker, Cf., Soren Kierkegaard, The Point of View for my Work as an Author, trans. Walter Lowrie (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), pp. 15-22. Henceforth referred to as Point of View.

and particularly his struggle against Hegel's Objective Idealism -- that obliterated the individual's unique existence and absorbed it into a form of "lifeless" absolutism -- left Kierkegaard no time for building logical systems.[1] In fact he criticized all systems very vehemently.[2] However, this criticism is not due to his incapacity of developing a system of his own or of analyzing terminology. In his Philosophical Fragments, and Concluding Unscientific Postscript, he displays a searching philosophical skill, and a strong command of logical argument. This uncompromising criticism of system is based on the view that all systems shift from reality, and that they are all false and deceptive.

But why is system deceptive? It is deceptive because the systematic enterprise, according to Kierkegaard, is a tendency among philosophers that "promises everything and keeps nothing"[3] of existence. System makes existence

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[1] One should note that Kierkegaard uses "system" in Hegel's meaning of the term, namely, the entire structure of objective truth which Hegel calls the Idea. It is also worth mentioning here that Kierkegaard adopts many of his categories from the philosophy of German Idealism; such as "Existence", "Paradox", "Qualitative and Quantitative Dialectic", "Reflection of Angst", "Moment", "Leap", "Decision", "Synthesis", "Contradiction", "Self", "Spirit" etc...

[2] Kierkegaard holds that a logical system is possible, whereas an existential system is impossible, Cf., Postscript, pp. 99-113.

[3] Ibid., p. 18.

evaporate, and as a result, existence is impoverished and ceases to be itself. For instance, most philosophers do not "live" in their system, or, in real life, they abandon their systems:

> " In relation to their systems most systematizers are like a man who builds an enormous castle and lives in a shack close by; they do not live in their own enormous systematic buildings. But spiritually that is a decisive objection. Spiritually speaking a man's thought must be the building in which he lives - otherwise everything is topsy-turvy". [1]

With such an understanding, the basic question of philosophy is given a new interpretation which frees philosophy from the abstract claims of an intellectualism that comprised a considerable part of the philosophic tradition for centuries. The new accent here falls on existence as immediately experienced in the inwardness of man, without being deduced from some a priori systematic whole. Philosophy, as a system, is an academic critical struggle after logical perfection which in the final analysis deflects from the original existential situation, and empties it of all significant content.

Accordingly, for Kierkegaard, "system" and "self-closed" rationality are synonymous terms that remain detached from life and existence. This is so, because existence, existence per se, is the "separation" between the subject and

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1 Journals, p. 156, year 1846, sec. 583.

object; it is the everlasting different.[1] As a result, existence and system cannot be allies, for the presence of the one abolishes the presence of the other. Thus, for Kierkegaard, the will for system is a will for dishonesty and for extinguishing the singularity of the individual's inward existence. This is why, according to Kierkegaard, the individual, the genuinely existent, stands outside the system as an Archimedian[2] point that can move the world. Hegel, the "infinitely great", the system par excellence, the "nothing at all",[3] in his systematic structure of the world, forgot what can move the world. If Hegel would have said that his system is hypothetical, he would, of course, have been very great, and have willed something great.[4]

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1 Posteript, p. 112.

2 Kierkegaard often uses the term "Archimedian Point". Cf., Journals, pp. 249-50, year 1848, sec. 784. Croxall says rightly that it comes from Descartes' Meditation II where he compares himself in the beginning of his second meditation to Archimedes. Cf., René Descartes, Meditations and Selections from the Principles of Philosophy, trans. John Veitch (Illinois: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1955), p. 29.

3 Cf., Posteript, p. 113.

4 Cf., Ibid., pp. 99-100 "n".

It seems, therefore, that what Kierkegaard advances against the system, and Hegel's in particular, is based on the above understanding of existence that is exemplified by the following:

> " The only thing-in-itself which cannot be thought is existence, and this does not come within the province of thought to think. But how can pure thought possibly vanquish this difficulty, when it is abstract? And what does pure thought abstract from? Why from existence, to be sure, and hence from that which it purports to explain."[1]

In order to show what abstract thought relinquishes from existence, Kierkegaard provides us with a rational explanation of what at first glance seems irrational. He appeals to a descriptive analysis of consciousness. It is immediacy, which is an element of consciousness, that is annulled by abstract thought, and it is to this that we should now turn.

(b) Duality of Consciousness - Immediacy and Ideality:

Thinking, say Kierkegaard, is an attribute of consciousness; but consciousness is born due to the encounter of the existing subject with the immediate environment. Yet consciousness implies awareness of something, and if this something is not consciousness

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1 Ibid., pp. 292-93.

itself, then it must be the immediate object of our consciousness which is the 'other', namely, actual existence. However, this actual existence is acquired by us without distortion by an immediate apprehension, in which all relationships are absent. Thus, immediacy becomes that which confronts us as a fact unaccounted for, unreflected upon, solely on its own evidence.[1] For example, colours, sounds and the episodes of our consciousness are immediate.

But the matter does not stop at this point; Kierkegaard goes as far as saying that consciousness cannot remain in immediacy, for if it could, consciousness would exist no more. If immediacy is like that of the immediacy of an animal, then the phenomenon of consciousness disappears; and man would be no better than an animal, for therewith, he becomes determined and dumb.[2] If man was incapable of speech, then he would not be able to go beyond immediacy; he would remain arrested by it. Therefore, that which annuls immediacy is speech. Kierkegaard writes that immediacy is reality, i.e., actuality, and speech is ideality:

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[1] Soren Kierkegaard, Johannes Climacus Or De Omnibus Dubitandum Est and A Sermon, trans. T.H. Croxall (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), p. 147. Henceforth is referred to as Dubitandum Est.

[2] Ibid., p. 148.

> " For when I speak, I introduce opposition. If, for example, I want to express the actual world which I perceive with my senses, then opposition is present. For what I say is quite other than what I want to express. Reality (i.e., immediacy) I cannot express in speech, for to indicate it I use Ideality, which is a contradiction, an untruth. But how is immediacy annulled? By mediacy, which annuls immediacy by presupposing it. What then... is mediacy? It is Word. How does Word annul Reality? By talking about it. For that which is talked about is always presupposed."[1]

It follows from the above passage that for Kierkegaard, consciousness is a duality, that is, an opposition of immediacy and mediacy or ideality. Consciousness has in its very structure a dichatomy of two elements, that of existence and that of thought. But thought acquires its being from existence and presupposes existence, yet itself negates its very basis and annuls existence.[2] For if

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1 Ibid., p. 148. (Intervening word is mine.)

2 It is worth noting that on the basis of this understanding of consciousness, Kierkegaard establishes his view of doubt. The seat of doubt, according to Kierkegaard, is consciousness, whose very nature is a kind of contradiction or opposition. As mentioned above, consciousness is produced by, and itself produces, a duality of reality and ideality. But consciousness is neither the one nor the other, it is a relation of both. Now, doubt cannot take place in either of the two components of consciousness. For, on the one hand, ideality or conceptual thinking cannot be true or false except when it tries to account for reality or existent things. While on the other hand, reality is "present" and it makes no sense to predicate truth or falsity of it. Doubt arises only when there is a relationship between two things, Kierkegaard says. Therefore, when ideality tries to account for reality and is bent on ./...

existence (immediacy) is expressed by thought, and words are the vehicle of thought, then existence is expressed by words. But to express existence by words, is not to express existence, for words are not existence. They stand over and against existence. The actual world is perceived immediately without reflection, while speech, words, thought, use mental categories which do not exist in the actual world. For instance, the concept "man" does not actually exist, but men do. It is on the grounds of the preceding analysis that one should search for the originality of Kierkegaard as a forerunner of existential thinking.

Conclusion from Sections (a) and (b):

Kierkegaard's view of 'existence', 'system' and 'consciousness', the way it has been presented in sections (a) and (b) validates the following inferences:

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existence, then truth or falsity can be predicated of this relation, and consequently doubt becomes possible. Hence doubt presupposes both reality and ideality, and it cannot be a quality of either one independent of the other. If this is the case, then disinterestedness does not make doubt possible, but it is presupposed by doubt. When we are interested, when our consciousness is at its best, when our thought tries to help us for actual decisive choice, doubt arises; and doubt can be conquered by a determination of the will. Cf., Ibid., pp. 149-55. It should be mentioned here that doubt, for Kierkegaard, is a behavioural or existential doubt, and not Cartesian doubt. Kierkegaard calls it, genuinely, despair. For further explanation see Chapter III.

(1) Abstract thought distorts existence by transferring immediacy, the existence par excellence, to an ideality which is on Kierkegaardian grounds semi-real.

(2) Kierkegaard in his authorship cannot assent to, but in fact has to rebel against, a logical systematic presentation of his thought.

(3) Section (a) and (b) show that the unity of Kierkegaard's works cannot be a rationally "closed" unity.

(4) His attention was endlessly focussed on the singularity of existence that cannot be accounted for by systematic thought. Existence and system cannot be thought of together.

(c) <u>The Dynamic Unity of Kierkegaard's Works: A Necessary Outcome of His View of "Existence", "System", and "Consciousness"</u>:

The significance of the preceding analysis, and the conclusions that were drawn from it rests in its direct bearing on, and its elucidation of, the problem of the unity of Kierkegaard's thought.

If abstract thought distorts 'what is' to an ideality, and if existence and system cannot be thought together, then the unity of Kierkegaard's thought is to be

found in a different order. If existence is the mobile, the 'open', the interrupted non-linking together, then the labyrinthian works of Kierkegaard are susceptible to a dynamic, and existential progressive structure that operates on different stages of life, and consequently becomes a unifying principle that bridges together the seeming multiplicity.

Therefore, the question of the unity of Kierkegaard's writings cannot be a question of a fixed abstract unity; but that of a vital organic unity, a unity of growth and movement whose underlying driving force are the manifold possibilities of the life of the individual that is engulfed by decisive tensions at different stages of the self. This is why, in his authorship, Kierkegaard does not appeal to a direct form of expression, but burdens himself with the task of emulating Socrates, who stirs his readers and commits them to perform the indispensable act of self-examination. Kierkegaard intended the Socratic method in order to startle his reader and drive him to refocus on the awareness of his conscious being; to teach him what it means to exist, and not to what is imposed on him by other theories. These theories labour on the individual from without, and no concept manipulation, or expression can seep into the depth

of the individual's immediate existence. At its best, propositional expression can act on the conceptual component of our consciousness. But this component is an ideality which is an impoverishment of existence, as we remarked earlier. "Consequently what Kierkegaard writes is not written in order to reveal himself to other men, but to reveal other men to themselves. All questions, then, are ambiguous; they exclude the possibility of a reply. All replies are dialectical; they re-echo the question. The impenetrable silence of the individual is a gulf in which all words are lost."[1] In brief, his works are like mirrors; if a dwarf peaks in, no giant will look out.

Moreover, Kierkegaard himself very enthusiastically stressed the vital unity of his work. In his Point of View where he undertakes the task of affirming what he truly was as an author, he represents his works as a dynamic progressive realization of a certain organic structure which, although not very conscious for him at first, became vividly so later. This organic unity seemed to him to be converging through the different levels of the consciousness of the individual, on

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1 Jolivet, Op.cit., p. 110.

one essential theme, that is, what it means to be a Christian.[1]

On the other hand, Kierkegaard reports that his whole productivity has had, in a certain sense, an uninterruptedly even course; as if he had had nothing else to do but to copy, in a 'half conscious' way, a definite portion of a printed book. Kierkegaard also adds that he would be dishonest with himself and God, if he were to claim to have had an anticipated, exhaustive, detailed plan to his whole authorship. That later reflection on his enormous productivity taught him something about his plan, Kierkegaard does not deny. On the contrary, after a post authorship reflection he observes that his works are imbued with an organic unity.

> " No, I must say truly that I cannot understand the whole, just because to the merest insignificant detail I understand the whole, but what I cannot understand is that now I can understand it and yet cannot by any means say that at the instant of commencing it I understood it so precisely - though it is I that have carried it out and made every step with reflection." [2]

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1 Cf., Journals, p. 348, year 1849, sec. 1001, where Kierkegaard says: "The Category of my work is: to make men aware of Christianity.... My task is to deceive people, in a true sense, into entering the sphere of religious obligation which they have done away with..."

2 Point of View, p. 72.

However, Kierkegaard's own description of his works need not be considered final here. For whatever his point of view of his works is, and whatever vindication he furnishes for their totality, we still are able to extract from his writings a dynamic framework or a progressive structure within which the bulk of his works falls. This structure reverberates in his writings with decreasing and increasing clarity which gives Kierkegaard's thought a general direction whose revolving point is the category of the Single One.

This structure is found in Kierkegaard's early works, Either/Or, Stages on Life's Way, and also later in the Philosophical Fragments and the Postscript. It is composed of three well outlined stages or spheres, the Aesthetic, the Ethical, and the Religious. The religious stage is constituted by religion A (general religiousity), and religion B (Christianity). In addition to these three spheres, there are also two other transitional spheres on the border-lines between the others called the Ironical, and the Humorous. Our procedure in examining the relation of faith to reason in Kierkegaard will, therefore, be undertaken within the framework of the just mentioned stages.

Finally, (1) it is by now evident that Kierkegaard does not abandon us to a state of theological, philosophic,

or poetic confusion. He advances his theory of the stages to draw a dynamic map for human emotions. (2) By so doing, Kierkegaard shows that the emotional modifications of our consciousness have a living structure, and that passions and feelings are not simply a structureless mosaic of haphazard subjectivity. (3) On the contrary, he demonstrates that we can be dispassionate and detached with our own passions without extinguishing our passions.

(d) Kierkegaard's Notion of 'Stage' or 'Sphere' of Existence:

When reading Kierkegaard's books Either/Or and the Stages, one cannot help developing, perhaps intuitively, the conviction that what Kierkegaard was unfolding in this theory of the Aesthetic, Ethical, and Religious spheres were his own experiences and feelings, and giving them intellectual expression.

Whatever the case may be, it is no accident that this theory appears in his writings cloaked in different forms, and it is no accident that one should emphasize its structure. For, according to Kierkegaard, the life of the individual, from a psychological as well as existential point of view, falls between three dynamically possible levels of awareness. From the life of the most ordinary individual to the life of the most exceptionally great, their encounter with life, and

the repercussions this encounter has on their emotional component is, and can only be, channelled through three progressive stages of development.

Consequently, in order to comprehend precisely the meanings of these divisions, it is imperative to designate the meaning of Kierkegaard's notion of 'stages' or 'spheres' of existence.

The stages are possible modes of existence within one and the same personality. They comprise the 'cross-section of the self' and 'co-exist simultaneously' (interdependently), and not successively, throughout the history of the self. A stage is an independent state of consciousness of ones own being which differs ontologically from other stages, yet it can hardly have an isolated existence in the individual. Furthermore, these stages are not stages in the sense that, in the procession from one to the other the former is, to a certain extent, superseded or left behind. On the contrary, Kierkegaard maintains that when the individual reaches a higher stage, the past or lower stage is not completely extinguished, but is subordinated to the higher.[1] These stages are not movements in an evolutionary flux that are linked with one another in a form of a teleological determinism. The individual

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1 This point will be elaborated in Chapter III.

must, so to speak, freely determine which stage he belongs to. He is entirely free to decide whether to choose the one or the other. This is Kierkegaard's Either/Or: either the aesthetic and speculative, or ethical and religious. Kierkegaard's theory of spheres of existence allows then for alternatives. This is necessary, for to affirm that life can be lived in different modes of existence, and then deny alternatives to human existence is to involve oneself in a contradiction.

(e) Reason and Existential Alternatives:

While emphasizing the presence of alternatives for his theory, Kierkegaard points out that his theory has no more legitimate claims to conceptual truth than other theories. This again, is due to the dichotomy between reason and existence which Kierkegaard was ever mindful to draw.[1]

The theory of the spheres of existence cannot, consequently, be true more than other theories because: (a) rationally all views, or alternatives, are 'logically' defensible. Reason flings these alternatives to the world

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1 In an entry to his Journals, called "The difficulty with our age" Kierkegaard says the following: "And so the whole generation is stuck in the mud banks of reason; and no one grieves over it, there is only self satisfaction and conceit, which always follow on reason and the sins of reason. Oh, the sins of passion and of the heart, how much nearer to salvation than the sins of reason!" p. 461. year 1852, sec. 1249.

of possibles; (2) to know, Kierkegaard says, is to translate reals into possibles, this is the direction in which any and all knowledge moves;[1] (3) it is only when we come to the exigencies of existence that contradiction and distressing tension begins.

Points (1), (2) and (3) are illustrated by Kierkegaard in presenting two traditional views. The first preaches that the highest good is pleasure (aesthetic), and the other that the highest good is duty (ethical). Here, when one observes the concrete existential implications of these two doctrines, one encounters unresolvable behavioural oppositions, namely, the dilemma of universally pursuing pleasure[2] and duty[3] at the same time. For it is not infrequent that they behaviorally differ, in fact contradict each other. This existential opposition between the two views, according to Kierkegaard, remains unresolved and places the existential ego in an unconquered existential uncertainty.

Now, what does reason do with the two opposing alternatives? Kierkegaard resentfully, though rightly, maintains that reason abolishes the difficulty by asking which one of the

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1 Postscript, p. 285 ff.

2 As in the case of Hedonism, Epicureanism and Utilitarianism.

3 Kant's ethical theory is the best instant of that.

alternatives is true. But this will conceivably yield no conclusion. For on the basis of points (1) and (2) the opposition is absorbed and transferred from the existential to the rational realm, and consequently it is emptied of all existential importance.[1] Furthermore, reason, Kierkegaard notes, at its best may function in delineating alternatives for a possible choice. But reason lacks the singular character of existence:

> " What is reasoning? It is the result of doing away with the vital distinction which separates subjectivity and objectivity. As a form of abstract thought reasoning is not profoundly dialectical enough; as an opinion and a conviction it lacks full-blooded individuality. But where mere scope is concerned, reasoning has all the apparent advantage; for a thinker can encompass his science, a man can have an opinion upon a particular subject and a conviction as a result of a certain view of life, but one can reason about anything'." [2]

Therefore, if one can reason about anything, then, according to Kierkegaard, to ask which of the alternatives is true is to ask a question which is irrelevant in connection with existential choices.

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1 Kierkegaard would say ironically, that reason resolves the opposition between the alternatives in very much the same way as a physician's medicine removes the patient's fever by removing the patient's life as well. Cf., Postscript, p. 268.

2 Soren Kierkegaard, The Present Age, trans. Alexander Dru (London: Collins Clear-type Press, 1962), p. 87. (Underlining is mine). Henceforth referred to as The Present Age.

(f) Passion Determines the Value and the Breach Between the Stages:

The spheres as alternative modes of existence are determined and differentiated from one another by a specific passion. The more the self has passion in each stage the more it belongs to that stage. Besides, if the stages differ in their qualitative modes of living, they are necessarily more so in the qualitative difference of their passions.

The aesthetic passion is essentially a zest for pleasure, however, not in strictly hedonistic terms, but in a more general fasion. The ethical passion is a zest to abide by the moral law, and the religious passion is suffering on whose grounds the Christian faith emerges.

In any stage, therefore, if the 'Single One' loses his passion or allows it to recede, then his singularity starts receding too; for what makes a man what he is, is the intensity and kind of passion he possesses. Passion, Kierkegaard holds, is, in the last analysis, what is essential.[1] Whether in one

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1 Cf., Journals, p. 201, year 1847, sec. 652, where Kierkegaard says that "What the age needs is pathos.... The misfortune of the age is understanding and reflection.... That is why it requires a man who could reflect the renunciation of all reflection...". For part of the subsequent remarks Cf., Jolivet, Op. cit., pp. 116-17.

stage or the other, the individual can only realize himself fully by living very intensively, a way which is a vital condition for the personality: "Passion... is the real measure of man's power. And the age in which we live is wretched, because it is without passion."[1] This point is emphasized in order to remark the movement which Kierkegaard is going to take later on. Humanity is defined by sensibility, and not by reason. The authentically human is passion, Kierkegaard says.[2] If humanity is feeling and passion, human perfection is constituted in the greatest possible energy, that is, passion, the most perfect expression of existence.

Passion, however, is not like emotion or sentiment. It is more ardent than sentiment, and not as short lived as emotions. Passion is a tendency which exaggerates itself, which takes hold of us, which makes itself the center of everything.

As a matter of fact, one can deduce from Kierkegaard's Either/Or, Postscript, and Fear and Trembling

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1 Journals, pp. 102-3, year 1841, sec. 396.

2 Soren Kierkegaard (Johannes De Silentio), Fear and Trembling, The Sickness Unto Death, trans. Walter Lowrie (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1954), p. 130. Referred to hereafter as Fear and Trembling and as Sickness Unto Death.

that passion is a more total phenomenon than any of our subjective modifications. It is a transformation of the whole personality.

But passion, Kierkegaard maintains, is not just an immediate outbreak of emotions that is not guided or purified by reason. An unguided, uncontrolled passion means the dissolution of the personality. Therefore, in order to be creative, and in order to be conducive to perfection, passion should be purified by reflection[1] (reason). Consequently, passion in every stage of existence does not break away from reason, but it is channelled and more focussed by reason to an object. A passion with a definite object is a useless enthusiasm that consumes the energies of the individual, and forsakes him to an existential blunder which spells his own annihilation.

It follows, that the individual in each sphere of existence, whether in the aesthetic, ethical, or religious, should very dynamically converge his passions on the contents of every stage. But, whether consciously or unconsciously, passion in every stage labours in a double movement. On the one hand, it seeks satisfaction and realization in the sphere

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1 Cf., Journals, p. 133, year 1844, Sec. 488, where Kierkegaard says: "Let no one misunderstand all my talk about passion and pathos to mean that I am proclaiming any and every uncircumcised immediacy, all manner of unshaven passion."

it belongs to; on the other hand, it strives to go beyond itself and to become transfigured to another sphere. On this basis, Kierkegaard finds an escape for the individual from being imprisoned and stifled in one of the spheres. Passion in every stage, therefore, implies an 'upward' flight to a higher stage, and it is never tranquilized until it reaches Him who is the source of its inspiration. In fact, it is Him who offers a motivation for the transition from one sphere to the other. But this transition is described by Kierkegaard as always a crisis, as a breach of continuity.

The Breach of continuity between the stages[1] means three things for Kierkegaard: (1) The values in each stage are determined by specific passion or enthusiasm, qualitatively different. (2) A person whose life is in the one sphere cannot by a mere process of reflection transport himself into the other; for this a passionate resolution of the will is necessary. (3) The change from one sphere to the other is never necessary, but always contingent; if it presents itself as possible, it also presents as possible of non-realization.[2] It is this breach, between the stages, that we are necessarily led to consider in the following chapter on the leap between the stages

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1 Cf., David Swenson, Something About Kierkegaard (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1956), pp. 162-63.

2 Cf., Ibid., pp. 162-63.

(g) Conclusion:

From the preceding discussion in this chapter one can conclude the following:

(a) Kierkegaard's understanding of existence and consciousness explains why he rejected the rigorous conceptual systematic presentation of his ideas.

(b) Kierkegaard's works do not lend themselves to an abstract fixed unity, but to a dynamic unity, a unity of growth and movement.

(c) The spheres are possible modes of existence in one and the same personality; and the transition between the spheres is made by a leap of passion, or by a dynamic interjection of the will.

The above conclusions are not without implications as far as the development of the problem of faith and reason in Kierkegaard is concerned. For instance, the dynamic unity of Kierkegaard's work that was established above helps us to study the different movements of faith and reason within a dominant principle that ties together the threads of Kierkegaard's thought on the subject. Furthermore, Kierkegaard's criticism of system and his emphasis on existence as immediate, probably shows why he maintains later that faith is an existential matter and not a rational one. If system or reason makes

existence evaporate, it makes it more so when it accounts for the dynamic nature of faith. Besides, the distinction between the spheres was necessary to show the sort of passion and crisis the religious man has to encounter when passing from one sphere to the other.

CHAPTER II

THE LEAP AS OPPOSED TO MEDIATION OF REASON BETWEEN THE SPHERES

The transition from one sphere to the other, was described at the end of the preceding chapter as a crisis and a breach of continuity. This chapter will, therefore, be necessarily focussed upon this notion of 'breach', which Kierkegaard calls the Leap.

This category of the leap is central to Kierkegaard's thought, without which his thought remains unclear. This leap, being contrary to mediation, and this mediation, being a quality of the continuous processes of reason will, of course, confront us with Hegel's notions of continuity and becoming.

But before discussing the 'leap' and its 'existential' and 'logical' implications, one should point to the fact that the 'leap' underlies most, if not all, of Kierkegaard's writings about the relation of faith to reason. Therefore, the attempt at a searching analysis of the 'leap' in a specific isolated section is hardly possible. For to do so, is to be driven to a thorough discussion of Kierkegaard's thought as well, a discussion which may be shown in the growing

development of this essay. Furthermore, it is perhaps erroneous for one to say that Kierkegaard does not discuss the 'leap' except where he openly mentions the word 'leap'. For in many contexts, if Kierkegaard does not explicitly mention the term, he either presupposes it or uses different terminology to convey precisely the same meaning. For instance,[1] terms or phrases like 'qualitative dialectic', 'dialectic of life', 'breach', 'discontinuity', 'objective uncertainty', 'intervention of the will', 'decisive choice', 'an act with infinite passion', 'halt' etc..., all essentially mean the same thing as the 'leap' for Kierkegaard.

Based on the above understanding, the subsequent remarks of this chapter will be devoted to the leap between the spheres as opposed to Hegel's concept of mediation and continuity.

(a) The Leap: Some Preliminary Remarks:

Kierkegaardian scholars do not agree upon a common source of this idea of 'The Leap'. Some interpreters like Bishop Bohlin[2] maintain that it is derived from the qualitative leap which Hegel describes in The Phenomenology of Mind. Reuter[3] expresses the opinion that the idea is

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1 Kierkegaard's work Concluding Unscientific Postscript, abounds in such terms.

2 Cf., Thomas, Op. cit., p. 90.

3 As cited by Thomas, Op. cit., p. 90.

derived from Kant's theory of the jump which takes us beyond experience. This sounds closer to Kierkegaard with one important difference, and that is the leap which Kierkegaard stresses is a particular thing and not a general assertion of something metaphysical. Høffding[1] says that the source of the idea is Schelling who lectured at Berlin, and Kierkegaard heard his lectures.[2] Schelling, Høffding says, emphasized strongly that speculative philosophy (Hegelianism) could not get further than the abstract and the universal; and the relationship to absolute reality which religious faith clings to, can only be regarded as an act of the will induced by practical and personal needs or, as Kierkegaard puts it later, by a leap. The opposition between thought and existence, between the universal and the individual, and the impossibility of a continuous transition between them impressed Kierkegaard so forcibly that he never forgot it.[3]

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1 As cited by T. H. Croxall in his introduction to Dubitandum Est, pp. 81-82.

2 In a letter to his brother from Berlin Kierkegaard says that he attended Schelling's lectures and that later he found himself too old to hear such lectures, and that Schelling was too old to give them. Cf., Journals, p. 104, year 1842. 'n. sec.'.

3 Dubitandum Est, p. 81.

Kierkegaard himself in the Postscript,[1] attributes the leap to Lessing[2] while subordinating the influence of Jacobi on him. Kierkegaard expresses his love of Lessing's concern with the personality, and with the idea of historical contemporaneity from which Kierkegaard, most probably, acquired the concept of the leap. However, one still wonders why scholars do not accept Kierkegaard's own account of the source of the leap as he points to it in the Postscript. While leaving the problem to be settled by more competent scholars,[3] one thing remains certain and that is Kierkegaard made use of this concept of the 'leap' in his writings more than any of the writers who preceded him.

Whatever the case may be, it is perhaps unfortunate that many of those who dealt with the concept approached it with marginal concern. They did not cut deep enough into the logical and epistemological grounds that may justify Kierkegaard's use of it, thus sparing him the unwarranted

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1 Cf., Postscript, pp. 86-97. In page 90 Kierkegaard says the following: "It is a leap, and this is also the word that Lessing has used about it, within the... distinction between contemporaneity and non-contemporaneity!"

2 Cf., Henry Chadwick, Lessing's Theological Writings (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1956), pp. 52-53.

3 The reader is referred to Thomas, Op. cit., pp. 90-92; also to Dubitandum Est, pp. 77-83.

charge of radical irrationalism. For instance, Bonifazi[1] in his interesting and lucid presentation of Kierkegaard's thought overlooks 'the leap', and Grene[2] unsympathetically calls him a lover of paradoxes and the Apostle of absurdity without taking the pains to look at Kierkegaard's leap from within to find out how much of his seeming absurdity remains. Another observer, Roberts,[3] is content to mention only that "...the transition from the ethical to the religious is made not by thinking but by what he called a 'leap'."[4] Jean Wahl,[5] perhaps unjustifiably, says: "cette theorie du saut est l'affirmation pour Kierkegaard du discontinu et de l'irrational".[6] (by this theory of the leap Kierkegaard affirms the discontinuous and the irrational).

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1 Conrad Bonifazi, Christendom Attacked (London: C. Tinling and Company Limited, 1953).

2 Marjorie Grene, Dreadful Freedom (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), chap. II.

3 David E. Roberts, Existentialism and Religious Belief, ed. Roger Hazelton (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959).

4 Ibid., p. 71.

5 Jean Wahl, Etudes Kierkegaardiennes (Paris: Fernand Aubier, 'n.d.').

6 Ibid., p. 145.

Bearing the foregoing interpretations in mind, one should emphasize the dangers of categorising Kierkegaard as an irrationalist. Here, rationalism or irrationalism may not be the sort of terms to be used in connection with Kierkegaard without a possible misunderstanding of his thought. For example, his claim that the movement from one sphere to the other takes place by a decisive leap, and not by a rational discursive manner, does not necessarily render him an irrationalist. However, the reason why Kierkegaard recommends the leap is partly due to his critique of intellectualism whose prototype is Hegel and whose logic cannot account for movement in existence. This drives us to consider Kierkegaard's utterance that logic[1] cannot move.

(b) <u>In Logic no Movement Is Possible</u>:

In order to show why, according to Kierkegaard, logic[2] cannot on its own ground move or provide a transition from one sphere to the other, we have to look back to Hegel. Hegel held his celebrated principle of identity[3] which contends <u>that thought and being are one</u>. Reality is in a constant state

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[1] By logic Kierkegaard means the Hegelian type of logic, or the dialectic. Cf., <u>Postscript</u>, p. 107.

[2] Ibid., p. 112.

[3] The stress on the nature of logic is done here because Kierkegaard considers faith as something actual, namely, existential and not logical or ideal.

of becoming, where existing differences and oppositions can be reconciled into a 'higher unity'. But in becoming, both being and non-being are contained. For when a thing 'becomes' it is now what it was not before, and it will be later what it is not now. To put it in Aristotalian language, it has moved from potentiality to actuality. Therefore, for Hegel there is a perpetual unceasing becoming or coming into being. For him truth moves and grows[1] continuously. Also, truth for Hegel lies in nature, history, and thought. In being, there is no dichotomy between the 'inner' and the 'outer',[2] they are one and the same. The outer world is the demonstration of an inner power (Idea) which permeates all being and is objectified in varying degrees in the physical world, and man is its highest objectification.

Now Kierkegaard does not deny that reality is in a constant flux, the way Hegel maintains above. But this flux can only take place in the actual existent reality and not in the realm of thought or logic. When Hegel holds the identity of the subject and object, the identity of the 'outer' and 'inner', then the result is a conceptual monism which stands against and over existence. This Hegelian

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1 Dubitandum Est, p. 74.

2 Cf., Postscript, p. 112.

understanding of reality is what Kierkegaard rebels against. Reality as conceived by Hegel, says Kierkegaard, must be static and cannot be in a state of becoming. For becoming is not an attribute of thought, it is an attribute of existence. But why cannot 'becoming' be attributed to thought but only to existence? It is simply so, because a concept does not change either to what it is not, namely, to another concept, or to something factual and concrete. Therefore, the transition between two existential alternatives or 'spheres' is made by a leap and not by the mediation of concepts. Furthermore, because becoming can only take place in freedom which implies the absence of necessity, then logic with its necessary linked processes cannot move. Let us listen to Kierkegaard:

> " The past has come into being; becoming is a change in actuality brought about by freedom. If now the past becomes necessary it would no longer belong to freedom, i.e., it would no longer belong to that by which it came into being. Freedom would then be... an illusion, and becoming no less so; freedom would be a witchcraft and becoming a false alarm".[1]

He also says:

> "... let logic tend to its own affairs. The word "transition" cannot be anything but a witty conceit

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1 Soren Kierkegaard (Johannes Climacus), Philosophical Fragments Or a Fragment of Philosophy, trans. David F. Swenson (New York: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 64. (Underlining is mine). Henceforth referred to as Fragments.

> in logic. It belongs in the sphere of historical freedom, for transition is a state, and it is actual."[1]

Kierkegaard adds:

> " In logic no movement can come about, for logic is, and everything logical simply is, and this impotence of logic is the transition to the sphere of becoming where existence and reality appear. So when logic is absorbed in the concretion of the categories it is constantly the same that it was from the beginning. In logic every movement... is an immanent movement, which in a deeper sence is no movement...".[2]

From the above quotations we can infer the following conclusions: (1) Reason or 'logic' cannot account for the contingent nature of actual existence within reason's own realm of logical relations. (2) In the realm of the actual there is no possibility of transition; all transitions take place by a dynamic decision, by a leap. (3) As against Hegel, Kierkegaard maintains that, 'that which really changed' since it belongs to concrete existence, namely, to time space and history is contingent and not necessary. Hence that which 'really changed' must have taken place in freedom, which means it was not necessarily 'bound' to be so but could have happened otherwise.

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1 Soren Kierkegaard (Vigilius Haufniensis), The Concept of Dread, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 73-74. Referred to hereafter as Dread.

2 Ibid., p. 12.

Consequently freedom belongs to existence, and being so, freedom makes possible the act of choice,[1] and this act of choice is always a matter of a leap. (4) All movement, according to Kierkegaard, implies a transcendence which logic cannot qualify for. In addition to these points just concluded, Kierkegaard would add two other important points: (5) It is meaningless to talk about the leap in the areas of quantitative sciences, mathematics, and logic. Hegel's mistake was to assert the emergence of a new quality in logic which is an assertion of no meaning. Because if logic is to accept this, it must straight away change both its nature and its meaning.[2] (6) For Kierkegaard, from an existential point of view, the person cannot be absorbed and transformed to an ideality by logic. Even if it were possible for the individual to become pure thought, then the being with which thought will be concerned is not the real being, but the being of thought.[3] Consequently, personality affirms the principle of contradiction, that of existence and thought, and this contradiction enables the personality to make existential choices that result in a leap. Personality, says Kierkegaard, will forever repeat its immortal dilemma

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1 Kierkegaard's concept of choice is discussed in Chapter III.

2 Cf., Dread, pp. 27-28. Also see note p. 28.

3 Cf., Postscript, p. 112.

of Hamlet, to be or not to be, that is the question.[1]

c) The Leap - Neither Rational Nor Irrational - Faith and Reason.

The above discussion, together with the conclusions that were drawn from it, shows clearly why Kierkegaard employed the 'leap' in the presentation of his thought. Whether in the aesthetic, ethical, or religious sphere, all behaviour is an existential behaviour, a matter of a leap which does not belong to the realm of logic and mediation. The Hegelian individual lives in the 'illusion' of the smooth harmony of thought while in actuality he is mostly gripped by the 'open' contradictory alternatives of existence. In fact, the Hegelian individual does not really live. His life is as semi-real as a concept may be. This sort of a 'pseudo-life' should not and cannot be lived in any of the spheres of existence, and especially the religious sphere. To say the least, this life cannot be the sort of life a man of faith lives. For faith is as real as existence can be and no 'concept-juggling' can help a man to move from one existential situation to another, be it a situation of personal interests, or a situation of altruistic moral obligation or a situation of confidence in the Divine - (Faith). The Hegelian thinker, 'the concept', can forget in

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1 Journals, p. 74, year 1839, sec. 286.

all his thinking to think that he is an existing individual and will never be able to explain life. He will merely make an attempt to cease to be a human being, just in order to become a book[1] or an objective something.[2]

Accordingly, for Kierkegaard, in life, in existence, in the act of existing, there is continuous striving against contradictory alternatives.[3] Here there is no 'higher unity' in which the either/or or these alternatives can be happily resolved. We are thrown on the waves of contradiction, so to speak, and we are forced to act; we are faced with many chasms and precipices that are so infinitely wide[4] to the extent that they can only be bridged by a decisive leap. Therefore, for Kierkegaard, a leap is a jump between two existentially, (not rationally), discrete spheres of being; an act that bridges the 'gulfs' between existential possibilities and contradictions. Consequently, we can safely stipulate that leaps are many but one in kind for Kierkegaard. Most behavioural decisions involve a leap, and not only the movement from one stage of existence to

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1 Cf., Postscript, p. 85.

2 It is noteworthy here to observe that Kierkegaard does not depreciate reason or objective attempts when they are in their right order. "It is not denied that objective thought has validity; but... where subjectivity must be accentuated, it is a misunderstanding." Ibid., p. 85.

3 Cf., Ibid., p. 84.

4 Cf., Ibid., p. 90.

the other. Every transition, from the individual instance of observation in the inductive procedure to the ideality of universal laws of science, involves a leap. The movement from skepticism to belief is a leap of fundamental importance.[1] Even the passage from the philosophical realm to the realm of religion, and from the realm of religion in general to christianity, each passage involves a leap. Yet in most cases this leap is a leap of faith,[2] it is a religious movement. This movement always entails an adventure, an act of courage and risk, a trust in the other end. This risk-taking, Kierkegaard observes, is always dynamic; for without risk faith, any faith, becomes impossible.[3]

Among those many 'leaps' that the individual is challenged to perform in the existential striving of his every day life, there is one form of leap which Kierkegaard stresses very much and he regards it as of utmost importance. This is the leap par excellence by which the religious passion, (in

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1 Cf., Swenson, Op. cit., pp. 148-49. 'n.'

2 Here one should observe that Kierkegaard does not necessarily mean by 'faith' the religious faith or the Christian faith only. but the leap is called a leap of faith (trust), in so far as every leap is made with passion and confidence in the other end, any end, be it God or a stage of existence. Here faith means trust in either, an act of marriage, an aesthetic mode of life, or in God. All leaps have a common quality, namely, passion and trust.

3 Cf., Journals, p. 368, year 1850, sec. 1044.

Christianity called faith), emerges.[1] When performing this leap the transition is not made only by an act of the will as it is in other leaps, but also by divine assistance, by God granting the condition to man.

On the basis of this leap the Christian faith becomes an existential fact and not a rational one. It becomes a confidence, a jump into a vacuum without a good reason for hope. In other words, this leap par excellence,[2] which belongs to the behavioural realm, makes Christian faith contrary to the continuous processes of reason. In short, as has been previously remarked, Kierkegaard says that the positive can be conquered only by the negative. To the mediacy of reason, then, must be opposed the immediacy of faith; to continual reasoning, the passionate and pathetic lyricism of affirmation and intuition; to the reasonableness of logical thought and objective reflection, the existential leap of faith made with passionate inwardness.[3] This is what Kierkegaard means by saying that the understanding is the death of faith. But why is it necessarily the death of faith? Kierkegaard answers that

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1 Cf., Swenson, Op. cit., p. 163.

2 This form of the leap is discussed in chapter IV. In this chapter the different aspects of this leap are seen in operation in various areas of Kierkegaard's notions of truth as subjectivity, and the apprehension of truth.

3 Cf., Jolivet, Op. cit., p. 116.

the death of faith is due to the approximation processes of reason. This approximation makes faith, the leap par excellence, probable, but when faith is made probable it definitely becomes impossible. For that which is very probably we can almost know, or as good as know, yet it is impossible to believe,[1] and it is not commensurate with the intensity of the leap of faith.

What follows, in consequence of this Kierkegaardian understanding of the approximation of reason, is that reason cannot and must not give faith. Reason must understand itself and know what it has to offer without taking anything away. But usually reason does not abide by this rule, and when it does not, then it will be hard to find among those who devote themselves to rational speculation and experimental procedures, a will at their heart, a conviction, a faith,[2] says Kierkegaard. Such people would want to understand, would want to explore and receive ideas without believing or being determined by them.

However, if the speculative life of reason weakens the will, and if it makes it hard for the individual to prompt the leap of faith, this does not necessarily mean that the leap

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1 *Postscript*, p. 189.

2 *The Present Age*, p. 18.

of faith is completely unsupported by reason. But it is rather supported by reason in so far as reason holds faith in honour while it cannot fully understand it.[1] Reason at least can know the leap negatively.[2] In addition Kierkegaard maintains, that the man of faith and especially the Christian, both has and uses his understanding. By and large he respects what is human and does not put it down to lack of understanding if anybody does not posses the Christian faith.[3] The Kierkegardian believer, therefore, does not move in absurdity, whimsically, unintelligently and at random when he performs the leap of faith. On the contrary, reflection can be halted by a leap of faith, this leap of faith is a process up to which rational analysis can lead, preparing the way, but cannot grasp it essentially.[4]

After the above characterization of the leap in general and the religious in particular, and after showing that the leap is contrary to the mediation of reason, one can still hold that Kierkegaard is not an enemy of reason nor is he preaching irrationalism or anti-intellectualism

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1 Cf., Journals, p. 362, year 1850, sec. 1033.

2 Cf., Ibid., pp. 362-3, year 1850, sec. 1033.

3 Cf., Postscript, p. 504.

4 Cf., Ibid., pp. 105-6.

the way he came to be popularly known. This point can be illustrated along the following lines:

In conclusion (4) of section (b) of this chapter[1] we maintained that all movement, according to Kierkegaard, implies a transcendence which logic cannot qualify for. Now, if this conclusion can be granted, then we can say that the leap for Kierkegaard, being existential, is necessarily outside the static domain of logic, being thus it makes no sense to say that Kierkegaard's concept of the leap is rational or irrational. For these two categories cannot be predicated of the leap without doing violence to language. This is, in very much the same way that we cannot predicate tooth aching or its absence to 'Friday' or 'Tuesday'. Furthermore, on the same grounds, when rationalism or irrationalism are attributed to Kierkegaard's employment of the leap the outcome is a category mistake. The leap belongs to a different order of being. We can even push the matter further and say that faith, for Kierkegaard, from a cognitive point of view is neither true nor false, but simply exists. This is so because existence, or that which exists, cannot be true or false, it is real. Truth and falsity can only be predicated of the rational processes of reason. It is on this basis perhaps that Kierkegaard hated

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1 See above p. 46.

to hear somebody saying that Christianity is to a certain degree true.[1] We may also add on the basis of the above analysis, and on the basis of conclusion (5) of section (b),[2] that the leap which is involved in the act of faith is not at all a quantitive leap, but a qualitative one which stamps the mode and personality of the individual. The leap of faith, therefore, leads to a drastic qualitative change in ones own being.

The preceding argument warrants the following conclusion: (1) The leap is not quantitative. (2) Cognitively speaking, it is neither true nor false. (3) Existentially speaking, it is neither rational nor irrational.

Once again, the third point just mentioned brings us to the limits and scope of reason in the act of faith. Faith itself, being not rational, does not come within the realm of reason to reason about. However, this does not mean that Kierkegaard depreciates reason or that he rejects its validity when reason operates in its proper household viz. Mathematics, Logic, and Empirical Science. In fact, Kierkegaard stresses that reason should guide us in every day life and that we ought to be quite cognizant of the difference between a conscious responsible act, especially

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1 Cf., Postscript, p. 209.

2 See above p. 46.

that of faith, and a whimsical irresponsible one.

This last point calls for a remark concerning certain misunderstanding which Kierkegaard's thought seems to have suffered. For instance, Walter Kaufmann in his two notable volumes, "From Shakespeare to Existentialism"[1] and "Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre"[2], despite his illuminating critique of Kierkegaard, very reservedly discloses an unwarranted bias and repeatedly, though unfairly, says: "He... attacks Hegel of whom he lacked any thorough first-hand knowledge..."[3] and "the crucial difference between an informed and uninformed, a reasoned and un-reasoned, a responsible and irresponsible decision, escapes Kierkegaard."[4] Kaufmann adds: "Reason alone, to be sure, cannot solve some of life's most central problems. Does it follow... that reason ought to be abandoned altogether? Kierkegaard rashly renounced clear and distinct thinking altogether."[5]

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1 Walter Kaufmann, From Shakespeare to Existentialism (New York: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1960).

2 Walter Kaufmann, Existentialism From Dostoevsky to Sartre (New York: Meridian Books Inc., 1956).

3 Ibid., p. 16.

4 Ibid., p. 17.

5 Ibid., p. 18.

Now, if we consider Kierkegaard's views concerning 'logic' and the 'leap', the way we presented them above, it would then be possible to show that the above charges against Kierkegaard are unfounded. For example, concerning Kierkegaard's first hand knowledge of Hegel, Kaufmann seems to be wrong for the following reasons: (1) Hegelianism during Kierkegaard's time was dominant in Denmark, and a considerable part of Kierkegaard's terminology is quite clearly Hegelian, as it was pointed out in the previous chapter.[1] Terms like 'mediation', 'opposition', 'mediacy', 'immediacy', 'ideality', 'reality', 'immanence', 'dialectic' are expected to have been drawn from Hegelian texts. Besides, Kierkegaard in his writings refers to particular sections and titles of Hegel's works. For example in The Concept of Dread, Kierkegaard says that Hegel entitles the last section of his Logic 'Reality'.[2] Then, of course, someone who can locate titles of sections of the body of Hegel's writings cannot be properly accused of not reading Hegel. (2) Kierkegaard, himself, complains about the difficulty he encountered while reading Hegel:

> " I for my part have devoted a good deal of time to the understanding of the Hegelian Philosophy, I

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1 See above p.148. 'n' 3.

2 Dread, p. 9. See also Ibid., p. 146. 'n'.

> believe also that I understand it tolerably well, but when in spite of the trouble I have taken there are certain passages I cannot understand, I am foolhardy enough to think that he himself has not been quite clear." [1]

This passage, together with point (1), may leave no doubt that Kierkegaard had a first hand knowledge of Hegel. Consequently, Kaufmann's indictment that Kierkegaard had no first hand knowledge of Hegel is left groundless.

Also, the other charges would lose their significance, when we realise that Kaufmann in most cases does not argue for his point but he simply presents it. Moreover, if Kierkegaard asserts that reason alone cannot relieve us from the need of decisions, it does not follow at all, the way Kaufmann puts it, that reason should be abandoned altogether. For, in many contexts, Kierkegaard asserts that reason, although necessary, is not sufficient for making existential leaps; it must be corroborated by interests and passion. Furthermore, if 'leaps' live in passion and especially the leap of faith, then reason, says Kierkegaard, can lead to the leap yet cannot grasp if fully.[2]

As a result, it seems to make no sense to say that Kierkegaard cannot differentiate between reasoned and

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1 Fear And Trembling, pp. 43-44. (Underlining is mine)

2 Cf., Postscript, p. 105.

unreasoned forms of decision and behaviour.

(d) Conclusion:

What has been undertaken in this chapter was the attempt to show the following: (a) that the transition from one sphere of existence to the other is not a matter of mediation but that of a leap; (b) point (a) was established by discussing Kierkegaard's notion that logic cannot move, and that logic, the Hegelian, does not account for the contingent nature of real existence; (c) since faith is something living, it is outside the ideal realm of reason, and consequently, faith is effected by a leap and not by the consistent processes of reason; (d) when reason accounts for 'faith', or the 'leap', faith is transferred to something non-living, or semi-real; (f) the leap, whether from one sphere to the other, or whether the leap par excellence, is cognitively neither true nor false, nor is it either rational or irrational.

If the way in which point (f) is inferred can be granted as correct, then it constitutes a step towards establishing the main thesis of the present essay, namely, that Kierkegaard is not an irrationalist nor is he depreciating reason, neither in the movement from one

sphere to the other nor in the contents of these spheres; especially the contents of the religious sphere. But so far, nothing has been mentioned about the contents of these spheres. So let us turn our attention to the meaning of the contents of these spheres, in so far as they bear on the problem of the relation of faith to reason in Kierkegaard. This shall be the immediate task of the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE MOVEMENT OF FAITH AND REASON IN THE CONTENTS OF THE AESTHETIC AND ETHICAL STAGES

In the previous chapter the attempt was made to account for Kierkegaard's use of the category of the leap, the reasons Kierkegaard himself gives for this use, and the stand he takes against Hegel's notion of mediation. When discussing the leap, some aspects of the limits and scope of reason bearing on the problem of faith and reason, were brought to light.

This chapter deals with the movement of faith and reason in the contents of the aesthetic and the ethical stages. To do so, one is led to attempt an adequate exposition of what Kierkegaard means by both the aesthetic and the ethical spheres of consciousness. When discussing the aesthetic stage one finds it imperative to approach Kierkegaard's notions of despair and choice. On the other hand, when discussing the ethical stage, one is compelled to dwell on Kierkegaard's concept of the teleological suspension of the ethical. While venturing to treat the

above points, it would be proper to indicate the different movements of faith and reason, and to point to some misinterpretations of Kierkegaard that were responsibly written, although unjustifiable in this connection.

I THE AESTHETIC STAGE:

(a) The Meaning of the Aesthetic Stage:[1]

Kierkegaard investigates the aesthetic view[2] of life with subtlety and wit yet in Either/Or he is endlessly repetitious,[3] viewing over and over the same theme again from different perspectives.

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1 The aesthetic attitude is expressed at the beginning of Either/Or, and later in the "Diary of the Seducer", also in the Stages on Life's Way, and in Repetition.

2 Jolivet's views on this subject have been made use of in expounding the ideas of this section. See Jolivet, Op. cit., pp. 24-31.

3 The attempt has been made in this chapter to avoid being repetitious. Hacker says: "If one were to attempt a presentation of Kierkegaard's thought... he would find himself compelled to repeat step by step and sentence by sentence the original writings. One would, in other words, find himself compelled to refer the reader to the works themselves and tell him: 'Now go ahead and read' ". As cited by Kurt Reinhardt, The Existentialist Revolt (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1960), p. 40.

The aesthetic stage, according to Kierkegaard, is a possible form of individual existence which advocates variety of pleasures as the ultimate goal to which the self is attracted. However, this variety of pleasures, Kierkegaard does not reduce to pure sensualism. Rather it includes any attitude whose sole aim is pleasure, even if it is refined and merely intellectual. In short, the aesthetic life culminates in a general form of Epicureanism which tries to banish meaninglessness and despair by emphasizing the pleasures of the moment. By doing so, it falls back on, or gets arrested by, the same existential state it attempted to escape from, and that is despair. The aesthete, in a primary sense, is he who determines to live for the luxury of pleasurable moments.

Accordingly, every man, says Kierkegaard, no matter how inferior his talents are, feels by natural tendency the necessity of forming a view of life and a conception of its purpose. The aesthete also forms a view of life, but this view is based on enjoyment. In this view, the aesthete does not differ from other people, for most people through the ages agree that one must enjoy life. However, the important thing here is that people differ in their conceptions of enjoyment.[1] They differ because

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[1] Soren Kierkegaard (Victor Eremita), Either/Or (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959), Vol. II, p. 184. Referred to hereafter as Either/Or.

enjoyment is not one thing but a multiplicity of things. If this is true, then the aesthete who emphasizes enjoyment in life, is himself ruptured or difused into a boundless multiplicity;[1] the multiplicity of the pleasures of the moment. But since the aesthete lives in the greed for the moment, then he lives a prey for external events. But why a prey for external events? This is because "... he who says that he wants to enjoy life always posits a condition which either lies outside the individual or is in the individual in such a way that it is not posited by the individual himself."[2] Consequently, if man has to seek enjoyment outside himself, he cannot bear existence in the present.[3] Therefore, the aesthete is driven to plunge into violent exciting works and amusements in order to escape from the possibility of boredom. This escape, which is an escape from himself, becomes his cause of bewilderment and despair.

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1 Ibid., p. 188.

2 Ibid., p. 184.

3 Cf., Either/Or, Vol. II, pp. 186-187. "We encounter views of life which teach that one must enjoy life but which place the condition for it outside the individual. This is the case with every view of life where wealth, glory, high station... are accounted life's task and its content."

The aesthete, accordingly, is a man who does not possess himself; he is engaged with the things outside him and therefore lacks full-blooded individuality, stability, and is diffused in the flux of momentary[1] immediate pleasure. Nothing gives him temporary relief from his boredom except the freshness of immediacy. The aesthete[2], says Kierkegaard, cannot will one thing:

> " ... when that one thing which he wills is not in itself one: is in itself a multitude of things, a dispersion, the toy of changeableness, and the prey of corruption! In the time of pleasure see how he longed for one gratification after another. Variety was his watchword. Is variety, then, to will one thing that shall ever remain the same? On the contrary, it is to will one thing that must never be the same. It is to will a multitude of things. And a person who wills in this fashion is not only double minded but is at odds with himself. For such a man wills first one thing and then immediately wills the opposite, because the oneness of pleasure is a snare and a delusion. It is the diversity of pleasure that he wills. So when the man of whom we are speaking had gratified himself

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1 Cf., Ibid., p. 182. "But what is it to live aesthetically.... What is aesthetical in man?....To this I would reply the aesthetical in man is that by which he is immediately what he is.... He who lives in and by and of and for the aesthetical in him lives aesthetically".

2 When trying to trace the word 'aesthetic' back to its Greek origin, we find that it is derived from the Greek term 'aesthetikos' which means perceptive. If this is true, then it bears direct relevance to what Kierkegaard means by aesthetic. For that which is perceived is usually immediate; and this is precisely what Kierkegaard means by aesthetic life, namely, living in the immediate moment.

> himself up to the point of disgust, he became weary and sated... his enfeabled soul raged so that no ingenuity was sufficient to discover something new - something new! It was change he cried out for as pleasure served him, change! change!"[1]

This quotation, from Purity of Heart, displays almost exactly what sort of being the aesthete is in his pursuit after pleasure.

(b) Some Aspects of Faith and Reason in the Aesthetic Mode of Life.

As was just mentioned, when willing enjoyment, the aesthete is not willing one thing but a multiplicity of things. This multiplicity of alternatives is conceived by the aesthete's power of reasoning. It is reason that points to the possibilities of aesthetic life, but reason itself precludes commitment and even action. Consequently, the contemplative or rational aesthete stands outside life and scrutinizes it as a spectator.

Furthermore, rational speculation and non-committed intellectualism, which Kierkegaard calls skepticism, are employed by the refined aesthete to escape dynamic, ethical or religious decisions. The philosophers or

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1 Soren Kierkegaard, Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing, trans. Douglas V. Steere, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1956), pp. 56-57.

rationalists, who occupy themselves with the luxury of weighing possibilities and anylysing concepts, are all essentially aesthetes in their undertaking. And all of these, says the Danish Socrates, suffer from a lack of self-understanding. Their lack of self-understanding is due to the fact that they are incapable of an inward movement which would involve them in the responsibility of practical connections and decisions. Therefore, it is hard for such speculators to relate themselves to a permanent standard, or to the Divine imperatives. For they are aesthetically absorbed in contemplating their own abstract systems that are far from real life. Thus, from these extravagant intellectuals who are bewitched with their 'intellectual landscape', come the greedy Don Juan,[1] the idle doubter, and the egocentric Epicurean. Eventually then, the philosopher's objective detachment and the continuous suspension of judgement until evidence emerges - two qualities closely associated with the Western tradition of philosophy - are rejected by Kierkegaard. In this rejection Kierkegaard presented the primary theme of subsequent existential philosophy, namely, that of the priority of existence over essence.

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1 See Either/Or, Vol. I, pp. 83-102.

But what about the faith of the aesthete according to Kierkegaard? When one is engaged in reading Either/Or one does not really dwell on passages where Kierkegaard overtly predicates faith of the aesthete. What permeates the being of the aesthete is a sort of conviction about the value of the immediate attachment to life and the fleeting moment. In other words, the aesthetic life is devoid of 'faith' in the sense of rational and passionate attachment to the Eternal-God. The aesthete who indulges in the moment, i.e., the temporal, is in sin, for the temporal signifies sinfulness[1] according to Kierkegaard. But why does the temporal signify sinfulness? Simply because the aesthete lives merely in the instant abstracted from the eternal, and embraces finitude which is an embracement of a false self-independence. Living in the temporal is an escape on the part of the aesthete from yielding himself to faith and, consequently, he is caught by sin.

This is why the self of the aesthete is engulfed in suffering and despair. For he waives an essential necessary component of his nature, namely, the eternal,[2]

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[1] Dread p. 83.

[2] For Kierkegaard, the human self is a union of the temporal and the eternal; being aware of both is a deepened self knowledge. Cf., Ibid., p. 76. Also Ibid., pp. 81-83. Cf., also Fear And Trembling, p. 162. "The self is the conscious synthesis of infinitude and finitude... "

which is foresaken and remains hungry, or, so to speak, crying for satisfaction. This suffering, or inner torment, is the beacon which prompts the aesthete to choose religious faith via the ethical stage. The aesthetic stage, therefore, is a point of departure from which man passes and lays anchor in the eternal, and therewith, reaches the bliss of faith. Yet man is left free to make his own decision, either to choose -- existentially -- the ethico-religions, or remain suspended in the charm of speculation, loosing touch with existence, paralysing his will and destroying his personality.

Therefore, the life of the aesthete is wanting in the sort of faith for which Kierkegaard is calling. He does not even attempt to employ the terms 'aesthetic faith' or 'ethical faith' which some interpreters of Kierkegaard are wont to employ. For instance, James Collins in his somewhat dogmatically written essay[1] on the role of reflection in the three stages, although enlightening at certain points, construes the whole problem of reason and faith in a manner which, inasmuch as it is Collin's own innovation, is literally un-Kierkegaardian. He talks about 'aesthetic reflection and aesthetic faith', 'ethical reflection and ethical faith', 'religious reflection and

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[1] James Collins "Faith and Reflection in Kierkegaard", Kierkegaard Critique, pp. 141 - 54.

religious faith'.[1] This manner of approaching the problem of faith and reason is not attuned to Kierkegaard's writing, and is definitely alient to it. True, there are instances where Kierkegaard talks about aesthetic, ethical, and religious reflection,[2] but he never mentions or wanted to mention what Collins calls aesthetic faith or ethical faith. Kierkegaard uses 'faith' to mean only religious faith; this means that Collins is not fully aware of the shifts of meaning of 'faith' in each case. Collins sometimes talks about belief and reflection[3] without making clear to us whether he means by 'belief' exactly what he means by faith and whether 'belief' in the different spheres has different connotations. Hence, he falls victim to a terminological blunder. Let us listen to Kierkegaard:

> " For faith is not the first immediacy but a subsequent immediacy. The first immediacy is the aesthetical ---- But faith is not the aesthetical - or else faith has never existed because it has always existed ."[4]

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1 Ibid., pp. 143 - 45.

2 Cf., Either/Or, Vol. II, p. 188. Also Postscript, pp. 105-6.

3 Collins, Op. cit., p. 143.

4 Fear And Trembling, p. 92.

It is clear from this passage that Kierkegaard was reluctant to talk about 'aesthetic faith' the way Collins does. For as Kierkegaard writes in the passage above, faith is not the aesthetical; nor would he consider faith as the ethical, because the ethical in the act of faith is suspended, as we shall see below.

(c) The Aesthete and the Moment:

From what has been said in sections (a) and (b) one can infer that the basic aesthetic dictum, for the aesthete, is that the moment is everything. But this is essentially like saying that the moment is nothing; just as the Sophistic proposition that everything is true means that nothing is true.[1] For instance, Don Juan, who belongs everywhere and desires in every woman the whole of womanhood, belongs to no woman, and, consequently belongs nowhere. This means that in the moment, for the aesthete, there is only the moment. However, the moment being transient and continuously disappearing, then the

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1 Postscript, p. 265.

aesthete, in a special sense, lives in nothing.[1] If we look at his actual life, we find it anarchical, disorderly, and resulting in failure.

On the other hand, Kierkegaard says that the moment is 'a glance touched by eternity', or it is the present that has no past or future.[2] Here it is this eternity in the moment that gives the aesthete stability and self-possession. But this is exactly what the aesthete recklessly neglects and thus, he becomes a vain cry, a speck of dust in the winds of enjoyment. But enjoyment or immediacy is an intoxication that has the taste of death. Consequently, the aesthete is somebody who dies, or who longs for dying by neglecting the eternal and concentrating on the transitory which becomes despair.[3]

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1 In Either/Or, Vol. II, p. 198, Kierkegaard says that many men find it natural to despair because they discovered that what they built their life upon was transient. Also Ibid., p. 190, Kierkegaard mentions that the aesthete "... gasps after pleasure ... for only in the instant of pleasure does he find repose, and when that is passed he gasps with faintness... the spirit is constantly disappointed, and ... his soul... becomes an anguishing dread..." See also Jolivet, Op. cit., p. 125.

2 Dread, p. 78.

3 Either/Or, Vol. II, p. 199. Also Ibid., p. 200, where Judge William declares to the aesthete "you are like a dying man, you die daily... life has lost its reality..." See also Ibid., p. 198, "the aesthetic view of life has proved itself to be despair."

He then becomes the 'epitome of every possibility',[1] and is forced to choose either the temporal, which necessitates nihilism and perdition, or the ethico-religious ensuing in self integration, selfperpetuation and health. This is so, because the healthy man, according to Kierkegaard, is he who lives in the hope for the eternal via the moment, yet retaining touch with the temporal.

(d) The Aesthete and Despair:[2]

In the preceding sections the factors that precipitate despair have been mentioned. It has been noted that the aesthetic stage is a stage in the existential development of the self, in which man does not yet realise his dual nature of the infinite and the finite, the eternal in time. The aesthetic stage precedes despair and nourishes the seeds of despair in it.[3]

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1 Ibid., p. 17, where the aesthete is told that "you are an epitome of every possibility, and so at one time I can see in you the possibility of perdition, at another of salvation".

2 This section and the subsequent sections (e) and (f) can hardly be written without the repetition of certain concepts and themes. For when discussing despair one is led to dwell on choice. And when discussing choice one has to dwell again, to a limited degree, on despair.

3 An ebaborate analysis of Despair and Choice is to be found in Sickness Unto Death, pp. 146-200, and Either/Or, Vol. II, pp. 198-236. 'Choice' is stressed on pages 218-229 of Either/Or, Vol. II.

But what is despair? Despair is a form of loss of one's self due to the inability on the part of the aesthete to effect balance and stability between the two components of his being. It is a form of bewilderment, confusion, and even estrangement from one of the elements of his composite being. It is the failure to hold fast both elements in a form of homogeneity before Pure Being[1] or God. Considered this way, despair becomes a double-edged weapon which slays and saves at the same time. For he who remains in despair becomes mortally sick, and he who suffers it is necessarily driven to choose himself in his eternal validity.[2]

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1 Cf., Sickness Unto Death, p. 162. "The self is the conscious synthesis of infinitude and finitude --- whose task is to become itself, a task which can be performed only by means of a relationship to God."

2 Cf., Either/Or, Vol. II, p. 236. The aesthete gets to know that his destruction is the temporal: "Then it appears to him that time, that the temporal, is his ruin; he demands a more perfect form of existence, and at this point there comes to evidence a fatigue, an apathy.... This apathy may rest so broodingly upon a man that suicide appears to him the only way of escape.... He has not chosen himself; like Narcissus he has fallen in love with himself. Such a situation has certainly ended not infrequently in suicide".

Kierkegaard presents quite a searching analysis of despair in his Sickness Unto Death, and in Either/Or Volume II. It is interesting to find that Kierkegaard anticipates many of the Freudian psychoanalytic concepts; for example, when he talks about conscious and unconscious forms of despair; also when he says that he who becomes conscious of the causes of his despair is on his way to a cure. Kierkegaard here seems to be advancing a doctrine of human nature which is as profound as it is psychological.

Furthermore, Kierkegaard initiates his analysis of despair[1] with the following plan:

A. Despair Regarded in Such a Way That One Does Not Reflect Whether it is Conscious or Not, So That One Reflects Only upon the Factors of the Synthesis.

a) Despair viewed under the aspects of Finitude/Infinitude.

(1) The despair of infinitude is due to the lack of finitude.

(2) The despair of finitude is due to the lack of infinitude.

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1 The interested reader may be referred to a fairly rounded exposition of this concept in David Roberts, Existentialism and Religious Belief, ed., Roger Hazelton (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 116-125. Mr. Robert's schematizing of the problem of despair does not faithfully follow Kierkegaard's plan in Sickness Unto Death.

b) Despair viewed under the aspect of Possibility/Necessity.

(1) The despair of possibility is due to the lack of necessity.

(2) The despair of necessity is due to the lack of possibility.

B. Despair Viewed under the Aspect of Consciousness:

a) The despair which is unconscious that it is despair, or the despairing unconscious of having a self and an eternal self.

b) The despair which is conscious of being despair, as also it is conscious of being a self wherein there is after all something Eternal, and then is either in despair at not willing to be itself, or in despair at willing to be itself.[1]

This is how Kierkegaard plans his analysis of despair. However, despair with its two movements towards the temporal or towards the eternal, is the result of the ontological structure of man. Man has to effect a communion with Pure Being without being himself Pure Being. Both of the foregoing movements lead to despair because they are attempts to escape from the genuine self which is neither the one nor the other but a composite of both. Although man knows that either one is the cause of despair, yet he cannot escape from either one, especially the eternal; it is hard, it generates despair and nothing can destroy it. Consequently,

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1 The above plan of despair is adopted from Sickness Unto Death, pp. 162-180.

it drives man to continual self-consumption without dying.[1] This form of despair is not like the rational doubt which can be removed easily by rational demonstration.

(e) Reason, Doubt and Despair:

But what is the difference between doubt[2] and despair? The difference between the two seems to be almost the same difference as that between reason and faith. If the realm of reason is the realm of ideality, and the realm of faith is the realm of real existence, then on parallel grounds doubt belongs to the realm of abstractions, and despair belongs to the realm of the inward life of the individual.

Doubt belongs to the realm of reason, but the realm of reason is the realm of necessity. Consequently, doubt cannot move, and if it cannot move it cannot embrace

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1 Cf., Ibid., p. 151. "... but dying the death means to live to experience death.... If one might die of despair as one dies of a sickness, then the eternal in him, the self, must be capable of dying in the same sense that the body dies of sickness. But this is an impossibility.... The despairing man cannot die; no more than the dagger can slay thoughts can despair consume the eternal thing, the self, ... whose worm dieth not, and whose fire is not quenched!"

2 For the difference between doubt and despair see Either/Or, Vol. II, pp. 215-17.

the existing ego.[1] Therefore, only despair can seep into the very depth of the personality. Doubt, on the other hand, can only be predicated of intellectual activity, whereas despair grips the individual in his very core. This despair incites the aesthete to leap towards the eternal and relate himself to Pure Being. As a result, rational attempts to reach objective certainty do not preclude despair. On the contrary, the philosopher might rest in his intellectual certainty and still be captured by despair. This point Kierkegaard launches 'against certain philosophers of Germany',[2] who having conquered their doubt and tranquillized their thought, are still in despair and are distracted from it by objective thinking. The aesthete hardly needs reason in order to despair. For one can despair without reason, and can reason and remain in despair. This means that, for Kierkegaard, the extravagant intellectual does not will despair but thinks it out, and therefore, remains existentially in it.

However, in order to go beyond despair, one must have the will to will despair. And when one wills despair,

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1 Ibid., p. 216. "Despair is precisely an expression for the whole personality, doubt only an expression for thought."

2 Ibid., p. 216. Here Kierkegaard seems to mean Hegel.

he simply goes beyond it.[1] But by going beyond it, his personality is tranquilized, not by logical necessity but rather by an insertion of the will. This will is an essential constituent of the personality, and the more will a person has the more self he possesses. This is why, when talking about the importance of choice Kierkegaard says that: "A man who has no will at all is no self; for the more will he has, the more consciousness of self he has also."[2] Consequently, for Kierkegaard, a richness of personality and its spiritual contents can be achieved by a decisive will which effects choice and vanquishes despair by reaching the Divine.

Once again one should repeat that Kierkegaard, in the dinstinction he makes between rational doubt and despair, does not deny the merits of reason when it functions in its own domain. He is simply drawing the limits of reason when it reflects on existential matters, like despair and choice.

(f) Choice and the Aesthete:

The discussion of despair and doubt leads us to discuss Kierkegaard's concept of choice. In order to do so,

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[1] Ibid., p. 217.

[2] Sickness Unto Death, p. 162.

we have to dwell again on the duality of the self. According to Kierkegaard, the consciousness of the self, as a duality of eternity and time, is a form of deepened self-knowledge that introduces to the individual the category of choice. In the aesthetic stage, when the aesthete is not yet in despair, he is not yet himself fully. When he suffers despair, only then does he become aware of his real self as it is. The aesthete, as it were, before despair, was incapable of real choice. This is so, because he was not aware of the alternatives that constitute his nature. Therefore, this self is what it is, and it does not become. It becomes only in ideality or logical necessity. But when the self is realized for what it is, then there is open to it the true possibility of choice. This is what Kierkegaard means by saying that one chooses 'one's self'. The self which is chosen is the dual self, and this new self gives new possibility of choice. The former self, namely, the aesthetic, is necessity, i.e., the absence of alternatives. Whereas the new self is contingent and hence can exercise freedom.

Apparently, choice seems to be rooted in the structure of the self that is in the situation. However, when the category of choice is introduced the self is already in the ethical stage. Consequently, it is the presence of the eternal in the self that brings forth the ethical stage.

From this, it follows that what constitutes freedom and makes choice possible is something highly abstract - the eternal - and something highly concrete, namely, the temporal.[1] This is freedom per se for Kierkegaard. Accordingly, choice is nourished and reaches maturity in a self that is in despair. Here there is cognizance of the unbalanced conflict between eternity and time.[2]

But this conflict, we said, is the means of liberation from the aesthetic life to reach the ethical life by a choice. However, Kierkegaard maintains that there is one form of choice where the individual chooses himself absolutely. This category of absolute choice requires brief attention: "I return to the importance of choosing. So, then, in choosing absolutely I choose despair, and in despair I choose the absolute, for I myself, I am the absolute..."[3] What Kierkegaard means by the self as the absolute is obscure.

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1 Cf., Either/Or, Vol. II, p. 218, where Kierkegaard talks of the self as "... the most abstract of all things, and yet at the same time it is the most concrete - it is freedom."

2 Freedom could also be related to Dread in a similar fashion. The seat of Dread is found in the tension between two open possibilities for the individual: The possibility of drawing nearer to God, or the possibility of self annihilation.

3 Either/Or, Vol. II, p. 217.

Knowing that he wrote in an age where absolutism had the upper hand does, however, help us to clarify what he meant by the self as the absolute.[1] One might say that choices have an absolute character in the sense that, having been made, they cannot be retracted; the self becomes the absolute when the individual, by his choice, determines his destiny once and for all by choosing the ethical that everywhere lays burdensome tasks upon the self. The self becomes the absolute in either bringing together, or, in dissociating the multiplicity of the attachments between itself and the universe.

Furthermore, absolute choices have two dialectical movements or aspects, necessity and freedom. Choices are necessary in the sense that the self or inward history which is chosen, was already available qua the individual; and choices are free in the sense that the newly acquired self was precipitated by the choice.[2] This sounds paradoxical, yet one can find it meaningful. For, if what one chooses

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1 One cannot but agree here with what Lourie says about his painful difficulty to understand Kierkegaard on certain points: "Much as I love Kierkegaard, I sometimes hate him for keeping me awake at night. Only between sleeping and waking am I able to unravel some of his most complicated sentences." Fear and Trembling, p. 81 'n'.

2 Cf., Either/Or, Vol. II, p. 219. Choices perform "... two dialectical movements: that which is chosen does not exist and comes into existence with the choice; that which is chosen exists, otherwise, there would not be a choice."

did not exist, but completely came into existence with the choice, one would not be choosing, but would be creating. But one does not create himself, he chooses himself. Furthermore, if the original self is regarded as the new self, then this new self is not a self of free spirit, because it actually was not chosen, but was there from the beginning. The new self is born out of a choice that transforms the original self to a new one.

However, when choice is performed, the self is transformed to a higher sphere than the aesthetic. The self reaches the ethical and religious spheres of consciousness. But when the self reaches these spheres the aesthetic stage, Kierkegaard observes, is not completely eliminated. The self lives in the happy synthesis of the three modes of existence. The three become united in an alliance, and become mutually interdependent, with the religious sphere as the dominating factor. This fact seems to have been overlooked by certain interpreters of Kierkegaard, for example, Thomas and Allen, in their books, Subjectivity and Paradox,[1] and Kierkegaard: His Life And Thought,[2] respectively. Their understanding of Kierkegaard on this point is questionable. In connection

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1 Thomas, Op. cit.

2 E.L. Allen, Kierkegaard: His Life And Thought (London: Stanley Nott Ltd., 1935).

with the three stages Thomas writes the following:

> " The whole point of Either/Or was to present the dilemma of opposites - either the aesthetical life or the ethical life. It was not an attempt to merge them in a synthesis but to preserve them clearly apart so that it could be seen that they were the alternatives of a choice."[1]

Whereas, Allen has the following to say on the same issue:

> " We are meant to mount up from level to level, till we come at last face to face with God. There are those, of course, who never leave the swamps for the steep path which winds up the mountain side..."[2]

One's inability to agree with Thomas and Allen in the above quotations is necessitated by many passages in Either/Or. In this book, Kierkegaard emphasizes that life becomes meaningless if we cannot conceive of the three spheres as allies, and even as a unity and a synthesis:

> " If you cannot reach the point of seeing the aesthetical, the ethical and the religious as three great allies, if you do not know how to conserve the unity of the diverse appearances which everything assumes in these diverse spheres, then life is devoid of meaning, then one must grant that you are justified in maintaining your pet theory that one can say of everything 'Do it or don't do it you will regret both!'"[3]

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1 Thomas, Op. cit., p. 13.

2 Allen, Op. cit., p. 121.

3 Either/Or, Vol. II, p. 150.

In another passage Kierkegaard repeats the same theme:

> "...all of the aesthetical remains in man... but from this it by no means follows that it has been lost.... The ethicist simply carried through the despair which the higher aesthetician began..."[1]

These passages show that Thomas' and Allen's understanding of Kierkegaard on his point leaves much to be desired. Also, early discussions showed that the three modes of existence co-exist in the same self. It was shown that in the movement from the one to the other, the first is not entirely left behind but is integrated with the higher stage. Furthermore, the unreliability of the views of both writers is made clearer, when one knows that the different stages are not to be taken as a journey from Beirut to Jerusalem, where Beirut is left behind when reaching Damascus, and in Jerusalem, both Beirut and Damascus are completely left behind.

Now, from all the foregoing discussion of the meaning of the aesthetic mode of life, one can conclude that the aesthetic life ends in despair. This despair prompts the aesthete to choose the ethical mode of existence, an existence which also drives him to choose the religious sphere. But since Kierkegaard maintains that the

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[1] Ibid., p. 233.

ethical sphere is very close to the religious sphere, one should, therefore, consider Kierkegaard's understanding of the ethical sphere insofar as it bears on the problem of faith and reason. It is this sphere that we should turn to next.

II THE ETHICAL STAGE [1]

(a) The Meaning of the 'Ethical':

The preceding analysis of the aesthetic mode of life showed that the shipwreck of the aesthete was despair from which the ethical life emerges. Whenever choice is taken, the ethical becomes present. But what does Kierkegaard precisely mean by the ethical? This is the goal of the present section of the essay.

Briefly, the ethicist, for Kierkegaard, is a person whose ultimate aim or telos, is the whole-hearted obligation to duty and to the universal moral law. Duty and universality are what lead him to a stability which the self of the aesthete lacks. If for Descartes, the Archimedean point of certainty was "Cogito Ergo Sum", then for Kierkegaard its ethical equivalent would be, "I choose authentically, therefore, I reach the plane of duty and the universality of the ethical".

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[1] The ethical stage is discussed in Either/Or, Vol. II, in the Stages, Postscript, and in Fear And Trembling.

The man who discards the temptations of the moment and external factors, and focusses on the inwardness of his single being, reforms himself with an inner moral restraint. In so doing he becomes the example of compliance with the eternal cry of the Athenian Socrates, "know thyself".

Duty, for Kierkegaard, is founded on reason which is universal and abstract. However, in order to be raised to authentic morality, duty should be interiorized.[1] In other words, the sense of moral obligation should be fused with one's conscience. Having become so fused, it is imperative that it must become altruistic. Having become altruistic, man shoulders responsibility, establishes friendships and commits himself to marriage.[2] This means that he subordinates his individual interests to collective interests and the welfare of society. Here, collective duty - I use 'collective' to mean 'universal' - becomes the person's own duty, where he becomes a synthesis of the universal and the particular with inward clarity and coherence:

> " ...when the ethical individual has completed his task, has fought the good fight, he has then reached the point where he has become the one man, that is to say, that there is no other man altogether like him;

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1 Cf., Either/Or, Vol. II, pp. 260-61. "Only when the individual himself is the universal is it possible to realize the ethical. This is the secret of the conscience.... So the ethical individual has duty not outside him but in him".

2 Cf., Ibid., pp. 326-30.

> and at the same time he has become the universal man. To be the one man is not itself anything so great, for that everybody has in common with every product of nature; but to be that in such a way that he is also the universal man is the true art of living!" [1]

(b) Conflict Between the Demands of Reason and the Demands of Faith:

Again the ethical, being the universal, labours under the dictates of reason; being so, it is highly abstract. Consequently, the ethical is prohibitive and appears as a law.[2] Furthermore, every action the ethicist does should take the form of duty. If the ethicist cannot effect this, he will be unhappy. This is so, because duty in him would be dependent upon external factors. Even friendship should take the form of duty.[3]

Breathless as one might feel at this point one can very distinctly distinguish a clear Kantian strain stamping Kierkegaard's analysis of the ethical. With a moment's reflection we are driven to Kant's concept of duty, The Categorical Imperative: that is, a command issuing from the autonomous feeling of respect for the law and promising no reward; a universally applicable maxim. It is an a priori

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[1] Ibid., p. 261.

[2] Ibid., p. 259.

[3] Ibid., p. 327.

concept compelled by the universal laws of reason. It was Kant who declared that one should act in his person on behalf of humanity; or his celebrated rule: "act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature."[1]

However, appearances are sometimes deceptive. The striking resemblance between Kierkegaard and Kant here cannot be extended any further. The rationalistic aspect of Kant's concept of the ethical can be extolled to the extremes. Yet no allowance for any distinctive expression of individuality is permitted. The moral agent -- if I understand Kant correctly here -- is compelled to the imperatives of God without incurring any conflict with his obligations towards his fellow humans. In other words, the claims of practical reason are in harmony with the dictates of Pure Being -- God. Whereas Kierkegaard's point of departure from Kant is to be found in his conception of the ethical.[2]

The ethical for Kierkegaard, being a synthesis of the universal and particular, an acute contradiction, harbours in it the seeds of its own destruction. For it is not infrequent

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[1] Immanual Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals. trans. H.J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row. Publishers, 1964), p. 30.

[2] The theme of Judge William in Either/Or, Vol. II, is dominantly Kantian. The discontinuity between Kant and Kierkegaard is to be found in what Johannes de Silentio says in Fear And Trembling. In this book De Silentio repeats what the Judge maintains, and then he goes beyond it.

that the demands of the ethical are in tension with the demands of God. They may even contradict each other. This is what uplifts the individual above the universal. Hence the ethical becomes the stumbling block of faith. "For faith is this paradox, that the particular is higher than the universal..."[1] Faith itself, demands a concrete individual standing in a face-to-face encounter with Pure Being which incarnates itself as a person in time. This intractable character of faith does not really demolish the Kantian 'arrogance' of practical reason, that is, the moral law. But it is rather discontinuous with it. Reason is, so to speak, suspended and the inwardly plagued individual, with his contradiction is surrendered to the darkness of the absurd, and faith enters upon the scene.

One need not stress again here that it was the introduction of the eternal into the self that transferred the aesthetic to the ethical. Also, by the same token, the ethical is destroyed and transmuted to the religious universe. The basic characteristic of the ethical situation is that it cannot do full justice to ethical exigencies. The substance of the ethical being universal, ethical maxims establish horizons which the ethicist painfully ventures to accomplish

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1 Fear And Trembling, p. 65. See also Ibid., p. 80.

and always falls short of. Hence, the expression of this ethical failure is guilt. For guilt is primarily the product of the ethical. The self is lost, perhaps dissipated and repugnantly stretched beyond its capacity, due to the sometimes puzzling impossibility of ethical imperatives. The moral subject, staggered by his encompassing guilt, acquires an entirely different expression, and by a 'leap' places his guilt before God. His guilt becomes sin, and is, therefore, launched into the religious sphere. However, the ethical in its encounter with God is conquered to return again as the universal in a more deepened existential immediacy.[1] This is precisely what is meant by Kierkegaard's equivocal statement that faith "...is like a two-edged sword which slays and saves"[2] at one and the same time. Thus, while becoming morally stifled the individual becomes emancipated in his new relation with God. When this is effected, the individual regains with more abundance his existential moral obligations. This is the double movement of faith; one breaks with the world and faces God, becomes liberated in faith, then turns back again to his immediate existential duties.

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1 Cf., Ibid., p. 80. "From this, however, it does not follow that the ethical is to be abolished, but it acquires an entirely different expression, the paradoxical expression -- that, for example, love to God may cause the knight of faith to give his love to his neighbour the opposite expression to that which, ethically, speaking, is required by duty'." See also Dread, p. 17.

2 Fear And Trembling, p. 42.

The conflict between the universal and particular, or, as it were, the individual as standing outside the universal, is in Kierkegaard's case exemplified in his abandonment of Regina. The universal urges that Kierkegaard should marry Regina. While the particular, rising above the universal before eternity, counselled that he should foresake her, namely, to break with moral ties. By so doing Kierkegaard resigned the world and became liberated in the idea or love for God. This is why when he renounced Regina, he was endlessly hoping to regain her.

Also Kierkegaard employs the Abraham-Isaac legend,[1] as an example to show the tension between the universal demands of reason, and the uniqueness of faith, where the ethical is defeated. In Fear And Trembling, Kierkegaard practically exhausts the ethical and religious implications of the story. The story comprises the bulk of his book.[2]

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1 Abraham is considered by Kierkegaard as the "Knight of Faith".

2 In Fear And Trembling, Kierkegaard presents two versions of the story, the Bible story and his own version of the story. Cf., Ibid., pp. 27-29. For Kierkegaard's interpretations of the story, Cf., Ibid., pp. 30-51. For an interesting analysis of the implications of the Abraham legend and its bearing on 'faith'. The reader is referred to Griffith O. Gwilym, "Kierkegaard on Faith", The Hibbert Journal, Vol. 42, (1943-44), pp. 58-64. The above exposition is indebted to this article in understanding Kierkegaard on this point.

In this legend, God calls upon Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, his only son, whom he very dearly loved. Here the demands of the ethical and the demands of faith are in dreadful opposition. Ethically speaking, the call of God is monstrous and absurd. For, as just said, Abrahan cared for his family and deeply loved his son. In his love and care, Abraham is a typical ethicist who abides by the moral imperatives of the ethical. But in spite of this Abrahan renounces the ethical with fervent inner turmoil, and with 'fear and trembling' seeping into the very kernal of his being. He leaves, in the dread horror of darkness for Mount Moriah with his knife and wood for the sacrifice. By so doing, he chooses the 'impossible possibility', the absurd, and passes to the religious sphere. All of this is done by a leap of faith, by a passionate trust in God's calling. Viewed ethically Abraham was a potential murderer, while viewed religiously Abraham is the 'knight of faith':

> " If faith does not make it a holy act to be willing to murder one's son, then let the same condemnation be pronounced upon Abraham as upon every other man.... The ethical expression for what Abraham did is, that he would murder Isaac; the religious expression is, that he would sacrifice Isaac; but precisely in this contradiction consists the dread which can well make a man sleepless, and yet Abraham is not what he is without this dread."[1]

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[1] Fear And Trembling, p. 41.

The story of Abraham, says Kierkegaard, has a remarkable property which is that of being remarkably great. This greatness lies in the fact that Abraham, despite his dread and horror, has kept on walking, determined to execute the will of God. Abraham had to break away with his ethical rules, suspend them, and to surrender, with an inward uncertainty, all his being to God. Because he was rationally foolish in his act, he was religiously great, says Kierkegaard.[1]

(c) Faith and the Teleological Suspension of the Ethical Demands of Reason:

Abraham, in his obedience to God was 'rationally foolish' because what he believed was a personal and private undertaking, an undertaking which reason cannot comprehend. Abraham's faith, therefore, entails the suspension of reason and ethics. But what does it mean to say that the ethical is suspended teleologically? Kierkegaard's possible answer would run like this: the ultimate telos of a religious man is faith. Consequently, when ethical rules come into conflict with the imperatives of faith, these rules are suspended for the sake of a telos. Hence, ethical rules are suspended teleologically, namely, for a purpose, that is God. That is, they ought to be subordinated to the absolute duty dictated by the Absolute. This is so, because the individual in his act

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[1] Cf., Ibid., p. 31.

of faith does not stand in relation to the universal, but stands independent of it in a unique relation to God. For instance, in Abraham's case, the individual overstepped reason, or the ethical, entirely and possessed a higher telos outside of the ethical. In relation to that telos, he suspended the ethical. Here again, the suspension of reason is due to the fact that "Faith itself cannot be mediated into the universal, for it would thereby be destroyed."[1] Faith then, implies an existing individual, in an existential relation to God. In all of this, Kierkegaard is perpetuating his anti-Hegelian thesis where the individual is not mercilessly swallowed by the abstract encompassing of a 'Universal Reason'. The individual in the act of faith, stands estranged of all communion except with the Almighty. Abraham's act, when performed, involved a suspension of reason because what he had to obey, namely, the voice of God, seemed absurd to reason. Yet he obeyed God and broke away with reason. For reason, the call of God, was absurd because it was God himself who promised Abraham that from Isaac his seed would be called. Eventually then, it looks as though God were inconsistent and contradicted

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1 Ibid., p. 81. Cf., Ibid., p. 80. "The paradox of faith is this that the individual is higher than the universal, that the individual ..., determines his relation to the universal by his relation to the absolute, not his relation to the absolute by his relation to the universal."

himself. It is at this point that Abraham's inward tension, the dread of the darkness of faith, begins. Here, if one rejects the superiority of Abraham's individuality by not suspending reason, one is driven back to the conclusion that Abraham was a murderer without any justification.

To conclude, therefore, one could safely say that it is in the act of faith, according to Kierkegaard, that the universal ethical is suspended. This universal ethical is a mode of existence, and not a universal moral principle that is abstract. This conclusion, one may maintain against some current interpretations of Kierkegaard on this point. Because the idea of the suspension of the ethical as a mode of existence is important for the understanding of Kierkegaard's concept of faith, one finds it advisable to attempt correcting, if possible, these interpretations. For instance, Mr. Calvin Schrag[1] devotes an intricately well-written article demonstrating that in the leap of faith, it is the universal moral requirement that is suspended and not the ethical as a mode of existence. I am aware of the injustice that Mr. Schrag's argument may suffer in being not reproduced with its full strength and merits in this essay. However,

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1 Calvin Schrag, "Note on Kierkegaard's Teleological Suspension of the Ethical", Ethics, Vol. 70. (1959-60), pp. 66-68.

presenting the substance of his thesis here will not incur serious distortion of his ideas. The net outcome of his argument is this:

> " ...that the ethical as a mode of existence is in no way contradicted or in any way suspended by the religious act of faith... thus it becomes clear that what is suspended by Kierkegaard's teleological suspension... is the ethical as a universal moral requirement."[1]

Concerning the suspension of the ethical universal, one need not quarrel with Schrag, nor would Kierkegaard for that matter. But his distinction between the ethical as universal, and the ethical as a mode of existence, clever as it is, does not seem to be very exact or agree with Kierkegaard. What Schrag exactly means by the 'ethical mode of existence' is not clear in his essay. To my mind, the ethical mode of existence is itself a <u>universally concrete</u> form of existence. Being so, it implies universal existential -- not abstract -- moral obligations. I think it is precisely these obligations, this mode of the ethical that is suspended in the leap of faith. For it was Kierkegaard who, in recurrently diverse contexts, stoutly affirmed that leaps of faith -- suspension -- are existentially made and not rationally. If only the universal abstract ethical is suspended, it need not be so, for being rational it can be mediated. Only existential choices

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 67.

cannot be mediated but effected by a suspension, a leap to the other end. If the above analysis is true, then one could dismiss as irrelevant Schrag's attempted thesis: that only the universal ethical is suspended and not the ethical as a mode of existence.

Another way of rejecting Schrag's thesis as being 'un-Kierkegaardian' would be to follow a counter proof along the following lines. It was mentioned earlier, in this chapter, that in the act of faith the ethical is destroyed in order to be regained with more abundance. Now, it is pertinent to ask "what form of ethical is regained?" Is it the abstract ethical or the ethical as a mode of existence? Doubtless it would not be Kierkegaardian to say that only the ethical as universal is regained. This is so because faith, being <u>real</u>, cannot and should not survive in the semi-reality of abstract principles of moral law. Therefore, if both the universal ethical and the ethical as a mode of existence, are not regained in the double movement of faith, then the only possibility that remains open is that the ethical as a mode of existence is regained. If this is cogent, then it should necessarily follow that, that which was suspended was the ethical as a mode of existence in order to be regained afterwards. This conclusion is diametrically opposed to what Schrag maintained, and hence leaves the core of his thesis outside the proper understanding of Kierkegaard.

(d) Conclusion:

In conclusion one could perhaps state the following: Despite Kierkegaard's suspension of the universal maxims of reason, he is not an enemy of reason, nor is he a radical irrationalist. Being rationalist or irrationalist has nothing whatsoever to do with his thought. What Kierkegaard abhors above all is to subjugate faith entirely to reason.[1] Reason, although necessary itself, cannot be the sole instrument of faith. To dub Kierkegaard as rationalist or irrationalist, is similar to saying that water is the only conclusive necessary element for one's life, or that it is exclusively unnecessary to it. Neither predicate is independently correct in this case. Therefore, any understanding of Kierkegaard which goes to either of these extremes should be rejected.

Ibn-Khaldoun, the outstanding Arab historian, when denying the validity of reason in the domain of religious discourse, urges that one cannot see with his ears nor hear with his eyes. The balance which weighs gold does not weigh mountains. Reason is sovereign in

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[1] Here I use reason to mean Kantian practical reason. However, throughout the essay 'reason' is used to mean both the practical and the speculative aspects of reason.

its own domain, mathematics and the concrete sciences. It should not encroach on matters of faith. Evidently, we cannot consider Ibn-Khaldoun as an irrationalist simply because he is settling things in order. The above example is parallel, in respect to my thesis, to understanding Kierkegaard on the problem of faith and reason. For Kierkegaard, as stated above, faith does not come entirely within the realm of reason to understand. It belongs to a different universe or order of things. Even though one were able to convert the whole content of faith into the form of conceptual thinking, says Kierkegaard, it does not follow that one has adequately conceived faith, or understood how one got into it, or how it got into one. For Kierkegaard there is a vast difference between he who has disinterested knowledge of what Christianity means, and he 'who really navigates in the bliss of Christian faith'. Here the individual paradoxically stands in truth higher than the universal.

For the elucidation of the notions of paradox and truth we should turn our attention to the following chapter.

PART II

FAITH, REASON

AND THE APPREHENSION

OF TRUTH

CHAPTER IV

THE MOVEMENT OF FAITH AND REASON IN APPREHENDING TRUTH [1]

The first part of this essay, comprising chapters one, two and three, was mainly devoted to the problem of faith and reason with respect to Kierkegaard's doctrine of the Spheres of Existence.

In this chapter, the second part of the essay, the attempt is made to present an exposition as well as a critical evaluation of Kierkegaard's concept of apprehension of truth, and the implications that this concept has on the problem of the relation of faith to reason.

Consequently, this chapter is divided into three main sections: The first section deals with Kierkegaard's theme of Truth as Subjectivity. The second section deals with Kierkegaard's Method of Indirect Communication, and the third section deals with 'How Truth

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[1] Kierkegaard's concept of apprehension of truth is found in his two books, Fragments, and Postscript. In this part of the essay extensive use is made of many of the essential themes of these two books.

is Apprehended' according to Kierkegaard. We will, therefore, approach these sections separately.

I TRUTH AS SUBJECTIVITY [1]

(a) Truth Is not an Epistemological Matter, but a Matter of Subjective Appropriation:

From many contexts of Kierkegaard's writings

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1 Kierkegaard, in not infrequent contexts, maintains that truth is not only subjectivity, but inwardness. Apparently he seems to employ both concepts interchangeably. Cf., Postscript, p. 216, also p. 218 when he says "...the irruption of inwardness, the first determination of truth as inwardness." From Kierkegaard's recurrent use of 'inwardness', one can infer that part of what he means by it, is the internal dynamic activity of the personality, the rational and the irrational components with intensity of feeling and thought. Walter Lowrie's use of 'inwardness' instead of the Danish term 'Inderlighed' seems to imply many meanings in Kierkegaard's texts, yet all are akin to one another. Inwardness seems to imply 'intimacy with ones' inner states' 'energy', 'earnestness', 'sincerity', 'depth', 'pathos', 'intensity'. In the Postscript, p. 391, Kierkegaard defines inwardness as "...the relationship of the individual to himself before God, his reflection into himself, and that it is precisely from this that the suffering derives... so that the absence of it signifies the absence of religiousity". Kierkegaard sums up the problem of inwardness by the following: "Christianity is spirit, spirit is inwardness, inwardness is subjectivity, subjectivity is essentially passion.... As soon as subjectivity is eliminated, and passion eliminated from subjectivity, and the infinite interest eliminated from passion, there is in general no decision at all..." Ibid., p. 33.

it is clear that the 'truth'[1] he is passionately concerned with is the 'existential'[2] truth, and not the objective detached one. It is a translation of the abstract into the concrete, an inward appropriation of the ideal, a dynamic practice and a realization instead of any doctrinal knowledge. It is a 'how' rather than a 'what'. This sort of truth is launched with an impassioned individualism and with a ravaging effect against Hegelianism. Truth, Kierkegaard would say, is not in the cognitive proposition that is believed, but in the person believing it. Hence, truth is subjectivity, namely, it belongs to the subject.[3] However, this definition of truth should not drive one to impute to Kierkegaard an epitemological relativism such as that of Protagoras: "Man... is the measure of all things, of the existence of things that are, and of the non-existence of things that are not".[4] Kierkegaard does not impute any infallibility

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1 Kierkegaard's theme of truth as subjectivity is developed in the Postscript, pp. 59-224.

2 Note that Kierkegaard uses 'Existential' to mean 'Subjective'. The two terms are employed synonymously. However, he is cognizant that not all subjective thinking is existential. For example our fancies, illusions, and autistic thinking are not existential. In other words, there is no biconditional relationship between existential and subjective, where if you deny the one you deny the other.

3 Cf., Postscript, p. 175. "The subjective reflection turns its attention inwardly to the subject, and desires in this intensification of inwardness to realize the 'truth'".

4 Plato, "Theaetetus", The Dialogues of Plato, trans. B. Jowett (New York: Random House, 1937), Vol. II, p. 153. Referred to hereafter as Dialogues of Plato.

to subjective personal opinions, nor does he tolerate solipcism. For he believes, among other universal standards, in an ultimate standard, God, the subjective truth par excellence. Kierkegaard is not a subjectivist in the sense that he would deny objective truth. It is the subject in the act of making truth his own that he insisted upon, and not the subject in possession of, or determining it. Furthermore, Kierkegaard's formulation of truth as subjectivity, contrary to the common contention,[1] is not an epistemological one. Indeed, he does not seem to sympathize with the modern philosophic enterprise of investigating the origin, ground and limits of knowledge. This is because the life of the individual, who is in passionate search for truth, is too full of effort in order to spare him the 'idleness'[2] of doubting

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1 Cf., Allen, Op. cit., p. 148. See also James Brown, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Buber and Barth. (New York: The Crowell-Collier Publishing Company, 1962), pp. 12-13. Also Ibid., pp. 36-37. Both Allen and Brown think that Kierkegaard in his theme of 'truth as subjectivity' is advancing a possible epistemological theory. Especially Brown when he charts an unwarranted epistemological comparison between Kant and Kierkegaard. This is obviously a mastake, for both Kant and Kierkegaard are not talking about the same dimensions of truth. Kierkegaard is not concerned here with the origin of knowledge and the reality of the outside world. He is infinitely concerned with the individual's salvation before Truth-God. Kierkegaard's possible epistemological theory is to be found in a different context, in his analysis of immediacy, as the content of consciousness, and consciousness as a contradiction of the immediate and the possible. Cf., Dubitandum Est, Op. cit., pp. 147-49. Also Dread, p. 32, Postscript, p. 102.

2 Cf., For Self Examination, p. 88.

the reality of the external world. Doubt in matters of of faith is not noetic doubt to be eliminated by the acquisition of more knowledge, but an existential doubt which can only be overcome in a passionate act of the will.[1]

It is clear, therefore, that whatever Kierkegaard means by truth as subjectivity, cannot be doubt in the reality of the outside world and the substitution of the inner subjective world for it. Kierkegaard here seems to be extending his denial to the Hegelian identification of the 'inner' and the 'outer', the subject with the object,[2] which are basically epistemic innovations and definitely un-Kierkegaardian in this context. With his denunciation of epistemic doubt[3] and various attempts of Idealism, Kierkegaard transposes the problem of truth, to an entirely different plane, namely, not the exploration of its origin but rather the relation of the concrete Single One to any doctrine. This is due to the fact that Kierkegaard

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[1] Cf., Fragments, p. 67. "From this it follows that doubt can be overcome only by a free act, an act of the will..."

[2] Page 112 of the Postscript contains Kierkegaard's attack against Hegel on this point. "The systematic Idea is the identity of subject and object, the unity of thought and being. Existence... brings about, a separation between subject and object, thought and being".

[3] This should not persuade one to believe that we cannot infer from Kierkegaard's works an epistemological theory. Here Kierkegaard is viewing the problem of truth with different perspective, namely, the religious.

draws a distinction between Pure Being, God, and existence, man, and not between subject and object which kindles the epistemological problems that modern philosophy is endlessly trying to extinguish. This distinction breaks away from the epistemological problem, and focusses on the problem of truth as subjectivity; namely, how existence - individual - can relate itself to Pure Being as it manifests itself in various forms. The substance of such a relation is not totally noetic, but essentially passional. That is why Kierkegaard strove in his works to explore the universe of human emotions.

By now it is evident that it was the truth of the ethico-religious with which Kierkegaard is concerned, and not the objective truth of a creed or belief. Religion is not a method of formal logic, or a set of syllogisms to which the man of faith assents because they are true. The religious truth,[1] truth as subjectivity, must enter into the very heart of the individual's personal existence or else it is useless. It should, with vigour, lead to an inward drastic transformation of the individual himself, and bestow on him on him a novel personality cleansed with truth. However, this

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1 One can safely employ the term 'faith' rather than 'truth' without incurring a misunderstanding of Kierkegaard.

should not lead one to believe that Kierkegaard had no respect or liking for natural science and experimental procedure. This is the error, in my opinion, that Mr. Allen commits.[1] The religious truth, or faith, is a personal matter; something which essentially involves the individual man.

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1 Allen, Op. cit., p. 150, says about Kierkegaard: "He had no liking for natural science, because it offered an impersonal truth, and he was hungry for something which could be assimilated at once... blinded him to the fact that the scientific outlook is of equal importance." One can submit that Kierkegaard is definitely innocent of Mr. Allen's indictment here. For Kierkegaard was aware of the benefits that the scientific enterprise was yielding to humans. Kierkegaard could not have been so naive as to overlook the almost equal importance of natural science, for example, in the case of a physician's treatment of a fatally poisoned individual; nor the importance of astronomy or physics for a bewildered ship in the dark seas. Kierkegaard tried to meet and neutralize the exaggerated scientific outlook, by overemphacizing subjectivity. What he hated was to see science, with its extensive development, encroaching upon Christianity and making it a lifeless data for experimentation. It is natural to disapprove of something you appreciate, when it is not in its right place. Science, although important, has no place in religious discourse. For, much as one likes, or needs his car, he would unquestioningly hate seeing it parked in his bedroom. In the year 1846 Kierkegaard made the following entry in his Journals: "All such scientific methods become particularly dangerous and pernicious when they encroach upon the spiritual field. Plants, animals, and stars may be handled that way, but to handle the spirit of man in such a fashion is blasphemy which only weakens moral and religious passion". Journals, p. 182. Sec. 617, year 1846. Also in the Postscript, Kierkegaard holds that 'It must be always remembered that I speak of the religious, in which sphere objective thinking, when it ranks as highest, is precisely irreligious. But wherever objective thinking is within its rights, its direct form of communication is also in order, precisely because it is not supposed to have anything to do with subjectivity". Postscript, p. 70. 'n'.

In this sphere of subjective truth, man's very soul is on trial. It follows that truth is not a subjective reflection about an objective certainty whereby one establishes a theory which changes objective certainty to a subjective belief in truth; but rather a subjective appropriation;[1] i.e., a making one's own an objective uncertainty that burdens the subject with the responsibility of venturing to create truth. Kierkegaard says:

> " Here is such a definition of truth: An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation - process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth, the highest truth attainable for an existing individual. At the point where the way swings off (and where this is cannot be specified objectively, since it is a matter of subjectivity), there objective knowledge is placed in abeyance. Thus the subject merely has, objectively, the uncertainty; but it is this which precisely increases the tension of that infinite passion which constitutes his inwardness. The truth is precisely the venture which chooses an objective uncertainty with the passion of the infinite. I contemplate the order of nature in the hope of finding God, and I see omnipotence and wisdom; but I also see much else that disturbs my mind and excites anxiety. The sum of all this is an objective uncertainty. But it is for this very reason that the inwardness becomes as intense as it is, for it embraces this objective uncertainty with the entire passion of the infinite. In the case of a mathematical proposition the objectivity is given, but for this reason the truth of such a proposition is also an indifferent truth." [2]

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1 Webster's Dictionary maintains that 'appropriation' comes from the Latin root 'proprius' which means 'one's own'.

2 Kierkegaard, Postscript, p. 182.

We see here that: (a) the above definition of truth is equivalent to Kierkegaardian faith par excellence; namely, "without risk there is no faith";[1] (b) it is the element of objective uncertainty that brings about the infinite passion of subjective certainty - truth; (c) in the truth so generated, involvement implies a stake in the outcome of something that is undecided, in which there are genuine possibilities, and reason stands almost helpless before it; (d) if truth is such an involvement as in (b), then truth should have an element of uncertainty in it without which it could not be itself; (e) it is the process of transformation of the inward geography of the individual that gives truth its validity; (f) the necessity for subjective appropriation of truth is stressed by Kierkegaard and is preferred to objective endeavours.

This last theme (f), which was inferred from the above is of primary significance for Kierkegaard. Truth must be appropriated in such a way that it will be true for me; a truth which engulfs the very being of the individual and becomes the individual's ultimate concern. An entry in his Journals says the following:

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1 Ibid., p. 182.

> " What I really lack is to be clear in my mind what I am to do, not what I am to know, except in so far as a certain understanding must precede every action... the thing is to find a truth which is true for me, to find the idea for which I can live and die. What would be the use of discovering so-called objective truth, of working through all the systems of philosophy and being able, if inquired, to review them all and show up the inconsistencies within each system; - what good would it do me to be able to... construct a world in which I do not live, but only hold up for the view of others; - what good would it do me to be able to explain the meaning of Christianity if it had no deeper significance for me and for my life.... I certainly do not deny... an imperative of understanding and that through it one can work upon men, but it must be taken up into my life, and that is what I now recognise as the most important thing. That is what my soul longs after..."[1]

This marvelously expressed fragment of Kierkegaard's spirit is an epitome of human souls ever seeking authentic existence, and grappling to find the one and only principle - truth - for which one can stake his life and by which, one can label his destiny. It is an epitome of an adventuring Gilgamish, a compassionate Buddha, and an inquisitive Socrates. Kierkegaard was one of the very few who over-emphasized the appropriation of truth so tremendously.

Although one might succeed in finding a sort of egocentricity in Kierkegaard's passage above, one can understand that for him truth should not be construed in an objective manner. And if truth could ensue from the understanding or reason, one should not abstract from it, but it

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1 Journals, p. 15, year 1835, sec. 22.

should be taken into one's life and involve its totality. Translating this into the context of faith, we can see that for Kierkegaard the problem is not the understanding of the Christian faith, but learning not to transform it into an abstraction; to live in it, die in it, and sacrifice one's life for it.

(b) Truth Is the 'HOW' and Not the 'WHAT':

The principle of 'truth' as subjectivity is an invective against the indifferent believer, who should realize that if he is a believer, then he should commit himself unquestioningly to God.[1] Truth, therefore, is a living relation between the subject in truth, and the object, namely, God. But this relation is not an arbitrary relation. It is a HOW rather than a WHAT.[2] Kierkegaard would go as far as saying that even if falsity were passionately appropriated, it would approximate truth more than an objective certainty. At this point it becomes amply clear that what Kierkegaard was interested in bringing

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1 Kierkegaard's concept: 'truth is subjectivity', is reminiscent of the Socratic dictum - Know Thyself - which implies bringing to awareness something which man already possesses. But Kierkegaard construes the matter differently: man should look within and await for the condition of truth from above. 'Truth is subjective' and God 'is infinite subjectivity'.

2 Cf., Postscript, p. 181. "The objective accent falls on WHAT is said, the subjective accent on HOW it is said".

out by his definition "truth is subjectivity", is not the validity of the Christian doctrine, but the relation of the subject in faith to Christianity.[1]

But how does Kierkegaard define the 'how' and the 'what' just mentioned? Kierkegaard goes on to say that the 'how' is not concerned with the moral value of an utterance, but with the relationship sustained by the existing individual to the content of his utterance. This inward 'how', says Kierkegaard, is at its best the passion of the infinite. However, this passion of the infinite is precisely subjectivity, and consequently becomes the truth. Whereas the 'what' is merely focussed on the thought content and its objective validity.[2] Perhaps the following quotation from the Postscript is very illuminating in this context:

> " When the question of truth is raised in an objective manner, reflection is directed objectively to the truth, as an object to which the knower is related. Reflection is not focussed upon the relationship, however, but upon the question of whether it is the truth to which the knower is related. If only the object to which he is related is the truth, the subject is accounted to be in the truth. When the question of truth is raised subjectively, reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual's relationship; if only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not true".[3]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 18-19.

[2] Ibid., p. 181.

[3] Ibid., p. 178. (underlining is mine)

Here, Kierkegaard is not belittling objective thinking, i.e., Reason. This is in line with the thesis of the present essay. There is nothing irrational about Kierkegaard here and he is not against the public character of objective reasoning. The contrast between objective truth and subjective truth is here effected to make clear that, in matters of faith, it is the truth which is essentially related to personal existence, as inwardness or subjectivity which is of primary importance. The theme advanced by Kierkegaard in the above quotation could be made clear, by the following manner:

Case (1), Objective Reflection:

G is pursuing T in manner O about $Y \supset T$ becomes the object of G, and G relates itself to T only if Y is true.

Case (2), Subjective Reflection:

G is pursuing T in manner S about $Y \supset R$ becomes the object of G, and if R is true, then G is in T even if Y is not true.

If my formulation of Kierkegaard's argument in Case (1) and (Case (2) is granted, then it reveals beyond doubt that the main difference between both cases is in the manner of reflection. G, the subject in Case (1), reflects

on objective truth. Whereas G in Case (2), reflects only on his relation, R, and this relation, G must reflect with infinite passion in order for it to be true. This, I think, is exactly what Kierkegaard means by truth as subjectivity, and practically exhausts what Kierkegaard means by faith, in so far as it is a matter of subjective reflection only.

Furthermore, again in agreement with what the present essay is trying to establish, Case (1) and Case (2) do not logically contradict each other in a paradoxical fashion. Case (2) does not imply the negation of Case (1), but rather, its desertion. Subjective reflection culminates in the abandonment of reason by following a different movement, yet leaving reason a master in its domains -- detached mathematical and scientific realms. Therefore, perhaps one can, once and for all, banish the unwarranted predication of irrationalism and rationalism in Kierkegaard's thoughts.

In Case (2), Kierkegaard seems to run into a difficulty when he emphasizes the desertion of Case (1). That is, we are almost left with no real criterion for being in truth. Does the infinite passion of inwardness suffice to lead one to truth? How could this be differentiated from autistic thinking or illusion? The only way that remains

open for Kierkegaard as an answer, is to urge that objective truth in Case (1) is in no better a situation, namely, it cannot submit a definite criterion for existential truth. However, this possible answer does not relieve Kierkegaard from the notorious charge of solipsism.

In an interesting parable found in the Postscript, the distinction between both cases, objective and subjective reflection, is 'beautifully' delineated:

> " If one who lives in the midst of Christendom goes up to the house of God, the house of the true God, with the true conception of God in his knowledge, and prays in a false spirit; and one who lives in an idolatrous community prays with the entire passion of the infinite, although his eyes rest upon the image of an idol: where is there most truth? The one prays in truth to God though he worships an idol; the other prays falsely to the true God, and hence worships in fact an idol". [1]

The above quotation speaks for itself and needs no further comment than what has been mentioned earlier.[2]

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1 Ibid., p. 179-80.

2 One should be on the alert here not to attribute to Kierkegaard's concept of 'truth is subjectivity' any pragmatic characteristics. The infinite inward passion with which the subject relates himself to the Object, be it an idol or genuine God, is not similar to William James' "will to believe", where faith becomes hypothetical and depends on its practical utility. Faith for Kierkegaard, is something actual, it is living, and God is an ontological reality, he is living. He cannot be demonstrated, neither by pragmatic proofs, nor by rational ones.

(c) Hegel's Concept of Truth Is a Tautology:

If by now our understanding of what Kierkegaard means by truth is relatively established, then it is appropriate to separate Kierkegaard from Idealism or the Hegelian understanding of truth; that is, truth as the identity of thought and being, or the identity of being and thought.[1] Truth construed in this manner, as noted before, is bitterly rejected by Kierkegaard. Truth, at its best, can serve as a useless tautology. According to Kierkegaard, the Hegelian thesis, I think, would take the following form:

The Subject (S) $\equiv$ Thought objectified (T)

The Object (O) $\equiv$ Thought objectified (T)

From this follows, that the relation between (S) and (O) amounts to T $\equiv$ T, which is obviously a tautology that contributes no new knowledge.[2] The identity of (S) and (O) in Hegel, effects a continuity in the whole of being.

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1 Postscript, p. 170.

2 For an elaborate explanation of this point, Cf., Postscript, pp. 169-71. On page 169 Kierkegaard says the following: "Whether truth is defined more empirically, as the conformity of thought and being, or more idealistically, as the conformity of being with thought, it is, in either case, important carefully to note what is meant by being... what significance being there has for him, and whether the entire activity that goes on out there does not resolve itself into a tautology..."

But according to Kierkegaard, this is a being of thought, a kind of being, which is not that of man. Man's situation, as an individual does not permit him to adopt that point of view. Man, being a subject, must, therefore, adopt the subjective point of view. However, Kierkegaard urges that complete subjectivity is close to madness with the only difference being that madness is subjective passion for something definite,[1] while full subjectivity is appropriate only towards God.

(d) Subjectivity Becomes Untruth:

Before ending our discussion of truth as subjectivity, it is necessary at this point to indicate briefly the new movement that subjectivity acquires by the fact of historical revelation. Truth, from the Socratic point of view, is subjectivity, but from a Christian point of view, due to historical revelation, the penetration of the eternal in time, truth as subjectivity is transformed to untruth. Truth becomes external to subjectivity and truth is no more immanent in it. Truth becomes something transcendent; it becomes the eternal turned flesh at a certain point in history. It is no more subjective, but

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1 Ibid., p. 174 'n'.

its object becomes the Absolute Paradox, the eternal in time. This transformation of truth comprises an important part of Kierkegaard's Philosophical Fragments.

II METHOD OF INDIRECT COMMUNICATION:

As a necessary consequence of our preceding discussion of truth, it is appropriate to examine a doctrine which permeates Kierkegaard's writings and is an indispensable characteristic of truth as subjectivity. This is the method of 'Indirect Communication'. This method, in order to be assessed clearly, has to be contrasted with direct communication.

The difference between direct and indirect communication of truth, according to Kierkegaard, is the same necessary difference between objective reflection and subjective reflection. Each dictates its own mode of communication. The one is concerned with voluntary immediate expression of the self to another self, and the relation between the two selves, is basically cognitive or a two-valued epistemic one, viz., truth or falsity. The other is concerned with truth as subjective certainty of an objective uncertainty, which is faith - subjectivity and being inward, cannot be communicated directly. If it could be, it could not escape unavoidable distortion. For faith,

being an inward appropriation, when conveyed in a detached propositional form, is mediated and therefore annulled. Evidently Kierkegaard is urging that reason, although it can describe reality objectively by formulating a system of corresponding cognitive propositions, cannot in its free direct manner describe the reality of human existence.[1]

Existential truth, faith, makes it clear for one, that if he desired

> " ... to communicate anything on this point, it would first of all be necessary to give my exposition an <u>indirect</u> form. For if inwardness is the truth, results are only rubbish with which we should not trouble each other. The communication of results is an unnatural form of intercourse between man and man, in so far as every man is a spiritual being, for whom the truth consists in nothing else than the self-activity of personal appropriation, which the communication of a result tends to prevent." [2]

So, indirect communication is the method of communication that develops from such understanding of the human situation; the situation of what it means to exist, which

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1 Cf., <u>Postscript</u>, p. 216. Where Kierkegaard maintains that the misunderstanding between reason, speculative philosophy, and faith "...must be rooted deeply in the entire tendency of the age. It must, in short, doubtless be rooted in the fact that on account of our vastly increased knowledge, men had forgotten what it means to <u>Exist</u>, and what <u>Inwardness</u> signifies." See also <u>Ibid</u>., p. 232.

2 <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 216-17.

is a question that ultimately concerns the personal interiorization of truth, and not its public depersonalization:

> " Inwardness cannot be directly communicated, for its direct expression is precisely externality, its direction being outward, not inward. The direct expression of inwardness is no proof of its presence; the direct effusion of feeling does not prove its possession, but the tension of the contrasting form is the measure of the intensity of inwardness. The reception of inwardness does not consist in a direct reflection of the content communicated, for this is echo. But the reproduction of inwardness in the recipient constitutes the resonance by reason of which the thing said remains absent, ..." [1]

The two foregoing passages above depict to us clearly why an artful oblique form of the communication of the intimately religious - inwardness - is advocated by Kierkegaard. Yet he does not deny direct objective communication and its propriety in respect to matters of facts. Therefore, we can safely deduce the following implications:

(a) that the purpose of Christian communication is not simply objective; but is to induce in the recipient a mode of truth imbedded in the speaker's inwardness. It seems that one cannot free himself of this mode of truth, become external to it, and

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[1] Ibid., p. 232.

describe it propositionally. For if he ever does, he is no longer in truth. To communicate what is appropriated in a person's immediate inwardness - faith - is to sting the other person, and compel him to the Socratic act of self-examination. Consequently, he is compelled to appropriate truth for himself. This could only be effected by a non-cognitive outcome of indirect communication. This partially explains why Kierkegaard resorted to pseudonymous authors in his different works, and why his style is a strange but attractive fusion of poetic, philosophic, literary and religious insights. One might suspect, as in Bergson and Nietzsche, that it is Kierkegaard's forceful literary style rather than his rigorous logic that converts his readers to assent to his position.

(b) Kierkegaard maintains that direct communication via propositions imparts truth, but this truth is never of moral and religious importance. There seems to be a great difference between this propositional form of communication and the inward reality. At their best, propositions can be no more than an echo of inwardness, but never inwardness

itself.[1] Consequently, ethical and religious propositions even if true, cannot induce in men, moral and religious transformation. This means that in the oblique form of communication, one should forget himself as a subject of objective communication, to a careful, scrutinizing religious

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1 In chapter II which dealt with the contents of the spheres of existence, the Concepts of Irony and Humour were intentionally left out. However, here it is pertinent to mention that irony and humour are two modes of communication that the 'Single One' employs when expressing himself. Irony is a form of communication which the individual resorts to when he is, so to speak, in the transitional sphere between the aesthetic and the ethical spheres. Whereas humour is a form of communication that is employed when the individual is on the boundary between the ethical and religious stages. Cf., Ibid., p. 448. Both forms of communication are indirect. Both are ways of the outer expression of the individual's unique subjectivity. This outward expression does not convey inwardness but veils it. Both are 'incognito' modes of communication behind which the transformation of the deep inwardness of the individual takes place. When the aesthete is on the way to a higher ideal, namely, the ethical, he uses irony to masquerade this inward transition. However, it is hard for one, by an outward observation, to tell whether the ethical life is present in the ironist or not. For he says something while, in fact he intends something else. Also humour is, the 'incognito' mode of expression behind which, the tendency towards the religious is hidden. Furthermore, both, the humorist and the ironist, do use the indirect method of communication not because they do not wish to express themselves directly, but rather because they find it impossible to express what is really residing in their depth fully. Hence, irony and humour are, both, an 'echo' of inwardness but not inward itself.

communicator who stresses the objective uncertainty of religious expression. He innovates an "evocative" method which helps kindle the individual to an awareness of his authentic private existence. The difference between direct and indirect communication, is the same difference that exists between to know, and to be. To know something is not to be that something.

(c) The 'man of spirit', according to Kierkegaard, is perpetually engaged in an attempted synthesis of the finite and the infinite. This means that the inwardness of the man of faith is a process, for faith is a continuous effort renewed every moment. Therefore, in direct communication, the discursive mode of reasoning, which employs static and timeless concepts, cannot arrest the flux of the dynamic inwardness of the man of faith. Consequently, if direct communication is used to convey religious experience the outcome is distortion.

(d) When Kierkegaard holds that direct expression of truth is not clear evidence of its presence, that it is outwardly directed and not inwardly, he is partially urging the individual to withdraw from the ordinary human situation, and essentially to place himself alone before God. If this inference is true, then its meaning necessarily leads the

individual to the essence of religious life, where he is isolated from the rest of men in his group, secluded, with God being his only companion.

Now, based on the above analysis of Kierkegaard's method of indirect communication, one is able to point out that: although Kierkegaard makes a genuine use of this method, to show that religious truth is annulled by using direct speech, this method is not original; it was, at least used before him by Socrates and the mystics. For instance, Socrates, the ironic moral philosopher, knew very well how to show the irony of an ignorant man's claim to wisdom; to show, in an indirect manner, through his dialectic or question and answer method, the unreal pretenses of men to virtue. By this question and answer method, he wanted to induce, indirectly, others to reflect for themselves and to make them produce true ideas in their minds with the intention of a right action. True that Kierkegaard used his method of indirect communication for a different end other than Socrates; but in so far as the 'method' is concerned, there is no essential difference.

On the other hand, the impossibility of communicating directly the inward experience, between two independently existing egos, was a matter of incessant despair for mystics. The distortion which the direct expression inflicts on inward

experience, as Kierkegaard stresses, is a perpetual theme behind the mystic's frustrating agony for direct communication. However, this similarity between Kierkegaard's method of indirect communication and that of the mystics, does not mean that he was a mystic or headed towards mysticism. It only shows that Kierkegaard's method is a phenomenon that was present and familiar to the philosophic tradition before him. In fact, Kierkegaard differs from the mystics[1] in that the mystic resigns existence because existence precludes communion with the Eternal, while Kierkegaard finds this resignation an escape from the human situation, namely, existence.

It is safe to maintain that Kierkegaard's method of indirect communication, although a necessary outcome of his conception of truth as subjectivity, (and it acquires relevance if the communicator intends to induce in the hearer the mode of truth imbedded in his words.) itself is not original and it is not Kierkegaard's own innovation.

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1 In Either/Or, Vol. II, pp. 246-49, we find an open statement of Kierkegaard's stand towards mysticism. After describing the life of the mystic, and his attitude towards it, Kierkegaard says the following: "The whole world is a dead world for the mystic, he has fallen in love with God... the life of the mystic displeases me because I regard it as a deceit against the world in which he lives..." Ibid., pp. 247-49.

Also, Kierkegaard is susceptible to the same charge that could be levelled against extreme subjectivism in general: the charge that they are arrested by a notoriously unwarranted solipcism. Furthermore, how can one know that what he experiences as inwardness is not an internal psychic illusion or a whimsical subjectivity. One cannot but be reminded here of Dr. Huxley's administering of certain pills that could induce in the subject an expansion of inwardness that seems to be real while it is a passing illusion.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, therefore, the purpose of all the preceding discussion of truth as subjectivity in section I and section II, was to show that: (1) Truth is not an epistemological concept, and specially not akin to the relativism of the sophists. It is a matter of ethico-religious concern--faith. (2) Truth is not a subjective reflection about an objective certainty. (3) Kierkegaard's concept of truth is an appropriation that holds fast an objective uncertainty with the most passionate inwardness. (4) Subjective truth stresses the manner of reflection; its accent falls on the 'how' and not on the 'what. (5) In line with the thesis of this essay, there is nothing

rational or irrational about Kierkegaard's concept of truth. He does not depreciate objective validity and its detached character in its own domain. (6) Kierkegaard does not tolerate the Hegelian conception of truth, the identity of thought and being which is a useless tautology. (7) The historical revelation transforms subjectivity to untruth. (8) Truth as subjectivity, unavoidably dictates Kierkegaard's method of indirect communication.

III HOW IS TRUTH APPREHENDED

At the end of the last section, it was indicated that truth as subjectivity is transformed to untruth in the light of historical revelation. Now, after becoming untruth, one should turn the question as to how, according to Kierkegaard, man acquires truth.

(a) Can Truth Be Taught?[1] -- Socratic Theory of Reminiscence:

Here we are driven to the heart of Kierkegaard's

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[1] It is worth noting here, that 'truth' does not have the same meaning in Socratic (Platonic) and in works as in the New Testament. In the New Testament truth is identical with the character of Jesus Christ as a significant moment in history. This Truth is not within every human being, but comes from without. Kierkegaard takes his starting point the Platonic understanding of truth which is essentially Eleatic. Truth here is considered as ontological and unchangeable. It does not come through the senses but through thought as innate and a priori. Later Kierkegaard gives the term the New Testament meaning and attempts to draw its logical outcomes.

Philosophical Fragments. The main theme that permeates this work is the distinction between Philosophical Idealism and the Christian faith. The problem that Kierkegaard attempts to answer is this: how is the 'Single One' related to the ultimate truth? Is it through discursive reason, or through a power from without? Better still, what are the logical outcomes of asserting that the individual possesses the ultimate truth, or the individual does not posses the ultimate truth? In other words, what is the relationship between reason and faith?

Here Kierkegaard chooses Socrates as the representative of the Greek-Platonic, and German-Hegelian philosophies. Kierkegaard observes that reason (Socratic method), at its highest, can serve as a mieutic relationship between man and man. For the begetting of truth--faith-- is, in the final analysis, restricted to God.

In order to illustrate this, Kierkegaard raises, in a philosophically retrospective manner, the ancient Socratic question: Can truth be taught? This question, according to Kierkegaard, is, or becomes Socratic because all virtues are finally resolved into a primary one, and that is knowledge. It will be remembered that in Plato's

Protagoras,[1] Protagoras held that: (1) virtues are many and not one; (2) virtue can be taught by a teacher. To this, Socrates retaliates by maintaining that: (1) all virtues are one, (2) virtue cannot be taught but is elicited from the learner.[2] In this last point, (2), Kierkegaard infers that the learner is in possession of truth, and all that he needs is a teacher who can make him aware of this truth. This fact Kierkegaard rightly observes, was a source of difficulty for Socrates in the Meno. If man is, or is not in possession of truth, considered either way, knowledge seems to be impossible. For man cannot seek what he knows, since he knows it, and if he does not know what he seeks, it is impossible for him to seek it, since he does not know it.[3]

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1 In checking the faithfulness of Kierkegaard's reports and references about Plato's thought in his dialogues, one would find that Kierkegaard entertains a searching understanding of Plato's thought and is historically precise and honest. Kierkegaard does not seem to pervert Plato's thought to suit his purpose. Cf., Dialogues of Plato.

2 Cf., Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 90-105.

3 Cf., Fragments, p. 5. For historical verification see Dialogues of Plato, pp. 359-60, where Meno tells Socrates "And how will you enquire, Socrates, into that which you do not know?.... And if you find what you want, how will you ever know that this is the thing which you did not know?"

Now, the difficulty is resolved by Socrates, by presenting his doctrine of recollection. This doctrine maintains that inquiry after knowledge is a form of remembering.[1] In a pre-existence, in the world of intelligible forms, our souls contemplated the ontological truth. These forms being immanent in the soul, men in their existence in the world of sensible phenomena, when striving after truth, should be induced to find truth through recollection.[2] Hence, they become illuminated and delivered from their pseudo-ignorance. According to Socrates, therefore, truth is found in the individual, and what a teacher can do, in a mid-wife fashion, is to help the student beget what he is already pregnant with. This, according to Kierkegaard, can be achieved by any accidental teacher, at any accidental occasion, in a transitory moment of history. The importance of this moment, if at all, is only historical. It can never be of ultimate decisive significance for the individual.[3]

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1 It is to be noted, that in the Fragments, Kierkegaard does not differentiate between Plato and Socrates.

2 Fragments, p. 5. For historical verification of Kierkegaard's report Cf., Dialogues of Plato, "Meno", pp. 361-66.

3 Fragments, pp. 5-8.

In other words, the role of the teacher through the dialectical vigour--reasoning-- is only secondary.

(b) In Christianity the Moment Has Decisive Significance.

Now if things are to be otherwise we should advocate a different view from that of Socrates. We must posit the moment in time as something significant and not accidental; so that one would never be able to forget it in time or eternity.[1] If this is attempted, then it follows that the seeker is destitute of truth up to that moment.[2] The moment, viewed in this novel perspective, permits reason to show, dialectically, between man and man, that the individual was outside truth. For if he were in truth before the decisive moment is actualized, then the moment becomes again accidental and is emptied of significance. This will drive us back to Socrates' difficulty, and the seeker will no more be a seeker, since he cannot seek what he knows. Now, on the grounds of this new understanding of the moment, the teacher can point to the learner that he is untruth. But in doing so the learner is not helped to know the truth. All what he comes to know is that he was ignorant, and that for knowing the truth he should

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1 Ibid., p. 8.

2 Ibid., p. 9.

depend on a higher power outside himself:

> " Now if the learner is to acquire Truth, the Teacher must bring it to him; and not only so, but he must also give him the condition necessary for understanding it. For if the learner were in his own person the condition of understanding the Truth, he need only recall it. The condition for understanding the Truth is like the capacity to inquire for it; the condition contains the conditioned, and the question implies the answer. (Unless this is so, the moment must be understood in the Socratic sense.) But one who gives the learner not only the Truth, but also the condition for understanding it, is more than a teacher.... But this is something that no human being can do; if it is to be done, it must be done by God himself.... But in so far as the moment is to have decisive significance... the learner is destitute of this condition, and must therefore have been deprived of it. This deprivation cannot have been due to an act of God (which would be a contradiction), nor to an accident... it must therefore be due to himself... God... who in acting as an occasion prompts the learner to recall that he is in Error, and that by reason of his own guilt. But this state, the being in Error by reason of one's own guilt,... let us call it Sin".[1]

From this quotation, therefore, the following points can be inferred:

(1) The power that it outside man, that can provide man with truth, is God. It is God, who grants the condition for man in order that man may apprehend truth.

(2) Reason, from a Socratic point of view, is not an adequate guide for man to apprehend the Truth. For there is, it seems, no continuity between the

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1 Ibid., pp. 9-10.

human reason and the knowledge of God.

(3) Reason cannot afford man, both the divine aid and the will that are central for Christian truth.

(4) Socratically speaking, sin is only ignorance and salvation consists in becoming rationally conscious of the world of intellegible forms. These forms can be comprehended through the dialectical aid of another human being.

(5) For Christianity, sin is due to the unwillingness of man to accept the condition of truth through revelation. Consequently, man is estranged from God. This estrangement is the cause of man's guilt.

The above points show that reason, in the Socratic manner, cannot understand how God rescues man from his predicament, namely, that of untruth and guilt. Therefore, it follows that according to Kierkegaard, if man were to be freed from his state of untruth, man has to recognize the divine imperatives of the Christian faith as imposed on him from outside. This is done by God who incarnates himself and confronts man at a certain point in history. Thus, in this way, man is presented by an unperishable significant

occasion[1] to be taught the truth. This occasion Kierkegaard calls a Decisive Moment, or the Fullness of Time.[2]

But since God is not prompted by a need for a learner to understand himself, the way Socrates was, why should God incarnate himself in the temporal? Kierkegaard answers by saying that God is unmoved, perfect, and his incarnation is not imperative. Everything else moves towards Him, to become like Him, without becoming like Him. Consequently, what can move God, according to Kierkegaard is Love; it is God's love to give the learner's life a purpose, to win him and to make the unequal equal:

> " Moved by love, God is thus eternally resolved to reveal himself. But as love is the motive so love must also be the end.... His love is a love of

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1 Kierkegaard's argument acquires cogency here, only by presupposing, as it seems he does, a hypothesis: that the moment in the learner's history should have decisive significance. But why should the moment have decisive significance at all? Here he seems to be positing faith from above, against and over the intelligence. This most probably drives him to endorse the Augustinian dictum: 'I believe so that I might understand'; or to al-Ghazali's dictum: 'Only then when my desparate doubt was conquered by light emanated from God into my inwardness that the first principles of reason acquired trust-worthiness and cogency'.

2 Fragments, p. 13.

> the learner, and his aim is to win him. For it is only in love that the unequal can be made equal, and it is only in equality or unity that an understanding can be effected, and without perfect understanding the Teacher is not God.... But this love is through and through unhappy, for how great is the difference between them! It may seem a small matter for God to make himself understood, but this is not so easy of accomplishment if he is to refrain from annihilating the unlikeness that exists between them." [1]

The difficulty in achieving God's undertaking, as apparent in this quotation, is the great chasm, the dissimilarity between God and the learner. Here the dissimilar should become similar yet retaining its dissimilarity or else the difference between God and man will be obliterated. Consequently, man cannot be elevated to the highest good,[2] although man is always in earnest to have a direct vision of God. For this direct vision shall always be denied for him. Besides, what makes the situation more difficult for man is that no rational proof can bring man to the living presence of God.[3]

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1 Ibid., p. 19.

2 Ibid., p. 22.

3 We have no wish to discuss Kierkegaard's concept of God's existence in this essay. It suffices here to mention, that according to Kierkegaard there can be no proofs for God's existence. By existence Kierkegaard means actual, living existence. Reason at its best can yield conceptual existence which is as lifeless as thought can be. Also it is worth .../.

On the other hand, if God were to help man by revealing himself directly, he would repel man by overriding his freedom which, in consequence, would never bring about a change of the heart in man. '... not to reveal oneself is the death of love, to reveal oneself is the death of the beloved!'[1] In other words, if God does not reveal himself, man is entirely left to his own estrangement, to the bondage of his own freedom[2] and remains in sin. Ergo, the problem is for God to reveal himself, yet retaining man's freedom without repelling him.

... noting here, that Kierkegaard comes as near to Kant as possible. It will be remembered, that in his antinomies of pure reason, Kant maintains that reason can argue with equal validity for and against God's existence. While for Kierkegaard reason reduces existence to an ideality, and in ideality everything becomes possible; hence it is possible to argue for and against God's existence. But all of this remains outside <u>real</u> existence. Kierkegaard claims the inadequacy of a priori proofs (specially ontological) for God. Because they all move from the idea of God's perfection to the idea of his existence, yet thought can never make this transition. It can only move from one concept to another, and hence reason can say nothing about existence. "Thus I always reason from existence, not toward existence, whether I move in the sphere of palpable sensible facts or in the realm of thought". <u>Fragments</u>, p. 31. Also Kierkegaard here follows on parallel lines Gorgias' argument. God either exists or does not exist. If he does not exist, why bother to prove the existence of that which does not exist and if he does exist "... it would be folly to attempt it. For at the very outset, in beginning my proof, I will have presupposed it... since... (it) would be impossible if he did not exist". <u>Ibid</u>., p. 31. This however does not mean that Kierkegaard denies objective-actual-existence for God. God only exists for the believer, "When an existing individual has not got faith God <u>is</u> not, neither God exist, although understood from an eternal point of view God is eternally". <u>Journals</u>, p. 173, year 1846, sec. 605. For an illuminating and searching analysis of Kierkegaard's concept of God's existence, see Thomas, <u>Op. cit</u>., pp. 77-102.

1 <u>Fragments</u>, p. 23.

2 Cf., <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 11-12.

This predicament is resolved by God's advent to man, in penetrating time and creating a relation of love with man. This relation, says Kierkegaard, rids man's will of its egocentricity. Here, God is like a king loving a humble maiden who has nothing equal to his glory. In order to win her, and not to repel her, the king descends to her level.[1] So God bridges the gap between deity and man by appearing in the likeness of the humblest; who must serve others, and consequently God takes the form of a servant.[2] Being so, he must endure all things, suffer hunger and thirst in the time of his agony,[3] must die deserted, misunderstood by men, who, instead of loving him, hang him on the cross.

Therefore, in answer to the Socratic question, whether truth can be taught, Kierkegaard's position is in the affirmative. Truth can be taught by a teacher, and this teacher is God, intersecting with time at a certain point in history. This is the Absolute Paradox, Christ, the God-man, the Saviour who extricates man from his bondage and presents him with the condition for salvation. Let us, therefore, consider Kierkegaard's different usages of 'Paradox' in so far as they bear on the problem of the relation of faith to reason.

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1 Ibid., p. 20. See also Ibid., pp. 24-25.

2 Ibid., p. 24.

3 Ibid., p. 25.

(c) Reason Is not Sacrificed in Kierkegaard's Usages of 'Paradox':

i - The Absolute Paradox:

In outlining Kierkegaard's conception of the Absolute Paradox in this section, the writer does not find himself in a position to explore the historical sources of this concept.[1] Our concern with the concept here, is rendered indispensable in so far as it has its direct relevance to the tension between faith and reason, as particularly displayed in Kierkegaard's apprehension of truth.

We have just observed that it was God who, being himself the ultimate truth, is genuinely equipped to teach the truth. Man is acquainted with truth by God entering time and becoming the Absolute Paradox according to Kierkegaard. But why is this paradox an Absolute Paradox? Kierkegaard here does not seem to have a direct answer. Apparently the term 'absolute', if it were clear for Kierkegaard, is not very much so to his readers; for he employs the term in many numerous contexts that might have many numerous connotations. Although he brutally rebelled against Hegel, he could not cleanse his mind entirely from

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1 For the historical sources of the Absolute Paradox, the reader is referred to Thomas, Op. cit., pp. 104-108.

Hegel's terminology. In fact, Hegel, although resented by Kierkegaard, himself might have been clearer in his employment of the term. Kierkegaard seems to stretch, narrow, shift the meaning of 'absolute' unscrupulously. However, careful scrutiny shows that the meaning, Kierkegaard ascribes to the God-man paradox as the 'absolute' is to be found in the double aspect which he attributes to the paradox.[1]

The God-man paradox has a negative and a positive aspect. Negatively, it displays the complete unlikeness of man from God, and positively it transforms the complete unlikeness into entire likeness.[2] Hence, the paradox merges the 'absolute' - complete or entire - unlikeness of God into an absolute likeness; ergo, the God-man paradox is an Absolute Paradox. This seems to be the most plausible meaning of 'absolute' in the Absolute Paradox.

Now, in order that man might be redeemed from his estrangement and apprehend truth (faith), his object must be the Absolute Paradox regardless of historical contemporaneity. The way the object of physics is the 'physis', and the object of love is the beloved, in very much the same way the object of faith is the Absolute Paradox. Only for faith, does this

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1 Cf., Fragments, p. 37.

2 Ibid., p. 37.

Absolute Paradox exist. But this paradox is a challenge to the human reason - says Kierkegaard. However, if reason and the Absolute Paradox are brought together to understand their complete disparity, the encounter is called 'happy'. This happiness is considered by Kierkegaard as faith. On the other hand, if the encounter is not of understanding but of an unhappy tension between reason and the paradox, the encounter is characterised as Offense.[1] But this offense, Kierkegaard urges, is not derived from reason but appears to be so. In reality it comes from the paradox itself.[2] It is the paradox that reflects the offense of reason. The paradox being The Moment does not lend itself to reason but offends reason in order to make reason (man) understand its own untruth; and that for truth reason is boundlessly dependent on 'It', namely, on the historical revelation of the God-man. Hence, that is why Kierkegaard calls the offense an 'accoustic illusion'[3] For the offense is the negative mark of the presence of the paradox.

Moreover, this Absolute Paradox offends reason, simply, because it appears self-contradictory and absurd. But why absurd? It is absurd because God or the Eternal truth has entered time, the infinite has become finite in a

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[1] Ibid., p. 39.

[2] Ibid., p. 40, also Cf., Ibid., p. 41.

[3] Ibid., p. 40.

form of a humble man, among men, on the plane of history. This means that the Absolute Paradox is simply an event that man is encountering which man cannot understand. The most that man can do is to understand that he cannot understand.

But if man should understand that he cannot understand, it does not, at all, follow that man should not use his reason, or that he should efface it completely if he were to be a Christian. Kierkegaard here is marking the boundaries of reason when it approaches the Absolute Paradox. He is simply saying that the Absolute Paradox does not lend itself to reason in order that reason may handle it, in such a way as, to make it comprehendable. The event of Incarnation is unique in all times and history; being so unique, reason cannot find a way by which it can penetrate the paradox in order to make it flat open for man to understand:

> " In things which are above reason faith is not really supported by reason, because reason cannot grasp what faith believes; but there is also a something here as a result of which reason is determined, or which determines reason to honour faith which it cannot perfectly understand". [1]

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1 Journals, p. 362, year 1850, sec. 1033.

Also in a passage in the Postscript Kierkegaard says the following:

> " So the believing Christian not only possesses but uses his understanding, respects the universal-human, does not put it down to lack of understanding if somebody is not a Christian; but in relation to Christianity he believes against the understanding and in this case also uses understanding... to make sure that he believes against the understanding". [1]

From the above quotations it, perhaps, seems obvious that Kierkegaard does not go as far as Luther's saying that one must close his eyes and not follow his reason and even cease his reasoning in order to have faith.[2] On the contrary, although for Kierkegaard, reason cannot alone give faith it must understand itself and know what it can provide for faith without taking anything away. Hence, concerning the Christian faith whose object is the Absolute Paradox, reason is not entirely destroyed but it should hold the paradox in honour and strive not against 'It', but rather should further it by minding its own limitations.

But what was the relationship of reason to God before the God-man event took place? Was it paradoxical?

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[1] Postscript, p. 504.

[2] Cf., Hugh Thompson Kerr, A Compend of Luther's Theology (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1943), pp. 56-57.

Kierkegaard says that before the advent of the God-man, man's relationship to God, from a human point of view, namely, the Socratic, was paradoxical in a different sense than that of the Absolute Paradox. God was not paradoxical, but rather man's relationship to God was paradoxical. This relationship was paradoxical in that man was subjectively or passionately certain of God's existence, while at the same time he was objectively uncertain. This is called the Socratic Paradox, which Kierkegaard differentiates from the Absolute Paradox in his Fragments.[1] What is this paradox then?

ii - The Socratic Paradox:

The Socratic Paradox tells about the drama of attempting to establish cognizance of God by the unaided reason without being able to do so. Reason, independent of the Moment, tries to establish a relationship with God by pointing to God without grasping him essentially. It leads man up to a point, and then man should, by a leap of passion, have faith in God and consequently worship Him.

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[1] Fragments, p. 29 ff. It is perhaps important for one to bear in mind the different meanings of 'paradox' that Johannes Climacus mentions in, both, the Fragments, and the Postscript. Furthermore, Johannes De Silentio, in Fear And Trembling mentions a different meaning of paradox that is not found in Fragments and the Postscript, Cf., Fear And Trembling, p. 65.

Accordingly, for Kierkegaard, reason with its passion for truth, confronts us with the paradox, which in consequence pronounces reason's own destruction. "The supreme paradox of all thought is the attempt to discover something that thought cannot think... paradox is the source of the thinker's passion... and so it is also the supreme passion of the Reason... must in one way or another prove its undoing".[1] It would seem, according to Kierkegaard, that reason in its very nature guides us to the paradox, and when confronted with it reason shrinks back with an unquenched curiosity and ignorance. But reason is, so to speak, stubborn; it perpetually seeks collision with the Unknown to know only that it is the Unknown, the unthinkable in human categories.

What is this unknown with which reason collides? Kierkegaard urges that it is "...the limit to which the Reason repeatedly comes... it is the absolutely different?..."[2] When qualified as absolutely different it seems on the verge of disclosure, but this is not the case; for the Reason cannot even conceive an absolute unlikeness".[3] Therefore, for

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[1] Cf., Fragments, p. 29.

[2] Kierkegaard here is in a specific sense reminiscent of Plotinus' description of the ineffable One. The One cannot be known through the human categories of thought. All that thought can know about it, is what it is not and not what it is. It is attainable in a state of mystical ecstasy where the last trace of sensible and intelligible experience has been erased. Whereas for Kierkegaard the unknown is attainable through the risk of faith.

[3] Fragments, p. 35.

Kierkegaard when reason knows that it cannot know, the unknown is <u>almost</u> disclosed but not exactly.

If this is so, then, we can infer - on the line of this thesis - that reason does not die in the act of faith but it is abandoned after performing its duty. It is left for the leap of faith, in the warmth of passion, to efface this 'almost' of reason and bring a complete break, a penetration into the Unknown, and consequently a happy relation of the like with the unlike - Faith. This complete disclosure, reason must obtain from God.[1] "For how should the Reason be able to understand what is absolutely different from itself? .., for if God is absolutely unlike man, then man is absolutely unlike God; but how could the Reason be expected to understand this? Here we seem to be confronted with a paradox".[2] This paradox which reason cannot really grasp is not due to God, it is fundamentally due to man's untruth, or estrangement brought upon him by his own freedom.

From the preceding discussion and exposition of the Absolute and Socratic Paradoxes one, I think, is legitimately led to the following inferences:

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1 This disclosure takes place by means of the Absolute Paradox as mentioned before.

2 <u>Fragments</u>, p. 37.

(a) Kierkegaard in his analysis draws very near to Kant when the latter attempts to label the limit and scope of pure reason. For Kierkegaar, reason entertains a passion to discover something beyond its grasp which, in the final analysis, pronounces its downfall. For Kant, as is well known, reason, being ambitious, is not satisfied with its own limits, but stretches itself beyond sensible phenomena, consequently, is arrested by vain illusions. The vanity of reason's ambition is shown up by what Kant calls the Paralogisms and Antinomies of pure reason. Reason cannot know the thing-in-itself by extending itself beyond what knowledge is possible. All that we are assured of, in a negative manner, is that the thing-in-itself exists. But to know what it really is, reason pronounces its own downfall. Both Kierkegaard and Kant seem, on parallel grounds, but perhaps for different purposes, to recognise the limits between reason and the 'Unknown'. For Kierkegaard it is the Absolute Paradox,[1] while for Kant it is the thing in itself. Kierkegaard, therefore, in his analysis of man's relationship to the Absolute Paradox, is not teaching irrationalism no more than Kant is in his epistemology. He is giving reason and faith what is due to each. Consequently, such polemics, as those of Grene,

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1 This is also applicable to the Socratic Paradox.

Kaufmann, and many others, against Kierkegaard as being a nonsensical and vulgar irrationalist may be considered, themselves, questionable and unfounded.

(b) For Kierkegaard, the Absolute Paradox lies in the schism between the temporal and the eternal, God is God, and man is man, and the one cannot be reduced to the other. This chasm is an existential and not a rational one. However, Kierkegaard does not deny that reason can resolve the Paradox in a Hegelian manner. Reason can mediate the unlikeness into a higher unity and a conceivable identity. But if reason effects this mediation, it does away with faith. "Faith itself cannot be mediated into the universal, for it would thereby be destroyed".[1] Kierkegaard's analysis of reason and paradox above drives us to infer that in matters of faith, reason should understand that it cannot understand. Reason can understand what Christianity is, but it cannot evoke real faith in the person. This should not give, however, the impression that Kierkegaard confronts us with an irrational approach to the problem of ultimate truth. It is rather the truth instilled in us from above, from outside, whose logical consistency cannot be grasped by us.

(c) When encountering the Paradox, reason is not effaced but itself posits a condition beyond itself whose

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1 Fear And Trembling, p. 81.

cognitive status may be suspect, but whose ground is not zero. Reason 'sets itself aside' when it knows its limits. Consequently, one finds it safe to submit that faith is not at all contrary to reason, but rather discontinuous with reason, or it is supra-rational.

From the preceding analysis of Kierkegaard's usages of 'paradox', one can safely say that Kierkegaard is not at all a propounder of logical paradoxes. He does not exalt irrationality, absurd use of language, over genuine consistent logical usages. Kierkegaard, as could be seen at work in his Fragments and Postscript, although repetitious, is a logical analyst. He employs his rational skill to vindicate his attitude: that objectivity when it encroaches on the things of the spirit, itself, becomes irreligious. If Kierkegaard was ever naive, he could not have been so naive as to hold that the religious man's language, and especially the Christian, should be involved in logical paradoxes. This point pleads Kierkegaard innocent of the, perhaps prejudiced and unwarranted, charges brought against him by persons like Greene, Kaufman,

aid Paton[1]. Therefore, one should emphasize here that by 'paradox' Kierkegaard meant an existential or behavioural one and not a logical absurdity or rejection of reason. We encounter such behavioural paradox when our thought is bent on what exists. It is a paradox of interests and values. The Absolute Paradox is one of having our ordinary sense of values and interests disturbed by encountering God in Christ. This act creates a conflict within the individual - a behavioural opposition not a logical one - and because of it, one would acquire a novel system of values if one's life is stirred and disturbed sufficiently.

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1 One finds that such eminent figures like Grene, Kaufmann, and Paton have, unsympathetically, depicted Kierkegaard, not without scorn, as naively advocating logical and linguistic paradoxes. Cf., Grene, Op. cit., p. 15. Also Ibid., pp. 21-22, where Grene ironically and unfairly maintains that Kierkegaard's conception of truth "... is profoundly meaningful because it is profoundly self-contradictory.... But... to reject all abstraction is to renounce the whole sphere of logic and consistency and to leave only contradiction and its linguistic expression, paradox". See also, Kaufmann, From Shakespeare to Existentialism, Op. cit., pp. 180-198. In these pages although Kaufmann entertains some relevant criticism of Kierkegaard, he seems to be misinformed, unsympathetic and authoritatively dogmatic in his criticism. See also H.J. Paton, The Modern Predicament, (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1958), pp. 119-120. I found out that Mr. E.D. Klemke rightly anticipates me and he devotes a whole ingenious article to disprove Paton's claims against Kierkegaard. In fact the subsequent remarks on Kierkegaard's concept of paradox, look back with partial gratitude to this article. Cf., E.D. Klemke, "Some Misinterpretations of Kierkegaard" The Hibbert Journal, Vol. LVII, (April, 1959) pp. 259 ff. Also my partial debt here goes to R. Herbert, "Two of Kierkegaard's Uses of 'Paradox'". The Philosophical Review, Vol. 70 No1(January,1961), pp. 41-55

In the Absolute Paradox, as well as the Socratic, one might note that Kierkegaard is marking the limit to reflection. He is acknowledging a limit to all acts of intelligence. No illogicality is involved in the matter. However, Kierkegaard here does not seem to have a definite claim for originality but he is simply reaffirming Kant's statement, that existence is not a predicate.[1]

Another movement of Kierkegaard's employment of 'paradox' was encountered at the end of the foregoing chapter. This had to do with faith as subjective certainty and objective uncertainty. This kind of paradox applies for, both, man's relationship to God, and man's relationship to the Absolute Paradox. For, although man is certain of the absurdity of the Absolute Paradox, yet his relationship to it, when in faith, is objectively uncertain while at the same time he is subjectively certain. How this paradox is obtained, is illustrated by Kierkegaard in the Postscript:

> " When subjectivity, inwardness, is the truth, the truth [2] becomes objectively a Paradox; and the fact that the truth is objectively a Paradox shows in its turn that subjectivity is the truth .... The paradoxical character of the truth is its objective uncertainty...." [3]

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[1] Cf., E.D. Klemke. Op. cit., pp. 264-65. Also Fragments, p. 31. Postscript, pp. 267-282. And Ibid., p. 290.

[2] Kierkegaard means religious truth here.

[3] Postscript, p. 183.

From the above passage it is clear that the paradox obtains in this manner: whereas one is subjectively certain that God exists and that the Moment in time is the telos of our unshakable faith, objectively one does not have enough evidence, and hence he remains uncertain. The paradoxicality of a man of faith is, despite the lack of objective evidence, subjective certainty. This is tantamount to saying that he is certain and uncertain at the same time. To be certain and uncertain at one and the same time, about the same thing, is definitely to involve one in a paradoxical situation. For the matter, as it is, seems to violate the primary rules of the law of contradiction: that a thing cannot 'exist' and 'not exist' at one and the same time.

So far, Kierkegaard seems to be gripped by a logical paradox. However, appearances are sometimes deceptive. If we press the matter further we would find out that Kierkegaard is not committed to a logical paradox, no more than one who is swimming fast and at the same time talking slowly. To swim fast and talk slowly at one and the same time generates neither logical nor behavioural paradox. But to swim fast, and to swim slowly at one and the same time is definitely paradoxical. It is logically and behaviourally impossible. Hence, on parallel grounds, to be subjectively certain and objectively uncertain generates no logical paradox at all. This is because the man of faith

is subjectively certain and objectively uncertain in different ways and in different spheres of certainty and uncertainty, and not in the one and same respect. Only if a man of faith is at one and the same time, objectively certain and objectively uncertain, or subjectively certain and subjectively uncertain, is he then confronted with a paradox.

Now if the above analysis is granted, one can eliminate once and for all, the criticism that Kierkegaard, in his writings is an apostle of logical absurdity.

The above analysis leads us to two possible conclusions: (a) that Kierkegaard intended, in his employment of 'paradox', a logical paradox, and consequently, he himself was confused by what a logical paradox is; (b) that by paradox Kierkegaard intended a non-logical use, namely, an existential one.

That Kierkegaard intended (b) and not (a), is by now clear. The paradox involved in truth as subjectively and objectively considered is not a rational one. For reason, as was noted before, impoverishes existence or distorts it to an ideality which is not existence. When one holds fast to a subjective certainty, in spite of objective uncertainty, there is an actual dynamic opposition to what actually in life -- objectively -- is uncertain.

This brings the notion of the leap into play. The man of faith has two existentially open possibilities. Either to embrace the approximations of objective uncertainty, or to hold fast the subjective certainty with a leap made in the warmth of passion. The paradox lies in the tension which encompasses the existing ego, and which might be torn asunder if - in spite of this opposition - one does not perform a choice and become committed to the risk of faith. Furthermore, when Kierkegaard affirms, as he does in various contexts, that faith is not a matter of knowledge, then faith as an objective uncertainty does not arise at all. For certainty or uncertainty are to be predicated of objective processes of knowledge and not of faith. Ergo, faith is cognitively neither certain nor uncertain, but belongs to a different realm, the realm of subjectivity as truth.

(d) Apprehension of Truth and the Moment in History:

It is appropriate at this point to discern a doctrine found in Kierkegaard's literature which requires some close scrutiny: that of 'Contemporaneity' with the God-man. Apprehension of truth as subjectivity, and subjectivity reduced to untruth, due to the fact of historical revelation, necessarily posits the Moment as the object of ultimate truth, and consequently raises the problem of contemporaneity with Christ.

According to Kierkegaard, whether a disciple is contemporary with Christ in the historical sense or not, the matter is accidental to genuine faith. Truth, for both the contemporary and for later generations equally, depends on God's granting the condition for truth. The contemporary disciple and the disciple at 'second hand', each has no priority over the other except in so far as they relate themselves passionately to the God-man. In faith, the disciple at second hand, if he receives the condition, is contemporary and the contemporary who was an 'eye witness', without receiving the condition, is not contemporary in terms of ultimate truth. He is simply a spectator for whom the Moment had no decisive significance. Here Kierkegaard adopts a statement of Lessing,[1] which urges that: a historical point of departure cannot become a solid ground for eternal happiness. Therefore, contemporaneity with the historical person means a tremendous psychic upheaval infused with enthusiasm and passion, to receive the condition, which Kierkegaard now calls FAITH.[2]

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1 Cf., Chadwick, Op. cit., p. 53. Cf., Fragments, title page.

2 Cf., Fragments, p. 47. For further references see Ibid., pp. 46, 48, 54, 55.

> " The contemporary... with respect to the Teacher's birth he will be in the same position as the disciple at second hand; if we wish to urge absolute historical precision there will be only one human being who is fully informed, namely the woman of whom he permitted himself to be born. But though a contemporary... becomes an historical eye-witness, the difficulty is... indeed a knowledge of all the circumstances with the reliability of an eye-witness, does not make such an eye-witness a disciple..." [1] Also "A contemporary may... be a non-contemporary; the real contemporary is such not by virtue of his immediate contemporaneity; ergo, it must also be possible for a non-contemporary... to be a contemporary, by virtue of that something which makes the contemporary a real contemporary.... Only the believer, i.e., the non-immediate contemporary, knows the Teacher, since he receives the condition from him, and therefore knows him even as he is known.... When the believer is the believer and knows God through having received the condition from God himself, every successor must receive the condition from God himself in precisely the same sense, and cannot receive it at a second hand; for if he did, this second hand would have to be the hand of God himself, and in that case there is no question of second hand. But a successor who receives the condition from God himself is a contemporary, a real contemporary..." [2]

Besides its vindication of the preceding remarks the above quotation warrants the following inferences:

(a) Historical contemporaneity is of significance to the historian whose plane of interest does not go beyond details. These details have no necessary relevance to what is beyond time and space, namely, faith. Even historical precision in the ordinary sense of 'historical' cannot be fully established, says Kierkegaard.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 47-48.

[2] Ibid., pp. 54-56.

(b) If truth depends on God giving the condition, then it makes no sense to talk about past generations or later non-immediate future generations. Both are equally on par in terms of eternal truth.

(c) Real contemporaneity is a matter of spiritual inwardness, a mostly non-cognitive immediate relation to the absolute truth, God, that transcends history and its determining conditions. Contemporaneity's accent falls on the immediate 'how' and not on the unending approximation of the objective 'what'.

(d) In point (c), Kierkegaard seems to have a point, namely, that it is the inward resolution, the insertion of the will, which places one before the significance of what Christ was and achieved. But this point seems to run Kierkegaard into a difficulty. If historical events are accidental, how should one go about acquiring faith, if it were possible to establish that Christ was not a real figure, or a pretentiously fake teacher? Kierkegaard here might not meet us with a satisfying answer.

(e) The difficulty of apprehending the details of historical revelation, to which Kierkegaard alludes in the quotations and other passages in the Fragments, would, as it seems, drive him into an unrepaired epistemological

skepticism. Kierkegaard draws very near to the British skeptic Hume in this connection. For Hume, as it is well known, the knowledge of the relationship between causal events has a high degree of probability. However, for Kierkegaard the uncertainty of historical information is conquered by the strong passion of faith.

Moreover, Kierkegaard's skepticism concerning the accidentality of historical details is consistent with his concept of faith as implying objective uncertainty; the faith which is mostly non-cognitive. The facts of historical revelation cannot be indubitably known neither by the forms of discursive reason nor by empirical observation. Consequently, faith is neither deductive nor inductive. Mathematics and experimental procedures can cut through the structure of faith, scrutinize and generalize about its material content, but can never breathe the dynamic warmth of faith into an existing ego.

Kierkegaard maintains the above by invoking a distinction between the truth of reason and the truth of fact. This distinction Kierkegaard seems to adopt from Leibniz, and to a certain degree from Hume. Leibniz maintained that every logical judgement conveys a cognitive truth, and this judgement is one in which the predicate is

contained in the subject. All such judgements are necessary and analytical. However, according to Leibniz, these necessary judgements are of two distinct kinds: (1) The judgements that have to do with the possible and conceivable and whose contradictory is impossible. In such judgements the truth, that is conveyed, is called the truth of Pure Reason. (2) While on the other hand, the judgements that carry assertions about matters of fact are not necessary but contingent. Furthermore, the truth that is conveyed by these judgements is called the truth of fact or the truth of experience.[1] This second kind of judgement draws us back to Hume's insight, that no judgement about contingent matters of fact can be established a priori.[2] This means that a priori judgements are incommensurate with, and cannot account for the sequence of empirical change.

Therefore, viewed either way, from the rational or the empirical standpoint, the historical event of the God-man, the object of the ultimate truth, remains an unobtainable

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[1] Bertrand Russel, A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1951) pp. 23-24. See also Fragments, pp. 60-62.

[2] Cf., Thomas, Op. cit., p. 14. For an interesting comparison between Kierkegaard and Hume the reader is referred to Richard Popkin's illuminating article "Hume and Kierkegaard", Journal of Religion, Vol. 31, No. 4 (October, 1951), pp. 275 ff.

possibility. The rational and empirical truths betray us to agnosticism, which makes faith seem very near, almost available, yet is actually far away.

The point to which Kierkegaard is approaching is by now within our grasp: (a) Historical information is not a matter of a priori propositions, namely, logical necessity. (b) The events in history are contingent, and hence they leave room for freedom and doubt.[1] Point (a) is presented against rationalists and more specifically against Hegel with respect to his account of Christian revelation. For Hegel, religion, art, and philosophy all entertain the same substantial content. They all are different gradations of the manifestation of the same Absolute Spirit. This can be entirely grasped by Speculative Idealism whose kernel is the dialectical logic. If this is cogent, then for Hegel, Kierkegaard would maintain, the problem of the relation of faith to reason does not arise.[2] The fact of historical revelation is rendered superfluous. Christ's appearance in history is not a decisive happening, but a normal ordinary self-unfolding of the Absolute.

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[1] Cf., Fragments, p. 67. Also Roberts, Op. cit., p. 87.

[2] However, Hegel in his early theological writings did deal with the problem of faith and reason. Cf., Friedrick Hegel On Christianity, trans. T.M. Knox (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), p. 36.

Consequently, the distinction that was made by Leibniz and adopted by Kierkegaard, between truth of reason and the truth of fact, is obliterated by the universal necessity of 'tight' dialectical absolutism. That Kierkegaard is right in his invective against Hegel, is shown by our previous observation, that a logical system about existence is impossible, and that if it is at all possible, it is only hypothetical. Whereas faith, on the contrary, is an existential matter, and does not belong to ideality which is the realm of reason. For reason moves away from existence and not towards it.

Therefore, Hegel committed a colossal confusion when he firmly held that mobile historical events can be apprehended by a tight logical necessity. When the category of necessity is superimposed on becoming the outcome is a distortion. Hence, what came <u>to be</u> in the past, is past, and consequently cannot change neither in rationality, nor in actuality. It simply took place. From this, therefore, it does not follow that the <u>same</u> events that took place in the past can come into the present <u>exactly</u> in the same manner as they took place in the past. Moreover, Kierkegaard says that historical processes are either subject to logic, or are not; if they are, then the past is considered as logically necessary, and as a result the future must, by the same token,

be thus necessary. Considered this way, the matter of apprehending historical events, negates the possibility of genuine freedom, and makes faith, which is partially an act of the will, practically impossible.[1]

Whereas point (b), although it leaves room for genuine freedom and opens the possibility of faith, it leaves open the possibility of doubt. Faith and doubt are both the outcome of the luxury of freedom. Empiricism does not conquer doubt, except in so far as one is immediately aware[2] of sense data. But the cognition of historical events and their meaning is not the same as that of the certainty of immediate sensation. Sensations, although certain and immediate, belong to the flux of the present and are completely different from the object of faith. This object is immutable, fixed, far from the present, yet it is made immediate in the present by a leap of faith, an act of will, that vanquishes doubt of historicity after acquiring the condition of faith from God. Therefore, if both rationalism and empiricism yield uncertainty concerning the ultimate object of faith, then the only possibility that is still open for one, is the painful venturing of a leap. This leap is charged with inner fear and trembling, and with the most enthusiastic passion, which drives one beyond all uncertainty to an irrevocable eternal contemporaneity with Christ; the contemporaneity

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[1] Fragments, p. 65. Cf., Roberts, Op. cit., p. 88.

[2] Ibid., p. 67.

of the happy faith; a contemporaneity which transcends time and space, and dictates to all generations, whether past, present or future, equal conditions addressed to equal advantages.

It is appropriate here to ask whether Kierkegaard's concept of faith, as has been so far portrayed, is an adequate solution for resolving the uncertainty of both rationalism and empiricism into a seeming certainty as claimed by him. Kierkegaard's certainty of faith might not be a genuine certainty. It may perhaps be an illusion that appears to be the redeeming alternative. The only criterion for the certainty of faith remaining for Kierkegaard is trust in what our inwardness passionately wishes and hopes for, and what it immediately grasps as certain. Certainly it is hard to negotiate with one who maintains such a position which cannot be vindicated in a public manner, and can hardly stand the assaults of rational or empirical scrutiny. Kierkegaard might be a victim of an illusion which, even though admirable and a source of beauty in poetry and art in general, is, of course, ungratifying and misleading for one who stakes his life on, and craves for, Ultimate Truth. It is worth remembering at this point what Santayana advanced when analyzing the origin of poetry and religion. The

understanding - both the intellegible and the perceptive - Santayana maintains, when confronted with the puzzling phenomena of nature, endeavours to analyze them in order to master them. In so far as it succeeds in doing so, the understanding is at peace. But, when despite its power and its ambition the understanding dwells on certain unanalyzable and uncomprehendable items of experience, not wanting to acknowledge defeat, it brings the imagination into play. Imagination comes to man's rescue from his predicament by creating entities and concepts, and, so to speak, aids man to victory over experience. If Santayana's thesis holds, then on similar grounds, Kierkegaard's 'faith' despite the uncertainty of reason and experience, and as against them both, may become, as 'certain' as the innovations of man's imagination, hopes, wishes that seem to relieve him from his dubious stifling approximations.

CONCLUSION

Such were the views of Soren Kierkegaard on the problem of the relation of faith to reason. His occupation with this problem was not a matter of mere chance. Christian masters before him exercised their thought for centuries to resolve the perennial conflict between the inquisitiveness of the human reason and the authority of the divine revelation. It may be remembered that the problem of faith and reason presented itself when the Greek rationalistic spirit came in contact with the authority of the revealed faith of Judaism and Christianity. This gave rise to the Apologists and to the thought of the early fathers of the church such as Origen and Clement of Alexandria; Tertullion, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Luther and Pascal.

Therefore, Kierkegaard did not start right out from a vocuous background on the subject. He had had behind him a long tradition of heavy massive speculation on the problem. German Idealism constituted for him, at

least on intellectual level, a background for his ideas. Besides, Kierkegaard could anticipate the dangers that the modern mechanization, and the machine - controlled mode of living, have on the spiritual life of the Individual. Kierkegaard appears in historical perspective as though he was after some kind of a Copernican revolution in the spiritual life of his century; more especially, after an existential transformation of the Christian personality to counteract the depersonalizing effect of Hegelian philosophy.

Furthermore, his thought on the problem, as was presented in this essay, if it places limits to the demands of reason, does not genuinely authorize one to consider Kierkegaard as a propounder of logical paradoxes. He knew very well that one cannot violate the rules of reason and still make sense. The belief that Kierkegaard depreciates reason was shown to be a mode of thinking which, in as much as it is unjustified, is also un-Kierkegaardian. What Kierkegaard tried to emphasize is the inadequacy of reason as a sole means of

acquiring faith and not its inefficiency and unreliability. Besides, Kierkegaard does not deny, but explicitly asserts, that reason is conducive to faith, yet itself unaided does not in the final analysis lead to it.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Problem of Pseudonymity

The writer is aware of the difficulty of studying Kierkegaard's thought without paying serious attention to the problem of pseudonymity. One wonders which of the pseudonyms really represent Kierkegaard's own views. For Kierkegaard mentions in more than one context that none of his works is genuinely his. This fact makes us hesitate to pronounce a definite statement concerning the precise meaning of his thought. That Kierkegaard was the author of the pseudonymous works seems unquestionable because: (a) in his different works we find that the themes in one are repeated and elaborated in the other, e.g., the themes of the 'ethical' that Judge William presents in Either/Or, Vol. II, is repeated in Fear And Trembling, with precisely the same style, elaborated and is surpassed by the religious. (b) his Point Of View is an open statement that the Aesthetic, as well as the Religious writings are written by him, and that the whole thought behind these works is "what it means to become a

Christian". Also, at the end of the Concluding Unscientific Postscript, pp. 551 ff., we find a note signed by Kierkegaard where he maintains that he is the author of the pseudonymous works. "... I acknowlege herewith... that I am the author... of Either/Or (Victor Eremita), ... Fear And Trembling (Johannes de Silentio)... Repetition (Constantine Constantius) ... The Concept of Dread (Vigilius Haufniensis)... Philosophical Fragments (Johannes Climacus) ...". However, the question as to which of the pseudonyms represent Kierkegaard's own thought remains an open question and deserves a separate treatment. The writer tends to believe that the ideas presented by Kierkegaard's pseudonymous authors will continue to be his and not his at the same time. For it is hard to say definitely that Kierkegaard endorses the views of one pseudonym over any other. These pseudonyms are intended to be living personalities who would speak for themselves about different views of life and acquire a universal character independent of the author. This is done by Kierkegaard in the hope of capturing individuals of different temperaments and modes of living, just to help them know what it means to exist and how to become authentic Christians. Every pseudonymous work of Kierkegaard, as he puts it, was intended for a prospective captive?

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