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THE EXISTENTIAL DIALECTIC OF SOREN KIERKEGAARD

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PROPOSITIONES

1. Fortuna est causa per accidens in his quae fiunt secundum propositum propter finem in minori parte.

2. Iustitia legalis est virtus maxime perfecta.

3. Principia syllogismorum perfectorum sunt duo, scilicet dici de omni, et dici de nullo.

4. Modus procedendi in demonstrativis est resolutorius.

5. Positio Cartesii de acquisitione virtutis moralis contradicit veritatem quod virtus moralis fit ex consuetudine.

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Foreword

A quibusdam enim praedecessorum nostrorum accepimus aliquas opiniones de veritate rerum, in quibus credimus eos bene dixisse, alias opiniones praetermittentes.[1]

Although it is the proper role of wisdom to order, there are times when even the wise man must pause and consider whether imposing order may not end in a distortion of the problem at hand. Nowhere is this more the case than when the disciple of St. Thomas (with at least a borrowed wisdom) turns his attention to the thought and systems of modern philosophers. In the morass of mock problems and half-truths which have for so long passed for legitimate philosophical coin, he may see only sophistry and return with relief to more rewarding fields. It is to be noted that such a reaction is not necessarily a retreat into the past: the truth is in very small measure the toy of history. There is, however, a more laudable alternative. Modern philosophy is simply a fact and it offers a multitude of questions and doubts which the true lover of wisdom will feel inexorably drawing him: he will hear a challenge which he must answer for reasons basic to his calling. It is for such a one that the problem of critical method arises.

By a similitude of proportion the author of the following study of Kierkegaard has faced somewhat the same problems as would our adventurous philosopher. The goal set was simply to compare the thought of the Danish thinker with that of St. Thomas, using the latter as a measure by which he could read the juxtaposed Kierkegaard's worth. But general goals have a way of turning in the hand when we descend to the concrete, and the finding of a way to carry out this plan was no mean task. The one decided upon, in fact, contains an admixture of liabilities which can be telling arguments against it. But let us examine a few of the possible ways of carrying out the plan so as to appreciate the difficulties faced.

The writings of Kierkegaard present us with a great many disparate problems. Obviously then, one could choose among these problems and treat one or more of them in a strict, scientific manner. This would be a necessary and fruitful work, but it is doubtful that it could pass muster as a critique of Kierkegaard most of whose problems are not peculiar to him. Thus the study would have to be billed as a treatment of a given problem with incidental reference to Kierkegaard. In other words, the goal would have been abandoned. Another possibility would avoid this defect but is so formidable and demanding that it would overtax the practical exigencies of a doctoral dissertation. It could take the form of an interlinear commentary on each of Kierkegaard's works or the less impracticable method followed by St. Thomas in the Sentences. The sheer quantity of the Kierkegaardian out-

put forbids this approach. Nor can selection be made and but one of the works be commented on in this manner. This is denied us for reasons internal to the Kierkegaardian literature: many of the books are ascribed to pseudonyms and do not represent the proper thought of Kierkegaard. At this point we can indulge in an envying backward glance at our colleague who elected to ignore the moderns. And yet there is a possibility of achieving the goal set us.

Kierkegaard envisaged his writings as the product of a singular unity of purpose, each was connected with the others in such a way as to be meaningless alone. The particular shading of each work was such that it contributed its share to the composite color which Kierkegaard wanted the reader to see. It is precisely this interdependence which lends hope to the possibility of a fairly comprehensive critique, for if we can find a central thread running through these works we would have a single point of inquiry which would nevertheless be representative of the whole. We find such a thread in the notion of indirect communication.

As we shall see, Kierkegaard insisted that what a person knows is unimportant, for it is how he acts that makes him what he is. His attempt to influence action in such a way that there would be a minimum of food for thought in what he said issued quite logically in his peculiar mode of communication. It is Kierkegaard himself, moreover, who emphasizes the radical importance of his manner of expression.

> But when an author has an individual conception of what communication is, when perhaps the distinctive characteristic, the reality of his historical importance is concentrated in precisely this; well, then it will be a long affair - O school of patience. Before there can be any notion of understanding anything which he has communicated one must first of all understand him from the point of view of his particular dialectic of communication, and understand everything from that point of view.[2]

This mode of communication which Kierkegaard calls indirect is the first and abiding difficulty in understanding what he has written. He could say of himself, "indirect communication was my natural qualification,"[3] and he employed it with a consistency which is alternately amusing and exasperating.

It can be safely said that no aspect of Kierkegaard has been more systematically ignored (although most commentators pay lip service to it) than indirect communication. It is the mask through which Kierkegaard speaks to us, and just as the word "person" derives from the dramatic mask, so each time the Dane assumes a different mask he intends to present us with another person - and there are many masks. It is for this reason that we must be cautious in attributing to Kierkegaard the various positions presented in his many books. This method, then, must be understood before all else by the student of Kierkegaard: the "how" tells us a great deal of "what" Kierkegaard was saying.

Such were the difficulties which influenced the subject and shape of the following study. And, since every choice entails exclusion, it is not surprising that ours sacrifices elements which are most embarrassing by their absence. Sali-

ent among these is the almost total lack of a scientific procedure in our study. The order followed is that of Kierkegaard and it does not proceed from the more known to us to the less known, except in the sense that the customary can also lay claim to being more known. The very nature of Kierkegaard's end precluded this natural process, for he was not, so he thought, presenting a doctrine: his major intent was to move the will and if he could accomplish this by speculative jibberish he did not hesitate to do so. A distinction is called for if this is to justify our own lack of order.

Before a doctrinal presentation of a truth is attempted, one must examine the doubts relevant to it, for "qui debet audire philosophiam, melius se habere in iudicando si audierit omnes rationes quasi adversariorum dubitantium."[4] Thus the propaideutic offered by a disputative and dialectical consideration plays an essential rôle in the teaching of truth and the study of various philosophers is the best means of bringing this dialectic into play. Such a study should not be a cavalier treatment indulged in for ulterior purposes; it is not an end in itself (the thought of any philosopher is important only in the degree that it brings us to the truth), but neither is it a bludgeon for beating those we decide beforehand are our adversaries. Each thinker has a contribution to make, and it is fitting that we be grateful to each of them, even those who give us more error than truth.[5] Therefore, although this study of Kierkegaard is not a scientific presentation of doctrine, it is ordered to such a presentation. The

critiques which have been inserted at regular intervals throughout the study are not intended to take the place of that further work; rather they serve to relate the Kierkegaardian trajectory to Thomistic doctrine.

So much for apology. What has been said should both warn the reader against asking more than is contained in the subsequent pages, and indicate that the author was aware of their inadequacy from a scientific viewpoint.

The study itself falls into three parts. The first presents in a general way the theory of indirect communication, after necessary spadework. Part two is a brief but comprehensive tracing of Kierkegaard's use of his method. The final part considers the Dane's later repudiation of Indirect communication, his reasons for doing so and the implications this has for his work.

Points which have special interest in Kierkegaard are his rejection of speculative thought, his definition of faith in terms of absurdity and his consequent stand that theology is a misunderstanding. These are doctrines quite in keeping with his voluntaristic humanism, and when he sometimes appears to deny his denials, we must remember that he is a poet and "poetae non solum in hoc, sed in multis aliis mentiuntur, sicut dicitur in proverbio vulgari."[6]

PART ONE

THEORY OF INDIRECT COMMUNICATION

Chapter One

Kierkegaard and Existence

> Sed oportet accipere pro principio quod nomen significet aliquid, et ipsi qui profert, inquantum se loquentem intelligit, et alii qui eum audit. [1]

Hamlet's reply to the question of Polonius that he read but "Words, words, words" was well calculated to indicate that he was mad, for one would certainly fall short of sanity if words conveyed nothing more to him than their brute reality on the printed page. Words are signs which stand for conceptions, and in choosing these signs to express his thoughts, the writer must respect the history which has accrued to a particular arrangement of letters. And yet, however long one ponder usage, he must finally accept the fact that a word may have several meanings and that there is an element of risk in any choice. This difficulty throws a corresponding burden of responsibility on the reader; it falls to him to determine what the author meant his words to convey. With this in mind, let us look at a word which is, perhaps,

the most important one in the Kierkegaardian literature.

That word is "existence" (and, of course, its principal derivative "existential"). It is a word that has been subjected to an unusual amount of abuse in recent years, both by those who would qualify their own thinking as existential as well as those who address themselves critically to this mode of philosophizing. Among these latter, some, et etiam sapientes, or at least in sapientalibus loquentes, have discussed existentialism in a manner which has little bearing on the central problem of this school of philosophy. It is true that discussions of the real distinction between essence and existence which obtains in all creatures are relevant to more recent existential schools, but they are somewhat peripheral to the problem of Kierkegaard. Since our only interest is Kierkegaard we are happily spared from entering into this latter day discussion; we can confine ourselves to a presentation of the Kierkegaardian usage in this matter with a view to verification of the term.

When we read in the Concluding Unscientific Postscript that "God does not exist, He is eternal,"[2] it seems safe to say that we are faced with a negatio negationis. Existence is thought of by Kierkegaard as a striving,[3] something to be acquired, a type of becoming.

> It is impossible to exist without passion, unless we understand the word 'exist' in the loose sense of so called existence... Eternity is the winged horse, infinitely fast, and time is a worn-out jade;

> the existing individual is the driver. That is to say, he is such a driver when his mode of existence is not an existence loosely so called; for then he is not a driver, but a drunken peasant who lies asleep in the wagon and lets the horses take care of themselves. To be sure, he also drives and is a driver; and so there are perhaps many who - also exist.[4]

Existence emerges as a modality, a "how"[5] which qualifies existence loosely so called. The distinction is obviously that between being and being as one ought to be, and the central factor of the Kierkegaardian philosophy, since it is existential in precisely this sense, is the notion of moral being.

Lest it be thought that this conclusion has been drawn too hastily and on insufficient evidence, we may note that the whole pseudonymous literature treats of what are called "spheres of existence." These spheres, far from being general categories, are world-views, systems of values in terms of which human acts are posited. The "existential dialectic" of Kierkegaard is an attempt to portray these views artistically, that is, by creating portraits of their adherents. And all of this was directed towards the goal of showing what it means to accept a religious mode of existence, how such a mode qualifies the acts of the individual. Because this is so, our conclusion, though early is not thoughtless, being based not only on the lines just quoted, but on the whole tenor of the authorship.

The disciple of St. Thomas will not be dismayed by the

fact that being as one ought to be and being are skillfully used by Kierkegaard to point up the ethical task, for he will recall the many places where the Angelic Doctor does exactly the same thing. A quick perusal of some of these texts will serve both to justify Kierkegaard's usage and to make clearer the distinction involved.[6]

Just as being is said both of substantial and accidental being, so too is the good said not only of absolute goodness, but of what is good secundum quid as well. But there is a great difference between these two divisions. Something is said to be, simply, thanks to its substantial being; but a thing is said to be secundum quid because of the accidents which accrue to it. Socrates is, in the absolute sense of the term, because of his substantial form; he is white because that accident inheres in him. It was an absolute generation which brought Socrates into being, for before being generated Socrates simply was not. But the alteration, or generation secundum quid, by which he becomes white entails only that, before acquiring this accidental being, Socrates was non-white.

Goodness is spoken of in just the opposite way. After the absolute generation by means of which he comes into being, Socrates is absolutely; but he is good only secundum quid in virtue of his being absolutely. To be as he ought to be is something accidental to his absolute being, and is therefore, being secundum quid.

> Homo qui, virtute spoliatus, vitiis est subiectus, dicitur quidem bonus secundum quid, scilicet inquantum est ens et inquantum est homo, non tamen bonus simpliciter, sed magis malus.[7]

Why is it that that which makes Socrates to be absolutely makes him good only relatively, whereas he is absolutely good in virtue of something which makes him be only in an accidental way?

We speak of a thing's being in terms of an absolute consideration; that is, we say that it is perfected in itself when it subsists in virtue of essential principles.[8] Something is said to be good, to be as it should be, with respect to something other than itself; Socrates must be ordered to something other than himself if he is to be good. Socrates relates himself to his end by acquiring accidental perfections, virtues, which rectify his operations. He will be said to be absolutely good when, over and above the perfection of his substantial being, he has acquired the accidental perfection of virtue. Only God is good simply because He is. Creatures have a certain goodness following on their absolute being; but they can only be absolutely good in virtue of that which, on the plane of being, is secundum quid.

Our existence, understood in the Kierkegaardian sense, will be the history of the acquirement of virtues and the subsequent use of them in relating ourselves to our end. If the ethical task is, as Kierkegaard maintains, to resolve the <u>posse</u> into its <u>esse</u>,[9] this must mean that we should realize

our potentialities for virtue so that we may not only be, but be as we ought to be.

These are elementary considerations, but it is well to avoid even a small error in the beginning lest it snowball into a complete misunderstanding in that which follows. What has been said entails, to be sure, the distinction of essence and existence in the creature but by beginning with the notion of the good we have a bridge into what follows, and what follows is not a metaphysical consideration. Kierkegaard presented no system of ethics, gave no orderly presentation of how moral goodness was to be acquired. He abhorred the finality and authoritarianism of Hegelian systematization and feared to indulge in it himself; more important, his very theory of indirect communication forebade such an approach. We go on now to discuss what Kierkegaard did say about human action not only because it is significant in itself, but because it will enable us better to understand his theory of indirect communication.

Chapter Two

Subjectivity is the Truth

"O foolishness of man to seek
Salvation in an ordre logique."

W. H. Auden

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1. Hegel and Providence.

If we can believe Kierkegaard, Hegelianism hung like a dense fog over the Denmark of his day, permeating everything with its unreality and inducing the very rank and file to speculation on Universal History. The age was one of pompous seriousness which felt that it had the real work of thought behind it and was presently engaged in filling in the interstices of a System which had exhausted reality. Everything was gathered to its ample bosom, comprehended and catalogued, from the most hidden thoughts of the divinity to the buzzing of the domestic fly. As a young man, Kierkegaard himself had pored over the tomes of the System, translating it into his mother tongue the better to understand the difficult passages, trying to assimilate the wisdom which all assured him was there. It was only gradually that the realization crept upon him that ethics was conspicuously absent from the system, or at least an ethics which could have some relation to himself and the

reality which surrounded him. With this recognition came the thought that the whole of Hegelian philosophy was a fantastic enterprise which would abstract him completely out of life into the weird and wonderful ether of Pure Being. And thereby hangs the tale.

The task of reason, according to Hegel, is gradually to appropriate the wisdom that religion had hitherto attributed to Providence.[1] He felt that the human intelligence had sufficiently matured to be able to open the last door, to go beyond faith and know God as Scripture had urged. In doing this, all would become clear and comprehensible to human reason, for ultimately it presupposes that God is an object proportioned to human intelligence and is thus below it. His ways become our ways and we recognize that all takes place with necessity, for we would know the cause of all the causes and there could be no unforeseen effects. We could then, echo Richard II,

> I am sworn brother, sweet,
> To grim necessity, and he and I
> Will keep a league till death.

Or, as Hegel puts it: "What irks and infuriates us is not what is, but the fact that it is not as it should be; once we know that it is as it must be - that is to say, not arbitrary or contingent -, we also recognize that it should be as it is." 2

Obviously Hegel has set himself a rather ambitious goal and we may well wonder how he proposed to attain it. What he set out to secure was science, which he insisted had been

done to death by his contemporaries, Fichte and Schelling. He would know the truth, and

> The truth is the whole. The whole, however, is merely the essential nature reaching its completeness through the process of its own development. [3]

The whole truth is, of course, God an exhaustive knowledge of whom would make providence an open book and take the difficulty out of life. Science, then, is the System, and in its passage from an inferior to a superior form it is only imitating the Absolute which is thus working itself out in time.[4] The dialectical development of the system finds its beginning in negation, in nothingness, which Hegel lyricizes thus: "...the portentous power of the negative; it is the energy of thought, of pure ego."[5] Portentous it is indeed, but this nothingness provides the clue to the fiction with which Hegel dazzled his contemporaries.

Hegel was perfectly aware that science is not given or attained in one fell swoop, but is only had at the end of a passage from the general and confused to the particular and distinct. Our minds are such that we go from idea to idea in the process of learning, having a diversity of concepts corresponding with the diversity of things known. For Hegel, the mind itself is the source of all our ideas.

> It is there (i.e. in philosophy) proved by speculative cognition that Reason...is <u>Substance</u>, as well as <u>Infinite Power</u>; its own <u>Infinite Material</u>

> underlying all the natural and spiritual life which it originates, as also the Infinite Form - that which sets this Material in motion. It is its own material which it commits to its own Active Energy to work up; not needing, as finite action does, the conditions of an external material of given means from which it may obtain its support, and the objects of its activity. It supplies its own nourishment, and is the object of its own operations.[6]

We are aware that the ideas that the mind produces in reflecting on its thoughts are second intentions, the proper object of logic. Thus Hegel's attempt would seem to reduce itself to a deduction from certain universals in praedicando the totality of the real in all its reality.[7] Our mind becomes creative and we no longer have to do with science but with the semblance of a technique which would give power and fecundity to our minds. That which in reality is nothing at all may have the status of mere object; that which cannot possibly be can yet have intentional existence. To regard this as a magic power is completely to misunderstand the nature of our mind, of logic and the weakness which necessitates it.

Nowhere does the presumption of the Hegelian method become more apparent than in its application to history. Kierkegaard took exception to this aspect of Hegel in basing himself on the exigencies of the ethical life. In juxtaposing the presuppositions of Universal History and the counter position of Kierkegaard, much light will be thrown on the intellectual milieu in which this first existentialist's

thought was born.

We have seen that for Hegel, our task when confronted with history is not to content ourselves with a vague and abstract concept of providence. Rather, we must make this idea concrete and determinate so that we will be able to see providence working itself out in history. We presume on the philosophical demonstration of the radical reasonableness of all things in our study of history.

> The only Thought which Philosophy brings with it to the contemplation of History, is the simple conception of Reason; that Reason is the Sovereign of the World; that the history of the world, therefore, presents us with a rational process.[8]

Just as a type of reflective history which confines itself to a partial view, forms certain general notions, so universal history will form general notions which cover the whole of the development of the cosmic reason. We are told that these generalities, if they are true, no longer constitute merely an external order of events, but rather show us the interior soul which governs the external events.[9] Universal history seeks a rational comprehension so that the world in which the acts of intelligence and will manifest themselves will no longer seem left to chance, but will be seen in the light of the Idea.

Hegel notes that Anaxagoras was the first to state that there was a reason which governed the world and that for this reason Aristotle likened him to the one sober man in a crowd of drunks.[10] But Socrates shows the indetermination of this

position when he notes that he sought in vain in the works of Anaxagores for an application of the causality of this Reason; instead, effects were attributed to causes like air, water, and the like. And Socrates had reason to complain, Hegel tells us, for we must show the workings of the idea in the universe, trace its course, manifest the rationality which governs the world. This is but another approach to the manifestation of the ways of providence.

> On the contrary our earnest endeavor must be directed to the recognition of the ways of Providence, the means it uses, and the historical phenomena in which it manifests itself; and we must show their connection with the general principle above mentioned.[11]

This is but to fulfill the injunction of Scripture which urges us not only to love God, but also to know Him.

One of the advantages of this determinate comprehension of the ways of Providence is that we will understand evil and why it is present in the world. Only by understanding the why which explains the presence of evil in the world, can one be reconciled with it. Since we will concentrate on the true goal of the world and on the process of its realization, the emphasis will be on the positive and we will see the negative disappear.[12] This comprehension of the goal of the world and the events which are understood only as functions of this end, will enable us to see the necessity with which history unfolds. Hegel insists that it is this necessity which we have to know.

There is something appealing in this cosmic view, and its

appeal is enhanced by being apparently based on a scriptural injunction. It rises above our personal concerns and trials; the world of strife and passion, of good and evil, is left far behind and we view benignly the totality and see that all is good. The only trouble with this point of view is the fact that we are still faced with the difficulty of life, and that good and evil remain as inscrutable as ever. Far from being necessary, our lives contain an incalculable element which sometimes is fortunate sometimes unfortunate. The fact is that Hegel thirsts after a knowledge no man can have, that of good and evil. Whether offered as an apple or a system, it is beyond our reach. One agrees readily with the remark of William Barrett that in

> Reading Hegel, we are always divided between admiration for his genius and shock, even disgust, at a certain coarseness of mind by which he can override the rough edges of contingency, chance, human existence itself.[13]

This also was the thought of Kierkegaard.

2. An Existential System is Impossible.

As has been mentioned, Kierkegaard spent a great deal of his youth trying to absorb this supposed comprehension of the totality, finding to his dismay that the bright promise of its beginning had never in fact been fulfilled. It was to this point which he constantly recurred in his own writings, likening the system to a sign in a store window which read "Pants pressed here", and yet when one entered with a pair of

trousers over his arm he found that only the sign was for sale. How unfair and fantastic to promise so much and give so little! The system offered to press the wrinkles out of life and yet its fundamental premise, that thought and being are one, belies the truth saved in the most insignificant action that there is a chasm which separates being and thought. Hegelian wisdom pretended to the status of providence and yet a higher wisdom tells us: incertae sunt providentiae nostrae. It was the irrefutable evidence offered by human existence that provided Kierkegaard with the basis of his attack on the system.

Of one thing every man can be certain: an existential system is impossible. That which we learn from history is merely the effects of action, the inviolable sanctuary of conscience remains hidden from our eyes.

> Does this mean that no such system exists? By no means; nor is this implied in our assertion. Reality itself is a system - for God; but it cannot be a system for any existing spirit. System and finality correspond to one another, but existence is precisely the opposite of finality.[14]

History is subject to what Kierkegaard calls a quantitative dialectic, and only that which has quantitative importance is included in it. It does not achieve the inwardness where the ethical resides. An individual acquires historical importance by means of that which, from an ethical point of view, is accidental.[15] And yet, if one intends truly to understand history from the viewpoint of providence, the ethical, morality, cannot be overlooked.

> For God, the apprehension of the historical is interpenetrated by His knowledge of the inmost secrets of conscience, alike in the greatest and in the humblest. If he (the historian) refrains from such an attempt, he will have to content himself with a survey of the more prominent items, and this is precisely what makes the quantitative the deciding factor in the selection.[16]

That which is important, as far as ethical considerations are concerned, is the purpose. Once the purpose is determined, the outcome and effects are indifferent.[17] Far from explaining away evil, Universal History can never attain to a recognition of good and evil as these exist as moral determinants in the individual.[18]

> But world history is the royal stage where God is spectator, where He is not accidentally but essentially the only spectator, because He is the only one who <u>can</u> be. To this theatre no existing spirit has access. If he imagines himself a spectator here, he merely forgets that he is himself an actor on the stage of the little theatre, who must leave it to the royal spectator and actor how He will use him in this royal drama, drama dramatum.[19]

But what of the necessity which Hegel claimed governed the world? Kierkegaard asks the system to explain Socrates necessarily, for he was significant and is conveniently dead. Let it explain the necessity with which he came into being, of his mother being a midwife, of marrying Xanthippe, and of being condemned by just three votes.[20] Kierkegaard insists that there is chance operative in the world, that actions and hence history are not necessitated. He cautions, however, against those who ascribe all to chance. Both extremes are in error, for the latter does man an injustice, whereas the

speculative philosopher does God an injustice.[21] It is in the Philosophical Fragments, so called to distinguish it from the System, that we find a philosophical attempt to refute determinism.

The discussion commences with a treatment of becoming in general, and Kierkegaard bases himself on Aristotelian philosophy. He proposes to speak of generation, which is distinguished from all other becoming in that it does not suppose the prior existence of that which becomes. That is, it is a change from non-being to being, understanding these terms absolutely. Nevertheless, even this non-being has a type of being for every change presupposes something.

> But a being of this kind, which is nevertheless a non-being, is what we know as a possibility; and a being which is being is actual being, or actuality; so that the change involved in becoming is the transition from possibility to actuality.[22]

Kierkegaard then asks whether the necessary can come into being.

> Becoming is a change; but the necessary cannot undergo any change, since it is always related to itself, and related to itself in the same manner. All coming into being is a <u>suffering</u> and the necessary cannot suffer; it cannot suffer the suffering of the actual, which is that the possible (not only the excluded possibility, but also the accepted possibility) reveals itself as nothing the moment it becomes actual; for the possible is annihilated in the actual. Everything that comes into being proves precisely by coming into being that it is not necessary; for the necessary is the only thing that cannot come into being, because the necessary is.[23]

What has come into being, is actual, but actuality is not necessity. At this point, Kierkegaard disagrees with Aristotle for whom even the necessary is possible.

> The mistake lies in his beginning with the principle that everything which is necessary is possible. In order to avoid having to assert contradictory and even self-contradictory predicates about the necessary, he helps himself out by creating two species of possibility, instead of discovering that his first principle is incorrect, since possibility cannot be predicated of the necessary.[24]

Every becoming takes place with freedom, not by necessity. All causes ultimately derive from a free being, and we must not be deluded by the vast panorama of intermediary causes to think that thereby a becoming is necessary.[25] "Nothing ever comes into being with necessity; what is necessary never comes into being; nothing becomes necessary by coming into being."[26] Kierkegaard is willing to admit that nature has a history insofar as it has come into being, but he reserves the designation of historical in the strict sense to "the possibility of a second becoming within the first becoming." This becoming within a becoming is due to a relatively free cause which derives ultimately from an absolutely free cause.[28]

The past does not admit of change, for what has happened has happened, but must we therefore conclude that the immutability of the past is identical with that of the necessary? Not at all, for it at one time came into being. "If the past is conceived as necessary, this can happen only by virtue of forgetting that it has come into being."[29] The necessary is that which cannot be otherwise, but at the time of its becoming the past could have been otherwise; therefore its immutability is not as the immutability of the necessary.

Kierkegaard insists that if we see the past as necessary, we must say the same of the future, and thus freedom would be destroyed. Kierkegaard here gives us an indication of the determinism which Hegel invoked, for by tracing a necessary line in the past it would seem to follow that this necessity continues through the present and into the future. To this he answers:

> The past is not necessary, since it came into being; it did not become necessary by coming into being (which is a contradiction); still less does it become necessary through someone's apprehension of it. If the past became necessary through being apprehended, the past would be the gainer by as much as the apprehension lost, since the latter would come to apprehend something else, which is a poor sort of apprehension. If the object of apprehension is changed in the process of apprehension, the apprehension is changed into a misapprehension.[30]

Wonder is necessary to the philosopher, as Plato and Aristotle have said, but who but a fool could wonder at the necessary? And wonder, of course, arises from an inability to grasp the why of something; Hegelian determinism, being beyond wonder, is beyond philosophy and human life.[31]

The problem which Kierkegaard is trying to resolve is perennial in philosophy, something which can be seen in the very number of past thinkers to whom he refers in his exposition. It is true that there is much value in what he has said, but his account remains inadequate. The problem of necessity and contingency, of determinism and freedom is much more knotty than the few pages he devotes to it make clear.

We cannot, therefore, pass over his refutation of Hegel without correcting what he has said in the light of the school of philosophy on which he initially bases his stand, that of Aristotle. Fully to present the necessary distinctions and all possible ramifications would, of course, carry us far beyond the modest scope of the present work. But without at least a provisory glance at the doctrine which covers this area, we would not be justified in going on to the Kierkegaardian position which follows on the views here set forth.

In restricting the signification of the necessary, Kierkegaard is doubtless motivated by the desire to distinguish clearly all creatures from God. Fortunately, this laudable aim is by no means impaired by admitting of various kinds of necessity and even by recognizing that there are examples of absolute necessity to be found in creatures. It is because he thinks of possibility as synonymous with contingency that Kierkegaard refuses to accept the statement that even the necessary is possible. That this must be so is dictated by strict logical requirement and should not be seen as merely a way of helping oneself out of an embarrassing verbal difficulty. St. Thomas states the logic of the case most succinctly:

> Nam quod necesse est esse, possibile est esse: quod enim non possibile est esse, impossibile est esse; et quod impossibile est esse, necesse est non esse; igitur quod necesse est esse, necesse est non esse. Hoc autem est impossibile. Ergo impossibile est quod aliquid necesse sit esse, et tamen non sit possibile illud esse.

> Ergo possibile esse sequitur ad necesse esse.[32]

The definition given of the impossible, that which necessarily is not, is opposed not only to the necessary, but also to the contingent which may or may not be. But the contingent, so defined, will also be opposed to the necessary which is defined as that which cannot not be.[33]

We see immediately the many distinctions which have to be made if one is to speak with any degree of coherence in this matter. The first is that already mentioned between the possible and the impossible. Under the possible we can understand both the necessary and that which, although not necessary, is yet not impossible. Beings falling into this latter category are, of course, contingent. Here we must again take exception with Kierkegaard, for we admit of some things which come into being and yet as beings do not contain the <u>natura possibilitatis</u> and are accordingly necessary with an absolute necessity. It is not the case, as Kierkegaard suggests, simply because a thing comes into being that it is not necessary, but because it was not necessarily precontained in its cause.

> Non dicitur autem aliquid per hunc modum possibile vel contingens ex hoc solum quod quandoque sit in potentia et quandoque in actu. (...) Sed possibile vel contingens quod opponitur necessario hoc in sua ratione habet, quod non sit necesse illud fieri quando non est. Quod quidem est quia non de necessitate sequitur ex causa sua.[34]

All things depend on the will of God as on the first cause of their being. Now the will of God is not necessitated to any act other than that of loving himself. When it is question of creatures, God is said to will them not with absolute, but with hypothetical necessity.[35] We will return later to a discussion of this second type of necessity, but for the moment we must show that hypothetical necessity does not exclude all absolute necessity from creatures.

> Illas autem res simpliciter et absolute necesse est esse in quibus non est possibilitas ad non esse. Quaedam autem res sic sunt a Deo in esse productae ut in earum natura sit potentia ad non esse. Quod quidem contingit ex hoc quod materia in eis est in potentia ad aliam formam. Illae enim res in quibus vel non est materia, vel, si est, non est possibilis ad aliam formam, non habent potentiam ad non esse. Eas igitur absolute et simpliciter necesse est esse.[36]

We are now enabled to distinguish contingent things into two main groups, necessary and non-necessary contingents. In the first case, beings are absolutely necessary in themselves, but are said to be extrinsically contingent. That is to say, it was not absolutely necessary that they be created; they, as all creatures, are willed by God with only hypothetical necessity. But this does not force us to conclude that all absolute necessity is thereby excluded from creatures, as we have already seen. Moreover, it is the case that there are instances of absolute necessity in the realm of beings which contain the natura possibilitatis,[37] which contain in themselves the seeds of their future dissolution.

Socrates is an example of a being subject to intrinsic contingency, there is in him a proclivity towards non-being. But precisely here is an example of absolute necessity. It was not necessary in the first place that Socrates be, but now that he is, it is absolutely necessary that he be rational and that he should one day die.[38] However, it is not absolutely necessary that Socrates run, for he is no more determined to that action than to its opposite. But given the fact that Socrates is running, it is impossible that he be at the same time standing still.[39] Note well that hypothetical necessity always goes from consequent to antecedent and not vice versa; it is not a necessity that is somehow not necessary.[40]

Obviously if we are intent on proving that an existential system is impossible, whatever we say will ultimately reduce itself to an inquiry into how effects are precontained in their causes. It is because Kierkegaard will not admit that effects are necessarily so precontained that he is moved to sustain his thesis. From what has been said, it should be evident that his approach is an unhappy one for ultimately it leads to contingentism. Human acts consider the present and the future; we do not take counsel as to the past.

> Factum autem quod est praeteritum non est contingens, quia non contingit ipsum non fieri, idest quod non sit factum; et ad hoc inducit verbum Agathonis qui recte dixit: quod solo isto posse privatur Deus, ut scilicet faciat ingenita, idest non facta quae sunt facta.[41]

The present as present is subject to the principle of contradiction: it cannot be other than it is.[42] What is left is the future and our question becomes, how are future effects contained in their causes?

St. Thomas tells us[43] that an effect is contained in its cause either (1) so that it will issue from it with necessity, or (2) so that the cause has an inclination to this effect, but can nevertheless be impeded from realizing it, or, finally, (3) so that the cause is purely in potency and is not determined to one effect or another. In the first case, contingency is excluded. It is necessary that a man have a sensible nature; it could not be otherwise. From the remaining two categories we distinguish three types of contingency. The second category lends itself to two types of contingency:
(a) that which happens for the most part following the inclination of nature. Usually babies are born with five fingers per hand, but it can happen that this is not realized.
(b) When the inclination is frustrated, the effect is contingent. (c) Effects which issue from a cause which is in no wise predetermined to them are due to free election. This kind of contingency follows on the third division above.

The free will with which we are endowed is indifferent to any good less than the universal good; to all lesser goods we must determine ourselves.[44] This indetermination makes it absolutely impossible for anyone to see preontained in the will the effects which will follow from it. A realization of

this radical indetermination at the source of the historical will show the stupidity of trying to trace necessity through the past and into the future. Human acts are contingent on a self-determination which cannot be predicted. But there is an even more radical contingency at work in the affairs of men, that of chance.

When Socrates slips off to the corner tavern to enjoy a cold beer and dialogue and there encounters Alcibiades who has owed him five dollars since the last Olympics, Socrates would seem to be in a fortunate situation. He certainly had had no idea that he would meet Alcibiades here; the latter is a member of the Prohibitionist party and was supposed to have left Athens forever after its defeat in the last elections. It would have been foolish then to expect to meet Alcibiades. But Socrates would not be so analytical. He accepts the five, orders a round, and Alcibiades, who had stepped in merely for a package of cigarettes without knowing whether Socrates were still this side of the Styx, steps muttering into the street.

The situation in the example is an accidental effect of something Socrates decided to do. His sole intention was temporary relief from Xanthippe and a refreshing drink; but that he should at the same time receive an unexpected sum, this he had not even dreamt of. How are we to account for such an accidental occurrence? Aristotle and St. Thomas tell us that Socrates is here an accidental cause of an accidental effect, and that, in order to be this, he must first be in-

tending a per se effect.[45] The chance effect is united to the intended effect, but is not one with the intention.[46] In fact, that which happens due to fortune is of such infrequent occurrence that it would be foolish to do one thing in order that something fortuitous might convene; something which usually happens or with any degree of probability so that it could be foretold, could not be fortune.[47] And yet the fortuitous, since it is related as a good or evil to the agent, would have been pursued or avoided had the agent known.[48]

The three necessary elements of a fortuitous event are, again: first that the agent be working for an end; secondly, that what happens by fortune is of infrequent occurrence; and finally, that it be related as a good or evil to the agent. The effects of fortune are incalculable, for they are infinite: causa autem per accidens est infinita et indeterminata, eo quod infinita uni possunt accidere.[48a]

Some have tried to deny the indeterminateness of fortune, insisting that anything accidental can be reduced to a per se cause.[49] Thus, in our example, going to the tavern would be the per se cause of receiving five dollars. But would not Socrates be suspect if going to the tavern were synonymous with receiving five dollars? There is no determinate cause of the fortuitous effect, it is reducible to the agent's intention as accidently conjoined to its effect. The effects of fortune are beyond our comprehension and thus serve to make

difficult the decision to act. For what might not ensue? To know the definition of fortune and how it is a cause helps one not at all when he would posit an act. If he could foresee the effects of fortune, they would no longer be the effects of fortune.

There is contingency in the world and what is more, there is that radical species of contingency which is chance or fortune. Not all effects can be read in their causes and because of this we can never comprehend reality in such a way that it will seem reasonable. For us there is much irrationality in the world and it is such that we cannot surmount it by thought. Anyone who thinks he has done so is, as Kierkegaard remarks, a fool. No system of reality can be formulated because no such system exists for man. With this realization, we reach a maturer outlook on human action. It is not something that follows necessarily from what has gone before, but must be approached with a certain fear and trembling. But before we speak of the human act we must first hear what Kierkegaard has had to say about the relation between thought and action.

3. Thought and Existence.

Just as a man who takes every precaution not to fall on his face often ends by toppling over backwards, so Kierkegaard, in reacting against the Hegelian speculative philosophy has a tendency to reject all speculative philosophy. Nowhere is his

anti-intellectualism more apparent than in the Postscript, and even if one can justify much of what he says in considering it as directed against Hegel, there still remains a substantial number of statements which seem directed against speculation as such. It is significant that Kierkegaard took Socrates as his model, for Socrates turned from the study of physics and busied himself only with ethical questions.[50] Kierkegaard constantly reminds us that he does not reject objective thought as such, but if, despite his protestation of good intentions, we find in his writing a rejection of all but practical thought we cannot merely slough it off.

Kierkegaard loved the greeks and affirmed that their philosophizing always had a relation to ethics.[51] He was thinking primarily of Socrates when he said this, but we find him referring often to Aristotle as to an authority. Thus, in rejecting Hegelianism, he adverts to the Aristotelian distinction between the speculative and practical.

> Abstract thought is disinterested, but for an existing individual existence is the highest interest. An existing individual therefore has always a telos , and it is of this telos that Aristotle speaks when he says (De Anima, III, 10, 2) that νοῦς θεωρέτικος differs from νοῦς πράκτικος τῷ τέλει. But pure thought is altogether detached, and not like the abstract thought which does indeed abstract from existence, but nevertheless preserves a relationship to it.[52]

It would seem that Kierkegaard accepts the type of speculation which Aristotle indulges in. He goes on to show that the Hegelian Pure Thought is neither of the types of which Aristotle speaks. "Just as existence has combined thought

and existence by making the existing individual a thinker, so there are two media: the medium of abstract thought, and the medium of reality. But pure thought is still a third medium, quite recently discovered."[53] Pure thought ignores or denies that it sustains any relation with that from which it abstracts.

The difficulty arising from this appeal to Aristotle is that the subsequent use of the term "abstract thought" becomes a bit ambiguous. We no longer know whether he intends Hegelian pure thought or speculation as Aristotle understands it. The only course left is to note what he predicates of abstract thought and then go on to see if it be true of speculation as we understand it. We are told that abstract thought ignores the concrete and temporal, the whole existential predicament of the individual. It is easy to explain things in abstraction simply because thought then abstracts from the definite something which is reality.[54] The only way in which abstract thought can get hold of reality is by nullifying it, and this nullification of reality consists in transforming it into a possibility.[55] The assumption that Kierkegaard is attacking only Hegelian speculation could be corroborated by innumerable citations from the Postscript. However, in the same book and in the Fragments we find the denial that we can prove the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, etc.[56] These are problems which we will consider much later in our study for the sake of the minimal

orderliness which we are trying to preserve.

Much of the difficulty alluded to is diminished if we consider that Kierkegaard's only objective is to defend the notion of human choice. More especially, he is trying to show that Christianity is not an invitation to speculation, but a way of life. It will become clear later, when we see Kierkegaard's criteria for "essential knowledge" that abstract thought in the manner of Aristotle is thought to be non-essential knowledge. For the moment, let us once again lend an ear to Kierkegaard's constant complaint.

> For it is regarded as a settled thing, that the objective tendency in direction of intellectual contemplation, is, in the newer linguistic usage, the ethical answer to the question of what I ethically have to do; and the task assigned to the contemplative nineteenth century is world history. The objective tendency is the way and the truth; the ethical is, becoming an observer! That the individual must become an observer is the ethical answer to the problem of life - or else one is compelled to assume that there is no ethical problem at all, and in so far no ethical answer.[57]

Is thinking an adequate substitute for action? It is in the light of this question that we must understand what Kierkegaard has to say. He insists that the ethical is not merely a knowing, but a knowing which is related to a doing.[58] What then can world history be if not a delay in the ethical task? Pure thought does not have any relation to my existence, and it is accordingly a chimera if the truth sought is something to exist in.[59]

> An intermediary state like existence would seem suitable for an intermediary being like man. How is it then with the supposed identity of thought and being in connection with the kind of existence that belongs to particular human beings? Am I the good because I think the good, or am I good because I think the good.[60]

There is no direct transition from the objective to the subjective,[61] from thought to action or existence. "If the content of thought were reality, the most perfect possible anticipation of an action in thought before I had yet acted, would be the action."[62]

> The only possible way of drawing a distinction between thought and action is to relegate thought to the sphere of the possible, the disinterested, the objective, and to assign action to the sphere of the subjective. But along this boundary there appears a twilight zone. Thus when I think that I will do this or that, this thought is not yet an action, and in all eternity it is qualitatively distinct from action; nevertheless, it is a possibility in which the interest of action and of reality already reflects itself. The disinterestedness and objectivity of thought are on the way to being disturbed, because reality and responsibility reach out to lay hold of it.[63]

And yet the real action is not to be confused with the external; rather it consists in the decision whereby one identifies himself with the content of his thought. Kierkegaard illustrates this by telling of the levite who passed the man who had been robbed. If a mile down the road he regretted that he had not helped the man and returned only to find him gone, his action was still a good one inspite of the fact that he could no longer manifest his decision exteriorly.[64]

> That the real action often tends to be confused with all sorts of notions, intentions, approximations to a decision, and so forth, and that it is seldom that anyone really acts, is not denied. On the contrary, it is assumed that just this state of affairs has contributed to the confusion with which we are here dealing.[65]

In this connection, Kierkegaard speaks of the ethical task as the resolving of a _posse_ into an _esse_.[66] This is the area of what Kierkegaard calls the subjective reflection which turns its attention inward to the subject and "desires in this intensification of inwardness to realize the truth."[67]

> This reflection of inwardness gives to the subjective thinker a double reflection. In thinking, he thinks the universal; but as existing in this thought and as assimilating it in his inwardness, he becomes more and more subjectively isolated.[68]

From this vantage point, Kierkegaard enunciates another major thesis: subjectivity is the truth. All other definitions of truth are false; it is not the identity of thought and being. The truth is subjectivity and subjectivity is the truth. The mode of apprehension of the truth is precisely the truth.[69] We are told that objectively there is no truth for existing individuals, but only approximation.[70] Subjectively the truth exists for them in inwardness, because the decisiveness of the truth is to be found in the subjectivity of the individual. We find an even more concise definition of the truth as: "An objective uncertainty held fast in an approximation process of the most passionate inwardness."[71]

All of this will seem surprising only if we forget the context in which it is found. This position arises from an analysis of Hegel's approach to Christianity the truth of which he claimed to grasp by speculative philosophy. Nay more, speculative philosophy brings the truth into being. "The truth, is not first given, and the understanding of it awaited

afterwards, but we look for the completion of the speculative understanding as that which alone can bring the truth into being."[72] Kierkegaard concludes that the knowledge of such philosophy is its own object, that is, it only knows its own knowledge. But what if Christianity is not just an imperfect truth which is brought to fruition by knowledge; what if it is something to be lived and this primarily? Thus arises the above mentioned definition of truth.

We do not intend to discuss Kierkegaard's notion of faith until much later, but it must be recognized that his definition of truth was for him a defense of what faith means. For this reason, he discusses at this time the relationship of knowledge to faith and introduces his rather bizarre concept of the absurd. We will have to forego discussion of all this for the present, and glean from what is said the relationship between thought and action. The texts we have cited already give us a fairly good notion of what Kierkegaard understood by this relation. Our intention for the remainder of this present section will be to set down the criteria for distinguishing the speculative from the practical and show that it is in this latter category that Kierkegaard's thought properly falls. Likewise, it will be well to show that the various degrees of abstraction which constitute the speculative order differ quite radically and thus do not constitute an essentialism as some of Kierkegaard's remarks would seem to indicate. We will reserve for the immediately following section the dis-

cussion of the prudential act and practical truth where we hope to bring together all that Kierkegaard has to say in this matter and compare it with the thought of St. Thomas. We hope thereby to show both what can be kept and what must be rejected in the thought of Kierkegaard.

When Kierkegaard refers to the De Anima for a statement on the speculative and practical intellects, he seems to misinterpret what he reads, for he says that an existing individual always has a telos or end and that it is in this that the practical differs from the speculative. Does this mean that the speculative does not have an end or telos? Here is how J. A. Smith translates the passage in question.

> Both of these then are capable of originating local movement, mind and appetite: (1) mind, that is, which calculates means to an end, i.e. mind practical (it differs from mind speculative in the character of its end)...[73]

It is not simply because it has an end that the practical intellect differs from the speculative, but they differ because they have different ends.

> Dicendum quod theoricus sive practico distinguitur, quod speculativus habet pro fine veritatem quam considerat, practicus vero veritatem consideratam ordinat in operationem tanquam in finem.[74]

It is necessary to recognize this difference, because as St. Thomas tells us, it is the proper difference between the speculative and practical. The object of the intellect as such is the truth in which the speculative rests as in its only

object, whereas the practical intellect would know truth so as to apply it to some operation.75 The speculative intellect studies necessary objects which are not operable objects for us; the practical intellect is interested only in operable objects.76

It follows that the mode of consideration will also differ, for the speculative seeks to resolve what it knows into its principles; the practical mode is called compositive and consists in applying a form to matter.77 Now, although we can never have practical knowledge of a non-operable object, we can study an operable object in several ways. Practical knowledge is said with reference to the genus and this can happen in two ways.

> Quandoque in actu: quando scilicet ad aliquod opus actu ordinatur, sicut artifex praeconcepta forma proponit illam in materiam inducere; et tunc est actu practica cognitio, et cognitionis forma. Quandoque vero est quidem ordinabilis cognitio ad actum, non tamen actu ordinatur; sicut cum artifex excogitat formam artificii, et scit per modum operandi, non tamen operari intendit; et certum est quod est practica habitu vel virtute, non actu.78

The end of the knower is an added criterion of practical knowledge. A man can acquaint himself with all the steps necessary for the construction of a Ford and yet never intend to build one. Yet all this knowledge looks to be completely practical is this intention: its object and mode are both practical. When the object is operable but the mode of consideration and the intention of the knower are speculative, we have a mixture of speculative and practical. The knowledge

may be called radically practical because its object is operable, but for the rest it is a speculative consideration. The speculative knowledge which bears on a non-operable object will be in no wise practical, for it answers to none of the criteria for practicity we have used: object, mode of consideration, intention of the knower. We can allow that it may accidentally effect action, as, for instance, the consideration of the immortality of the soul.

Thus between the extremes of simply speculative knowledge and simply practical knowledge, we have two types which are secundum aliquid speculative and secundum aliquid practical.[79] The one will be practical only as to its object and is called radically practical. The other is practical both as to its object and its mode of consideration, and is practical virtute. It is that knowledge which is simply speculative which is distinguished according to the three degrees of abstraction.[80]

It is hardly necessary to say that Kierkegaard's interest lies entirely in the realm of the practical, but it is sometimes well to state the obvious. In this case, it helps us read certain statements of Kierkegaard in a much more favorable light than would be possible if we thought them to be universal in applicability. "It must always be remembered that I speak of the religious, in which sphere objective thinking, when it ranks as highest, is precisely irreligious."[81] The complaint is simply that when the task set is an operation,

merely thinking about what is to be done, will never accomplish the task.

We have seen that there is a gradation from the simply speculative to the simply practical, and it would seem that Kierkegaard too has seen this to be true. Recall his statements of the twilight zone in which the disinterestedness of thought begins to be disturbed, and thought moves nearer to existence.[82] It is at this point that Kierkegaard seems to part ways with us, and we recall his judgment of the abstract thought represented by the speculative intellect with a little uneasiness. This abstract thought, he said, always preserves a relation to existence.[83] But if existence here means ethical endeavour, we would have to make a few distinctions before agreeing; one is responsible in an ethical manner for the time he devotes to speculation, but prudence plays no role in science as such. Is this all that Kierkegaard means, or is he saying that only knowledge which can be ordered to action is valid?

> All essential knowledge relates to existence, or only such knowledge as has an essential relationship to existence is essential knowledge. All knowledge which does not inwardly relate itself to existence, in the reflection of inwardness, is, essentially viewed, accidental knowledge; its degree and scope is essentially indifferent. That essential knowledge is essentially related to existence does not mean the above-mentioned identity which abstract thought postulates between thought and being; nor does it signify, objectively, that knowledge corresponds to something existent as its object. But it means that knowledge has a relationship to the knower, who is essentially an existing individual, and for this reason all essential knowledge is essentially related to existence. Only ethical and ethico-religious knowledge has an es-

<u>sential relationship to the existence of the knower.</u>[84]

The marked tendency in Kierkegaard to stress the practical to the point of denying that the speculative is worthy of attention for one who is really living, existing on every smoking cylinder of inwardness,-this tendency alligns Kierkegaard with schools of philosophy with which he has otherwise little in common. Perhaps this penchant of his thought can be reconciled, at least in some points, to traditional thought. Prudence is, after all, <u>sapientia vire</u>; it is the most important intellectual virtue just as moral goodness is the most important objective of human life.[85] Compared with this end, all else is secondary.

The danger that can arise from this recognition is that we may try to juggle adjectives a little and make that which for us is the most important, the most important absolutely. Verbally it is a small change, but it signifies that the world has been stood on end. Man becomes the most important thing in existence and it is in terms of him that the value of things is computed. Kierkegaard's division of knowledge is certainly close to this sort of criterion. Elsewhere, in discussing the principle that man is the measure of all things, he rejects the interpretation that one man is a measure for others, preferring to understand it "...in the Socratic sense that each man is his own measure, neither more nor less."[86] One could accept this, but once again only after distinguishing. Kierkegaard's subjectivism, which he himself calls accosmism[87]

is much easier to justify in the realm of natural knowledge then it is when he applies the same notion to faith. When he denies that faith is anything more then a way of life, understood as a continuous positing of actions, and that speculation about the truths of faith is to make them untruths, we must bring down the axe no longer merely to distinguish and reconcile, but to deny and part company. But we will not discuss Kierkegaard's notion of religion until the second part of this essay.

As transition to the next consideration, let us recall that Kierkegaard has noted the difference between abstract and existential thought, and that with regard to this latter he introduces a definition of truth in terms of subjectivity. Our analysis has pointed out what must have been obvious to anyone, that Kierkegaard is in the realm of the practical. We will go on now to a consideration of the prudential judgment and the notion of practical truth, beginning with Thomistic doctrine and making application to Kierkegaard. This will supply the necessary transition and preparation for the Kierkegaardian theory of indirect communication, which we will then discuss.

Chapter Three

Practical Truth and Prudence

> Et propter hoc exigitur doctrina, quae sufficeret si in solo intellectu seu ratione virtus consisteret secundum opinionem Socratis, qui ponebat virtutem esse scientiam. Sed quia requiritur ad virtutem rectitudo appetitus, necessaria etiam est consuetudo per quam appetitus inclinetur ad bonum.[1]

What we have seen thus far in Kierkegaard indicates that he was groping for the notion of practical truth which we find so lucidly expressed in the thought of St. Thomas. The Dane is right in opposing himself to the two aberrations we have already examined. History is not the criterion of the truth of human actions, whether this be stated in the Hegelian manner or in the somewhat more restrained doctrine of pragmatic truth as found in William James.[1a] Nor can knowledge alone suffice to make our action what it ought to be; we will see that our intelligence cannot embrace the circumstances in which we act and will always be inadequate as a proximate norm of action. We will first examine what the Angelic Doctor has said concerning practical truth, and how his doctrine enables us to see wherein the two positions

mentioned above fail. We will then compare Kierkegaard and St. Thomas on this matter, and go on to the theory of indirect communication which arises out of Kierkegaard's position.

1

In speculative matters truth is attained by a conformity of the mind to what is, and since such conformity cannot be attained in contingent matters, speculation is confined to what is necessary. There is no speculative habitus concerned with the contingent as contingent.[2] As we have seen, the philosophy of nature, although it has as its object things which are contingent, does not study them as contingent but concentrates on the necessary which is saved even in contingency. Since the practical intellect is concerned with contingent things, it will be said to be true quite differently from the speculative intellect.

> Verum autem intellectus practici accipitur per conformitatem ad appetitum rectum. Quae quidem conformitas in necessariis locum non habet, quae voluntate humana non fiunt; sed solum in contingentibus quae possunt a nobis fieri, sive sint agibilia interiora, sive factibilia exteriora. Et ideo circa sola contingentia penitur virtus intellectus practici, circa factibilia quidem ars, circa agibilia vero prudentia.[3]

The foregoing discussion on the difference between the speculative and practical intellect is of course presupposed in what we are now considering. The practical intellect considers those things which are subject to our doing or making, and since the principles of human acts are reason and will,

this latter will enter into the very nature of the human act. But in this area of practical truth we find that there are two virtues which perfect the practical intellect: art and prudence. We must see wherein these two differ in order not to confuse the truth of the one with the other, for this is an error as great as the two mentioned above.

Art in this connection is not synonymous with fine art, but signifies making in all its generality. Art as a virtue will be perfective of the thing to be made; it is not the good of the artist which it would insure, but rather the good of the object which will result from his transitive activity. The personal dispositions of the maker are irrelevant, what matters is that what he makes is good. In this art is like speculative virtues, for it does not matter whether the mathematician is elated or depressed when he makes a demonstration, if only his demonstration is true.[4] That which is due to art is true if it is in conformity with the end chosen by the artist; if he intends to draw a monster and draws a monster then art has performed its task.[5]

Prudence is directed toward making the one who acts good in an absolute sense. Any virtue is such because it perfects a given faculty so that it does its work well; prudence does this and more. "Prudentia autem non solum facit boni operis facultatem, sed etiam usum; respicit enim appetitum, tanquam praesupponens rectitudinem appetitus."[6] We have seen that the disposition of the artist does not enter into the esti-

mation of the goodness or badness of his work. The reason for this is that making is a transitive action whose term is a matter exterior to man such as building, sewing, and the like. Doing, however, is an action which is immanent to the agent such as seeing and willing.[7] Prudence governs human actions which use the various potencies of man in much the same way as art governs exterior making. And since in human acts it is the end which is the principle, prudence presupposes a good disposition in the agent with regard to his end. Rectified appetite is the result of the moral virtues and thus moral virtues are presupposed by prudence. Since art does not look to the good of man but rather to the good of the work, art does not presuppose rectified appetite.[8] The end to which the work of art must be conformed is not given by nature, but is chosen by the artist.

> Et inde est quod magis laudatur artifex qui volens peccat, quam qui peccat nolens; magis autem contra prudentiam est quod aliquis peccet volens, quam nolens, quia rectitudo voluntatis est de ratione prudentiae, non autem de ratione artis.[9]

This will have to suffice for the difference between art and prudence; other differences will appear and the ones mentioned become more intelligible as we go more deeply into prudence which is obviously that which is of the most interest to this study. Prudence looks to the good of the agent and that has been the topic of discussion all along.

The difficulty with which we are now faced is the crux of the matter when one would talk about human action. There

is a distinction so obvious and fundamental that it is incredible to find that it has been overlooked, ignored or denied by men of great intellectual acumen: the distinction is that between knowledge and action, science and virtue. There is moral science and there is the virtue of prudence; to confuse these two is to confound everything. Our present purpose is not to trace the history of the confusion, but rather to point out the absoluteness of the distinction.

Prudence is defined as <u>recta ratio agibilium</u>, rectified reason with regard to human acts. This very definition can give rise to the above-mentioned confusion.

> Cum enim significet <u>rectam rationem agibilium</u>, quidam intelligunt eam sic infra limites intellectus, ut, eam in intellectu absolute credentes, nihil aliud significare dicant nisi rectum dictamen agibilium: ita quod prudentia nil aliud significat nisi rationem recte monstrantem in particulari agibili quid, quomodo, qualiter, etc., eligendum sit.[10]

Cajetan cites Scotus as one who subscribes to this opinion. The implication is that we are able intellectually to exhaust the circumstances of our actions and so judge that we must do this or that in such and such a fashion. A true interpretation of the definition is that prudence is "right reason concerning human acts made firm by the rectified desire of a particular end."[11] The essential difference here is that prudence is not conceived as within the limits of intellect, but dependent on something outside intellect, namely right appetite.

That prudence does not remain within the intellect and is

dependent on appetite, can be seen when we consider that the proper act of prudence is to command. There are three acts of reason which bear on human acts, for first we take counsel, then we pass judgment and thirdly we command this or that action. These first two have their counterparts in acts of the speculative intellect, but the last is proper to the practical intellect, for we can only command of those things which are in our power.[12] Aristotle first assigns each of these acts to prudence, but later distinguishes three minor virtues which concern the first two acts, and leaves the last act to prudence proper. The first two acts involve no activity on the part of the will, but the command does:

> Quia sicut praecipere non est intelligibile quin dependeat ab appetitu, praecipit enim quilibet volens; ita recte praecipere sibi ipsi in huiusmodi moralibus, non est nisi a recto appetitu.[13]

That which divides moral science from the virtue of prudence in the most decisive manner possible is the fact of contingency. We have already noted[14] that a science can deal with the contingent in such a way that it does not study the contingent as contingent. However, of the contingent as contingent there is no speculative science because the variability and mobility of the singular eludes the grasp of the intellectual faculty. This can be explained by concentrating either on the imperfection of our intellect or on the imperfection of the material singular. It is for this reason that neither moral science nor any other intellectual discipline can attain certain truth in the area of the particular contingent.

> Quoniam, cum ab eo quod res est vel non est, oratio sit vera vel falsa; et contingentia aliter et aliter se habeant: impossibile est quod intellectus nostri cognitio conformetur infallibiliter contingentibus.[15]

And yet moral science concerns itself with these contingents. It is for this reason that ethics is such an uncertain science, and this not only when it would speak of things quite close to the realm of action, but even when it enunciates generalities which would seem to cover a certain area with certitude.

> Et cum sermo moralium etiam in universalibus sit incertus et variabilis, adhuc magis incertus est si quis velit ulterius descendere tradendo doctrinam de singulis in speciali. Hoc enim non cadit neque sub arte, neque sub aliqua narratione. Quia causae singularium operabilium variantur infinitis modis. Unde iudicium de singulis relinquitur prudentiae uniuscuiusque.[16]

Moral science remains infra limites intellectus and proceeds in a syllogistic manner and achieves a certain truth. The judgments of moral science can only be of universals, for the reason already given: singulars are variable and uncertain. When it is said that the universals of moral science are uncertain, this is to be understood of course only of the proper principles of that science.[17] There are universals of which we have the greatest certitude and which are the common principles of moral science. These principles are those of natural law, and the intellectual habit which perfects us in this regard is known as synderesis.[18] The proper principles of moral science are conclusions deduced from these common principles[18a] which latter are certain because of their very generality. Conclusions deduced from them are less general and accordingly less certain and this incertitude augments in proportion as the

conclusions become less and less universal tending toward the particular human act as toward a limit. That it is a limit which moral science cannot reach has already been sufficiently labored.

Before passing on to a consideration of the act of prudence, it would perhaps be well to consider a rather surprising opinion held by John of St. Thomas in this matter.[19] This is another example of an error which is extremely fundamental and the more surprising because it is sustained by an otherwise so trustworthy interpreter of the mind of St. Thomas. This opinion suggests that moral science can be thought of in either of two ways: in the first it includes prudence, and in the second it abstracts from it and speculates concerning the knowledge of virtues. In the first instance moral science is said to be practical because it includes prudence; in the second instance moral science is a speculative science, and not only natural ethics is such but also moral theology. John denies that moral science proceeds in a practical mode if it does not include prudence. This rather bizarre stand is completely without support in the Thomistic canon. We will consider John's opinion in reverse order.

We have seen above what Kierkegaard would call the "twilight zone" between the completely speculative and completely practical. John here would seem to be adopting the untenable stand that only the completely practical can lay claim to the compositive mode of procedure. That this is simply not the

case will be seen by recalling the three criteria by means of which we distinguished the speculative from the practical. Obviously moral science is concerned with an operable object, so in this sense it must be conceded to be practical. Again, the bulk of the Ethics proceeds in a compositive mode, something which John flatly denies. The one element which moral science lacks, and which as science it must for all eternity lack, is the intention of the student directly to apply his knowledge to action. With the appearance of this intention, science as science is no more and we are immediately in the realm of virtue. On this second point, then, John of St. Thomas is unfortunately sorted out with the goats.

With regard to his first point which was moral science as including prudence, his error is, if possible, even less recognizable as a Thomistic position. The gulf which exists between moral science and virtue has already to some degree been measured. St. Thomas, it would seem, is always quite clear that science and virtue are antipodal.

> Omnia ergo de quibus hic fit mentio, in tantum sunt species prudentiae, inquantum non in ratione sola consistunt, sed habent aliquid in appetitu. Inquantum enim sunt in sola ratione, dicuntur quaedam scientiae practicae, scilicet ethica, oeconomica et politica.[20]

The implications of this single statement would surely be enough to warn against the stand which John has taken.

The advantage had from discussing this position is that we see the importance of recognizing that science is <u>infra limites intellectus</u>, but that even as such it can proceed in

a practical mode. Prudence makes use of the data of moral science by accepting a conclusion from it as the first premiss of its practical syllogism; thence its procedure depends on the will as an analysis of this syllogism will show. Moral science as including prudence is a contradiction in terms for it would imply remaining within the limits of intellect and yet achieving action. Moral science is not prudence; prudence is not moral science. The one can exist without the other. It is to be noted, however, that it is of little use to the intellect to pursue moral science for the truth which can be had from such a study.

> ...si inquisitio huius scientiae esset ad solam scientiam veritatis, parum esset utilis. Non enim magnum quid est, nec multum pertinens ad perfectionem intellectus, quod aliquis cognoscat variabilem veritatem contingentium operabilium, circa quae est virtus.[21]

A certitude which would completely cancel out falsehood is not to be had in the fluctuating matter which moral science considers; it is not a speculative science in the sense that the truth known is something that intellect can rest in.[21a] It is a practical science and as such is useful for the remote direction of human action.[22]

In human acts there are three factors to be considered. The first is synderesis which concerns itself with the data of natural law and states the end toward which moral virtues are to be directed. Art chooses the end which it would realize, but for man as such there is an end determined by nature. Our knowledge of our ultimate end is a speculative matter, not a

practical one; therefore it does not come under moral science properly. It is as a common principle of that science. The end is the principle in practical matters; once it is given we turn to what must be done if the end is to be realized. The appetite directs itself toward the end and moral virtues perfect this intention. Besides synderesis and moral virtue there is, of course, prudence. Prudence, being right reason, introduces a certain discourse which uses two premisses as the principles of its conclusion. The first is a proposition derived from natural law, as, e.g., "The good of reason is to be sought in passions and operations." The second proposition is particular, stating that the good of reason here and now is saved by doing this or that in such and such a way, etc. Then comes the precept of prudence which is not, as Cajetan warns us,[23] in actu signato, that is, another proposition which concludes, "Therefore I should now command, pursue, choose." Rather the precept is in actu exercitio; it is an action. The whole confusion can crop up here again if we think of the conclusion as merely another proposition, for then prudence would be merely infra limites intellectus.

The fact that this is not so is already evident in the transition from the first to the second premiss which is not immediate as it would be in a speculative syllogism. The truth of the second proposition depends on the condition of the agent's appetite for it concerns a particular end,

and: qualis unusquisque est, talis finis ei videtur. The agent does not have intellectual certitude of what he should do here and now, and yet this is what he passes judgment on in the second, particular premiss on which his action depends. We will recall that St. Thomas calls the situation in which one acts inenarrabilis;[24] it is a tale no man can tell for no man can learn it. The infinity of possibilities, the variability of the singular, the lack of certainty with regard to the outcome of what we do: these are what make action difficult. We simply cannot conform intellectually to the flux in which we must act; and, as Cajetan says, he who would posit the perfection of the practical intellect in knowledge alone cannot surmount this difficulty.[25] In a word, action would be impossible if we first had to exhaust the circumstances in an intellectual manner. Paradoxically enough, the converse too would have to be true; we could not, by the same token, refrain from action, for we would not have intellectual certitude that this were permissible. If this insistence on the same point seems strange to the reader, let him recall with the uneasiness which is ours the errors which even the very wise have made in this area. Whatever our approach, we forever come back to the same point: knowledge and action are simply not the same thing, knowledge alone cannot rectify us with regard to this action. And yet this action must be true; though intellectually we can have only opinion, we must yet act with certainty that what we do is right. This is the root of the difference of

practical truth, for it derives its certitude not from knowledge alone, but from rectified appetite. Our wills must be determined to our true end if what we do is to be right.

And yet would it not seem that what we have been urging is in reality a vicious circle? Prudence, we say, is dependent on rectified appetite, and yet the moral virtues which rectify appetite are dependent on prudence. Is this not a contradiction? Perhaps the difficulties of action have led us into an untenable position. Fortunately, this difficulty is only an apparent one. Appetite is both of the end and of those things which are directed to the end. As we have seen, the end is determined by nature and is not dependent on prudence. Things which are directed to the end, however, are not so determined and must be investigated by reason. It is the rectitude of appetite with regard to the end which is the measure of practical truth; this rectitude is the rule by which we judge of those things which are for the end.[26] By reason of its tending toward the end, moral virtue precedes prudence and is the measure of the truth of the second premiss of the practical syllogism. With regard to those things which are for the end, virtue depends on the precept of prudence. From the viewpoint of prudence, this interaction is even clearer. Prudence is verified by the right intention of the end with regard to its particular judgment which was seen to be the second premiss. The conclusion of prudence is a double act: first it is a judg-

ment of those things for the end and secondly the precept as to what is to be chosen. These depend on the second premiss and thus presuppose the appetite's intention of the end, but they bestow the mean of moral virtue by concluding what is to be done here and now. Moral virtue then depends on prudence only with regard to election, that is of those things which are for the end. Prudence depends on moral virtue in the judgment of the particular circumstances, and also, but in a mediate way, in the double act of its conclusion.[27]

The foregoing enables us to see that knowledge is not the ultimate guide of action. Our minds are simply not able to grasp the material singular in a way that would make this possible. In the following chapter we will see that this is not a liability of intellectuality as such, but of our particular mode of intellectual knowledge. It has been observed that Socrates' dictum, knowledge is virtue, is true in creatures possessed of greater intellectual insight than we are endowed with. It is not because we have intellectual knowledge that we cannot have a science which would be a proximate norm of conduct, but rather because we are not intellectual enough. For the moment it suffices to show why, given our mode of knowing, we can never know with certainty how to act and thus are dependent on appetite for the truth of action. But there is another error which, although it is implicitly refuted in what we have said, would seem to call for more explicit treatment. This is the historical judgment of action or, so to speak, the judgment of the truth of an action by its outcome.

This view brings to light the fact that speculative error is compatible with practical truth.

Let us take the example offered by Kierkegaard. The levite has passed the man who has been set upon by thieves. Further down the road his conscience reproaches him and he returns to give succour to the wretch. Let us say that the Samaritan has been delayed by a broken shoelace (contingency) and that the man still lies in the gutter. The levite goes to him, moved by genuine charity, and finds several flasks in the man's baggage. Assuming that the one he selects contains water, he puts it to the parched and bleeding lips of the wounded man who drinks deeply and shortly dies. The wretch was an insect exterminator and the flask contained deadly poison. Now, must the levite feel impelled to a lifetime of penance in cinere et cilicio because he has poured a pint of Flit into the man and thereby caused his death? Certainly he erred speculatively. But this was a practical act. He had good reason to mistake the poison for water, for in that time such a flask usually held water. The criterion of the truth of his action is the intention which guided it.[28] He meant well; his action was true because his will was rectified and he had by no means acted in a thoughtless manner. But what is the judgment of history? The man has erred, the outcome contradicts his intention and he is a well-meaning fool. He is condemned in a terse paragraph, as Kierkegaard would say. Such an indictment flows from a misunderstanding of practical truth.

We cannot simply say that the levite is not guilty; we must show why he cannot be held guilty. Did the truth of his action depend on the conformity to what is; is speculative truth the criterion of practical truth? No, speculative probability must suffice for action. This does not mean that one can wink at reality, assure himself his heart is pure, and do what he likes. The speculative judgment must be seen not only in relation to what is, but also in relation to intention. One's intention is immediately suspect if he ignores the circumstances. The speculative judgment concerning the "water-poison" can be referred to either of two norms. To that which is, and thus it is false: termite killer is not water. But, referred to the intention of the agent this judgment can be practically true. This is true as well when we judge of all men as if they were good when such a judgment is not flatly contradicted by evidence which cannot be ignored; the truth here is practical, for the majority of men are not good. And yet

> Ipsi autem homini iudicanti, falsum iudicium quo bene iudicat de alio non pertinet ad malum intellectus ipsius, sicut nec ad eius perfectionem pertinet secundum se cognoscere veritatem singularium contingentium; sed magis pertinet ad bonum affectum.[29]

This brings to light a further difference between prudence and art. The work of art must be good in itself; if it is not so the critic does not say, "But Pablo tried so hard to paint a good picture, his intention was irreproachable." No, art is held to the perfection of its work if it is to be judged good. The outcome of prudence is something indifferent to the

practical truth of its judgment, and a man may cause havoc in the world around him and be for all that a good man.[30]

Can the writings of Kierkegaard be reconciled with the doctrine just set forth? Many of the points which have been cited in the preceding chapters would seem to indicate that he has approximated this doctrine on many scores. And so he has, but when we turn to a theme which became quite central to all he had to say about the realm of the practical, the teleological suspension of the ethical absolute, we will find that he has fallen into an error just as grave as those against which he inveighed so eloquently. This consideration will serve as the last preparatory step into the theory of indirect communication.

2

In trying to achieve an economy of order in this first and theoretical part of our study of Kierkegaard, we are consciously running the risk of a temporary misunderstanding of the totality of the pseudonymous literature. From the foregoing it might be thought that Kierkegaard was in the habit of discussing philosophical problems in a recognizably abstract manner. This is far from being the case. This does not mean that what we have been doing is a thorough distortion of Kierkegaard; it is permissible to distil the underlying theory from any man's thought as expressed in written works. We may do this even in the case of the novelist, and Kierkegaard bears a strong ressemblance to the creative artist.

At this point, however, it seems only just to allude to the fact that Kierkegaard had no such neat notion of ethics as we may have been led to believe. To bring this out we must, unfortunately, presume certain things which can only be made clear later, but in so doing we will find that the assets of our disorderliness far outweigh its liabilities.

Parenthetical mention has already been made of Kierkegaard's theory of existence spheres: which is to say, men either live in aesthetic, ethical or religious categories. The difference between these latter two spheres is the point of present interest. It is not an absolute difference. Geismar points out[31] that the ethical is severally understood by Kierkegaard as a sphere in itself and as an element in the religious life. In the works to which we have been referring in the foregoing analysis, it is in the latter sense that Kierkegaard has been using the term. When we consider one aspect of his thought on the ethical as a sphere in itself, we will become aware that his notion of ethics is quite far removed from that we have sketched as St. Thomas'. For Kierkegaard the ethical is but a transitional sphere on the way to the religious; it cannot be complete in itself because it addresses itself to a task which is impossible for it. On this point, Kierkegaard seems to be inferring the inadequacy of ethics from its inability to forgive sin. More determinately, Kierkegaard opposes ethics to faith by asserting that the former looks to a common good whereas the latter is concerned with the good of the individual. The example he takes is that of Abraham on Mount Morija.

What interests us in Abraham, according to Kierkegaard, is the fact that he shows that faith can make of a crime a holy act.[32] Faith puts the individual above the general which is represented by ethics;[33] by faith one is made superior to the general rule. What faith permits is the teleological suspension of the moral absolute.[34] Through the pseudonym, Johannes de Silentio, Kierkegaard tells us that the moral obligation called into question by God's temptation of Abraham is that the father ought to love his son more than himself.[35] This situation is to be kept rigidly distinguished from that exemplified in Iphegenia in Aulis, where the tragic hero is called upon to sacrifice his daughter, for what the hero does has an expression in a higher view of the moral task. But this cannot be said of Abraham.[36] Abraham cannot refer to a higher moral task such as defending the state or appeasing the irritated gods; no, his motivation is something private, totally foreign to the general or moral.[37] Abraham acts as much out of love for himself as for love of God.[38] We have need then of a new category to express the action of Abraham, for his deed entails an opposition between moral and personal virtue.[39]

The title of the work in which Kierkegaard considers the case of Abraham is Fear and Trembling, and he has not yet done with depicting the fearfulness of his temptation. A temptation is an attempt to turn a man from that which he should do.[40] But what is it to which Abraham as every man is held as to his proper task? Morality. And morality is

the will of God. But it is the will of God that Abraham be tempted, and we are asked to consider the terrifying contradiction involved. It is the will of God that Abraham disobey the will of God! If Abraham is authorized in his resolve to kiss Isaac this cannot be in virtue of any participation in the general, but in virtue of his quality of being an individual.[41]

> L'histoire d'Abraham comporte alors une suspension téléologique du moral. En tant qu'Individu, il a dépassé le général. Tel est le paradoxe qui se refuse à la médiation. On ne peut pas plus expliquer comment il y entre que comment il y reste. Si tel n'est pas le cas d'Abraham, il n'est pas même un héros tragique, il est un meurtrier.[42]

It is not merely in this one work that Kierkegaard discusses the teleological suspension of morality; it occurs in the second volume of Either/Or, in the second part of Stages on Life's Way and in other works of the authorship. He has taken an extreme example in Abraham, but each time the problem arises it is question of an ethical universal and its binding power on individuals. But Kierkegaard is not throwing morality to the winds, or calling into question its necessity, dignity, etc.

> Le moral est le général et comme tel encore divin. On a donc raison de dire que tout devoir est au fond un devoir envers Dieu; mais si l'on ne peut rien avancer de plus, on dit en même temps qu'à proprement parler, je n'ai aucun devoir envers Dieu. Le devoir devient devoir quand il est rapporté à Dieu, mais dans le devoir lui-même, je n'entre pas en rapport avec Dieu. C'est ainsi le devoir que d'aimer son prochain: devoir en ce que cet amour est rapporté à Dieu; cependant, dans le devoir, je n'entre pas en rapport avec Dieu, mais avec le prochain que j'aime.[45]

It is by faith that we enter into a personal relationship with God. But it is not Kierkegaard's notion of faith which is of paramount interest here, but his notion of the ethical universal and its suspension. We are presently concerned with the example of Abraham which he brings forth and which does pose a problem with regard to the universal applicability of the natural law. And since Kierkegaard sees a temptation only as an attempt to turn a man from his proper end, we must begin with a word on temptation. For in the case of Abraham, we are told, it is the demands of morality which constitute the temptation.[46]

The three things which concour to make a temptation are (1) desire to attain knowledge of something in doubt; (2) that this be intended by the tempter; and (3) that the tempter desires this knowledge himself.[47] When God is said to tempt a man, it is only the first two of these criteria which are present,

> ut patet in tentatione Abrahae; praeceptum enim de immolatione filii, tentatio eius dicitur; quia per hoc manifestabatur qualis esset in obedientia et fide: hanc etiam manifestationem Deus intendebat.[48]

The manifestation was not, of course, for God's benefit, but for ours, that Abraham might be known as the Father of faith.

With regard to the dispensibility of natural law, it is well to follow the traditional division of law into that of the first table and that of the second table. The first is the natural law which has reference directly to God whereas

the law of the second table refers to other men.[49] This distinction is derived from the tables of the decalogue which is incumbent upon all men insofar as it contains the natural law.[50] It would seem that Kierkegaard's statement that the laws which respect other men do not relate us immediately to God[51] is in agreement with this. A man is said to be good insofar as he is ordered with regard to things other than himself, but there are two orders. The first and principal order is that of all things to their ultimate end which is God; the second order is of one creature to another. The first order is the cause of the second, because the second order is for the first. Creatures are ordered to one another so that by mutual aid they may attain their ultimate end. Because the second order is dependent upon and directed toward the first, the goodness of the second can be subtracted without diminishing the goodness of the first. Does this mean that we can ignore our duty of charity toward other men and concentrate only on loving God? Can a man ignore his duty towards others, be disobedient to his superiors, even kill an innocent man, and still be related to his ultimate end in such a way that he can be called good?

> ...hoc non possent esse nisi virtute divina, per quam ordo in rebus institutus est. Sicut enim non potest fieri, nisi per miraculosam operationem virtutis divinae,... ut id quod natum est recipere bonitatem ex ordine ad finem ultimum mediante ordine ad rem illam, habeat bonitatem, subtracto ordine qui erat ad rem illam; unde ille actus qui est occidere innocentem, vel resistere praelato, non potest esse bonus nec bene fieri, nisi auctoritate vel praecepto divino.[52]

Only God can dispense with this type of precept, and such a dispensation is qualified as miraculous. The further and more

profound question now stands out in bas-relief: does the dispensation of God make an act of murder to be somehow not murder?

All law is ordered to the common good; this is the first and principal intention of the legislator. God, as the divine lawgiver, has enunciated the natural law in order that creatures might be ordered to Himself, since He is the common good of all creatures. The secondary intention of the lawgiver is the order of justice and virtue by means of which the common good is attained.[53] The precepts of the first table order to God, as we have seen, and the precepts of the second table contain the order of justice and virtue. Since these secondary precepts state the demands of justice, they are no more dispensable than the first, for we cannot say that God permits injustice. Certain distinctions are in order, therefore, if we are to interpret the case of Abraham, and again we turn to Cajetan whose commentary on the article we have last cited is of inestimable help in this matter.

Cajetan notes that the precepts of the decalogue can be considered in two ways: either according to the order of justice which they contain, and it is thus that they are indispensable, even by God.[54] If this were not so, God's command to Abraham would certainly pose a contradiction, for He would be denying Himself.[55] Or we can consider the precepts of the decalogue according to their application to some singular act. Thus we may say that these precepts are dispensable by God,

but not in the sense that such a dispensation is a relaxation of the precept, or a declaration that it is relaxed in this case or action. Rather, this dispensation causes that an action which without such divine authority would be homicide, is not homicide.

> Sic igitur praecepta ipsa decalogi, quantum ad rationem iustitiae quam continent, immutabilia sunt. Sed quantum ad aliquam determinationem per applicationem ad singulares actus, ut scilicet hoc vel illud sit homicidium, furtum vel adulterium, aut non, hoc quidem est mutabile.[56]

God has dominion over life and death and by his ordination both sinners and the just meet their earthly end. Therefore, one who kills an innocent person at the command of God sins no more than does God whose executor he is.[57] The authority of God in such a case makes the essential difference, for, as Cajetan urges:

> Omnia siquidem praecepta haec subintellectam habent hanc clausulam generalem, scilicet quod ex naturali mensura actus isti fiant vel non fiant: sic enim ordinem iustitiae insolubilem continent.[58]

It is now abundantly clear that there is no question here of making crime a holy act, but of imposing a different formality on a given act. That which being done on private authority is homicide, when done on divine authority is not. Were this not so, every death would be an unjust act of the deity, which would be a blasphemous conclusion.

In conclusion let it be added in all haste that the notion of the teleological suspension of the ethical absolute is stated only in works by pseudonyms; nevertheless,

it is defended in the Postscript, which in the mind of Paul L. Holmer,[59] who may be safely regarded as an authority in this matter, is the pseudonymous work closest to the thought of Kierkegaard himself. Kierkegaard retained from Hegel the knack of seeking and finding contradictions; what he rejected was their further mediation. In his eagerness to make action difficult, Kierkegaard is unfortunately on the way to making it impossible, for he would have a man held to self-contradictory duties. From such a situation fear and trembling would surely follow, but such fear and such trembling would be due to a mythical difficulty, and since action brings with it sufficient trouble, we need not busy ourselves with compounding it to the point of making action impossible.

It is well to note these conflicting positions in Kierkegaard, for they forewarn us against expecting easy sledding in what is to follow. From this confusion, we turn now to the principle of the confusion, indirect communication, which Kierkegaard thought was necessitated by the very nature of action. We may well wonder at this point just what in the world his theory of action is, but again we cannot deny the confusion with which his writing is replete. It would be misguided interpretation were we to deny the difficulties. An understanding of indirect communication will to some degree explain the existence of the difficulties, although it will not erase them.

Chapter Four

The Theory of Indirect Communication

> Scindum est autem, quod seducere est seorsum ducere: potest autem homo duci seorsum vel a veritate, vel a falsitate; et utroque modo potest dici aliquis seductor.[1]

What began as a suggestion and came to sound like a plea, namely that much of the apparent confusion of the foregoing chapters would be dispelled when we understood Kierkegaard's theory of communication, will now get a chance to vindicate itself. The problems we have hitherto discussed do not make clear that the Dane's thought is presented in a most obscure way, but without an understanding of those basic problems it is impossible to comprehend why Kierkegaard was so insistent on the need for obscurity.

Thought, Speculation and the System could not remove the difficulty of the ethical task; worse, they denied it by substituting the quantitative for the qualitative, the panorama of history for my insignificant duty. In reacting against this school, Kierkegaard determined to address himself only to the Individual. "With the category of 'the individual'

is bound up any ethical importance I may have."[2] The multitude, the public, were the concern of Hegelianism; Kierkegaard will emphasize the individual, "a thought in which is contained an entire philosophy of life and of the world."[3] To speak of the individual was to speak to the individual with the idea of having an effect on him. Kierkegaard's task was a missionary one; he was no lecturer. He would lead men, not by grouping them under a standard, but by forcing them to stand alone as individuals and realize that goodness can be attained only in this fashion, that is, alone. The tool of his task was indirect communication.

1

There are areas where direct communication is in order. When the truth to be communicated is of an objective nature, the relationship of teacher and pupil is established and what is to be taught should be stated as directly as possible so as to avoid misunderstanding. Kierkegaard saw no difficulty in this mode of communicating, or, if he did, was loth to discuss it for fear that it would detract from what for him was more important. Such direct communication is relevant to all objective disciplines, as logic, mathematics, and history. The difficulty arises when that which is to be communicated has relation to subjectivity and it is here that Kierkegaard insists that direct communication is a misunderstanding. The matter is such that it calls for an appreciably different mode of expression; that of indirect communication.

We have seen that subjectivity is opposed to knowledge, that becoming good is not synonymous with the perfection of the intellect. Since this is so, a truth which is meant to be lived in must not be communicated as if it were something merely to be known.

> If communicated in the form of knowledge, the recipient is led to adopt the misunderstanding that it is knowledge he is to receive, and then we are again in the sphere of knowledge. Only one who has some conception of the enduring capacity of a misunderstanding to assimilate even the most strenuous effort of explanation and still remain the same misunderstanding, will be able to appreciate the difficulties of an authorship where every word must be watched, and every sentence pass through the process of a double reflection.[4]

That authorship is Kierkegaard's and this statement of the difficulty inherent in everything he wrote is the result of his form of communication. It is only due to the fact that later in his life, Kierkegaard came to distrust indirect communication that we are assured of our ground in presenting his theory. In the Point of View, which occupies a place somewhat analogous to that of the Retractationes of St. Augustine, he has set forth directly the intent and modality of his authorship. This will be the great source for the present chapter. However, in many of his books there are hints and half-explanations of the method in use. Kierkegaard once asked himself, (one could say facetiously) whether it would be permissible to communicate directly his theory of indirect communication.

Indirect communication has to do not with knowledge, but

with the existential assimilation of what may be presumed to be known.[5] Let science be called first philosophy, then its assimilation will be secunda philosophia and with this latter Kierkegaard was concerned.[6] This assimilation is such that the recipient is not drawn to the one communicating, but rather withdraws from him in ethical isolation. For this reason, in the realm of the subjective, one man cannot be said to be the teacher of another; to have disciples is to be precisely in contradiction. Kierkegaard takes this statement to illustrate what he means by indirect communication. If one were to communicate directly that it is wrong for any man to have disciples, shout this message from the rooftops, deliver lectures on the subject, a hundred followers would immediately rise up and offer to go into all corners of the world and preach the doctrine that no man should have disciples.[7] In a word, direct communication defeats the subjective; only indirect communication can keep it intact.

Not that the subjective could in truth be communicated directly, for this would presuppose certainty and certainty is impossible for one who is in process of becoming.[8] The process whereby one appropriates in his own life a truth which he knows is given the name of reduplication. Answering to this in indirect communication is the device called "double reflection."

> ...just as the subjective existing thinker has made himself free through the reduplication given his reflection, so the secret of all communication consists precisely in emancipating the recipient, and that for this reason he must not communicate himself directly; aye, that it is even irreligious to do so.[9]

Just as subjective reflection is the attempt to appropriate the truth so that it will find expression in the thinker's life, so indirect communication must be such that in trying to assimilate it the recipient will be led to this double reflection in himself.

> The fact that the knowledge in question does not lend itself to direct utterance, because its essential feature consists of the appropriation, makes it a secret for everyone who is not in the same way double reflected within himself. And the fact that this is the essential form of such truth, makes it impossible to express it in any other manner.[10]

What is called for is an "elusive and artistic communication of the truth."[11]

This is the genesis of the art of Kierkegaard, one explanation of the use of pseudonyms which made him the "author of the authors."[12] Kierkegaard's task was to make Christians of men who had been assured that they were such in virtue of their historical and geographical location.[13] His fellows were the victims of a prodigious illusion, for their mode of life contradicted their claim to being Christians.

> If then, according to our assumption, the greater number of people in Christendom only imagine themselves to be Christians, in what categories do they live? They live in aesthetic, or, at the most, in aesthetic-ethical categories.[14]

What possible approach can one take who would lead men from such an illusion? He should not begin thus:

> I am a Christian; you are not a Christian. Nor does one begin thus: It is Christianity I am proclaiming; and you are living in purely aesthetic categories. No, one begins thus: Let us talk about aesthetics.[15]

This is the indirect method, which is dialectical and deceiving,

> ..which loving and serving the truth, arranges everything dialectically for the prospective captive, and then shyly withdraws (for love is always shy), so as not to witness the admission which he makes to himself alone before God - that he has lived hitherto in an illusion.[16]

Kierkegaard cannot be sure that such a man will follow where he is trying to lead him, although this may happen. The result is not in his power, depending as it does on so many things; and above all it depends on whether or not the man wills to follow.[17] One thing he can be sure of, that whoever listens to him will be forced to take notice of his message. But to assure himself of this he must become well skilled in the indirect method, taken upon himself "daily practise of the scales, or patient finger-exercise in the dialectical."[18] This method whereby he will communicate entails winning the ear of the listener who is at present deluded; this is done by means of deception which is concomitant with the method. Deception, to be sure, is an ugly word, but one should not be deceived by it.

> One can deceive a person for the truth's sake, and (to recall old Socrates) one can deceive a person into the truth. Indeed, it is only by this means, i.e. by deceiving him, that it is possible to bring into the truth one who is in an illusion.[19]

Kierkegaard defines deception as not beginning directly with what one wishes to communicate, but by accepting the other's illusion as "good money."[20]

Kierkegaard addressed himself to those who thought they

were Christians and yet lived in aesthetic categories, by producing works. It was in this way that he hoped to attract the attention of the multitude, so that their ears would be his when his real message would be given. His first work, Either/Or, contained a volume of aesthetic writings which attempted to outline this sphere of existence. He had told himself,

> If you are capable of it, present the aesthetic with all its fascinating magic, enthral if possible the other man, present it with the sort of passion which exactly suits him, merrily for the merry, in a minor key for the melancholy, wittily for the witty, etc.[21]

The amazing thing is that Kierkegaard had the capacity to do just this, and Either/Or created a sensation. To show that it did not represent his own message, it purported to present the thought of pseudonymous writers. This is the beginning of the deception, which was counter-pointed by publication at the same time of a little book by Kierkegaard himself entitled, Edifying Discourses. Such discourses were brought out each time a pseudonymous work was published and each was dedicated to the individual. The aesthetic works sought the crowd, the discourses the individual, and to ascertain indirect communication in its concrete application, it would be necessary to see each work in relation to the whole literature and especially with the discourse which accompanied it. Kierkegaard wove his web with a dexterity which is awesome, creating a complete coterie of writers who represent divergent points of view, state conflicting opinions, raise many questions, and give no answers. The result was always withheld and this is

essential to the existential dialectic. The individual to whom these works were addressed had to draw his own conclusions, as gradually he realized the deception involved. What had begun as a highly entertaining diversion becomes more and more sharply defined as an approach to the question: what is Christianity, how can I become a Christian?[22]

There is, of course, much that amuses us in the idea of such a method. There is something adolescent and hyper-romantic in this illusive pseudonymity; Kierkegaard in fact saw it as springing partly from a defect in his own personality. From childhood, he had felt a strange desire to obscure and mislead, to avoid saying directly what could be said indirectly.[23] And yet, as we hope to show, there is a great deal of truth in asserting the necessity of indirect communication when one would influence another's decision. In generality, we will be able to make quite a cogent case for indirect communication. Its essential characteristic is that it would stir the listener to self-activity; to do this it must be seen as an art to be cultivated.

> This art consists in reducing oneself, the communicator, to nobody, something purely objective, and then incessantly composing qualitative opposites into unity. This is what some of the pseudonyms are accustomed to call double-reflection. An example of such indirect communication is, so to compose jest and earnest that the composition is a dialectical knot- and with this to be nobody. If anyone is to profit by this sort of communication, he must himself undo the knot for himself...[24]

This aspect of the method causes the most difficulty for one

who would interpret Kierkegaard. There are times when the maieutic method seems slightly abortive, for it presupposes a greater interest on the part of the reader than is likely. Sometimes the knots are tied so well that the reader is content to leave them and move on to something more rewarding. Kierkegaard has foreseen this objection.

> Now if anyone wishes to object that this is mere declamation, that all I have is a little irony, a little pathos, and a little dialectic, my reply would be: What else should anyone have who proposes to set forth the ethical? Should he perhaps seek to frame it objectively in a formal paragraph structure, fit to be learned and recited by rote, so as to contradict himself by his form? In my opinion, pathos and irony and dialectic are quod desideratur when the ethical is quod erat demonstrandum.[25]

We will examine Kierkegaard's theory of psychological states as springboards of action when we look closely at the various pseudonymous works, a task we have reserved for the next part of our study.

Kierkegaard's mentor was Socrates and the notion of indirect communication derives from the Greek gadfly. In the works of the Danish thinker this maieutic art is called the "existential dialectic" and it bears

> qua dialectic the stamp of its origin as a philosophical term in the dramatic dialogue. It is, namely, a mutual confrontation of opposites in their logically developed consequences. As existential it seeks to mediate a clarification of the issues of life, paving the way for a decisive personal commitment, a fundamental and therefore passionate choice.[26]

The existential dialectic is Kierkegaard's conversation with his contemporaries by means of which he hopes to lead them to

the self-knowledge that will expose their Christianity as an illusion. This dialectic has in common with the Socratic dialogue that it does not present an answer, there are never "finite decisions",[27] which is to say, the characters presented do not exhaust the possibilities of the problems raised and limit the question by applying it solely to their own contrived situation. The problem is left open with the hope that the recipient, the listener, will be drawn existentially into the discussion and see that it has meaning for his life. Nor will he feel indebted either to the pseudonymous author or to Kierkegaard hovering in the wings, for in applying the problem to his own circumstances he isolates himself and his decision is a mystery to all others.

Indirect communication, the existential dialectic, sums up the weakness as well as the strength of the Kierkegaardian position; this is only just because it is the central fact of his authorship. Its strength derives from its recognition of an important aspect of ethical action: its secrecy and incommunicability, its particularity and isolation. Its weakness is that it can be seen as a moral relativity which recognizes any choice as valid or true insofar as it is passionate and realized in a high pitch of inwardness. Kierkegaard has so been interpreted by men whose knowledge of his writing is most profound.[28] In this view, an objective ultimate end for man becomes inconceivable; an empirical investigation shows that men in fact order their actions to a great diversity of conflicting ends and that they are apparently happy in doing

so. Does it not follow then that man's end is an operable object, that prudence is in fact an art in the strict sense of the term? It can be contested whether this opinion finds a solid basis in Kierkegaard, for it seems to undermine the presupposition which ultimately gives meaning to what he was trying to accomplish. In the last analysis his stand seems to be that it is only in Christianity that men can realize the full potential of subjectivity. And yet the scholars who find this relativity in Kierkegaard cannot be dismissed as ones who are not acquainted with his writings. Since Kierkegaard is open to this interpretation, if only in the eyes of a few, his position is weak to that degree. His jumbled views on ethics, which we have already seen, take their full toll in the existential dialectic.

Our purpose is to save what is true in the theory of indirect communication; its weaknesses have already been dealt with in previous chapters. Our question here will be the method whereby one man can attempt to persuade another in the realm of action. In a word, we will be trying to determine whether Scholasticism deserves the following censure of David F. Swenson:

> Objective thought in this field fails to apprehend this necessity (of indirect communication) and hence takes the process of assimilation frivously for granted. Objective thought presumes the readiness and adequacy of the individual to accept the truth as soon as it has been objectively determined, a presumption which but proves its naivete.[29]

2

No amount of practical science, be it as detailed as one could wish, can tell me what to do here and now; nor can the knowledge of moral science insure that good actions will follow.[30] This is the continuing dilemma of the human situation and we must see why this is possible before we can appreciate the role that indirect communication plays in the practical order.

We should note parenthetically that direct communication as evidenced in the teaching of philosophical disciplines is not quite the cut and dried thing which Kierkegaard's easy dismissal of it would indicate. The order which must be followed in teaching is of a very definite sort and requires an art which will forever respect that priority which things most known to us must receive. In leading the student from the known to the unknown, the teacher must follow the path that would be followed by the student were he forced to rely solely on himself for his knowledge.[31] Likewise, it should be seen that Kierkegaard's insistence that the recipient of indirect communication withdraw from the communicator and appropriate to himself the truth is paralleled in direct communication. Unless the student acquires the science for himself so that he is no longer dependent on the teacher for certitude, the student cannot properly be said to have learned or been taught.[32] But although direct communication

is also an art, it is much less involved than indirect communication[33] and insofar Kierkegaard is justified in passing lightly by it to what after all is more proper to his task.

Precepts are stated as universals, and the universal cannot move the will to act because actions are singular. The practical intellect which concerns itself with moral science, as intellect, does not attain the singular, and since actions and operations are not universal but singular, moral science is inadequate for the direction of the will.[34] It is due to this inefficacy that we have two sciences which have to do with our actions. The first is this universal science already mentioned whereby we determine that such and such an action is right or wrong. As a remote guide for action, such science is useful for without it we would be liable to commit many faults which, due to this science, we avoid. Secondly there is a particular science, which looks to the circumstances of this particular action.[35] This latter science is necessary for the reason already given; the universal alone cannot move the will. In order to know the singular, the intellect must rely in a special manner on the lower potencies of the soul and especially on the particular reason which is one of the internal senses. A double difficulty results from this aspect of human action.

The good is the natural object of the will and when a good is such that it answers every exigency of the appetite we cannot not will it. God is the only good of this kind and

when we see that He is our happiness we will love Him necessarily. In this life, we must will our own happiness, but a wide margin or error is possible when we seek to determine what precisely felicity consists in.[36] St. Thomas remarks that scarcely two of the ancient moral philosophers agreed on what happiness was;[37] time has altered very little this ridiculous situation. Why is it that the will, a faculty whose object is the good, can nevertheless tend toward that which is not truly good? This defect has two sources.

The first source of our defection from the good is the intellect itself, which can attain without error a knowledge of the universal good and the good which is ordered to our end. In a particular instance, however, the intellect can and does err insofar as it judges something to be ordered to the end which is not. The will, following on cognition, naturally wills the good which is the end, but due to the imperfection of the intellect with regard to the singular it may be led to choose something which is not good.[38] We must not conclude from this that intellectual nature as such is the cause of this defect. The defect follows on the weakness of our intellect; if we had a perfect concept of the universal good the defect in question would not be possible.

> Unde et natura rationalis, quae ordinata est ad bonum absolute per actiones multifarias, non potest habere naturaliter actiones indeficientes a bono, nisi ei naturaliter et immutabiliter insit ratio universalis et perfecti boni; quod quidem esse non potest nisi natura divina.[39]

The manner in which our minds desire felicity is indeterminate and universal and as this does not include determinately that felicity should be sought in this or that, we can err.[40] If we had more perfect knowledge of the good we could see the relationship which exists between this particular manifestation of goodness and the absolute good and then, indeed, knowledge would be virtue as Socrates wished. We have already seen what follows from the fact that we cannot know singulars determinately; the role of rectified appetite in the truth of action finds its root in this inadequacy on the part of our intellectual faculty. It is because we do not see how a particular good is related to the ultimate end that we are free before it, being able either to choose or not to choose it. Only felicity in all its generality elecits a necessary adhesion from the will while we are in via.

The second source of our possible defection from the good is something extrinsic to reason,

> cum propter vires inferiores quae intense moventur in aliquid, intercipitur actus rationis, ut non limpide et firmiter suum iudicium de bono voluntati proponat; sicut cum aliquid habens rectam existimationem de castitate servanda, per concupiscentiam delectabilis appetit contrarium castitati, propter hoc quod iudicium rationis aliqualiter a concupiscentia ligatur, ut Philosophus dicit in VII Ethic.[41]

The disposition of the agent enters into his judgment of the good and colors that judgment so that, as Aristotle notes, qualis unusquisque est talis finis ei videtur.[42] Thus, the agent may be fully cognizant of the rightness or wrongness of an action in universali, but in judging whether or no this

particular action is such his disposition can so affect his judgment that he will be led into error. Nor is this a small danger.

> Scientia universalis, quae est certissima, non habet principalitatem in operatione, sed magis scientia particularis: eo quod actiones sunt circa singularia. Unde non est mirum si in operabilibus passio agit contra scientiam universalem, absente consideratione in particulari.[43]

The very fact that the intellectual virtue of prudence is dependent on the disposition of appetite in its judgment in each particular case, gives some indication of the influence which the appetite which is not rectified can have on that judgment. Our exposition of the doctrine concerning the practical syllogism made clear that the transition from the first and universal premiss to the second particular premiss is not direct as in speculative syllogisms, but that the state of the appetite decides the nature of the second premiss.[44]

It will not be necessary for our present purpose to go more deeply into these two sources of error with regard to the good. Concerning the second, since it would seem to destroy all objective norms of action and reduce everything to an obscure subjectivism, we must add that no disposition necessitates the adhesion of the will, except in the case of temporary insanity, as St. Thomas notes.[45] Superficial as these considerations have been, they open up the way for a discussion of indirect communication.

Kierkegaard introduces the theory of indirect communi-

cation in the realm of human action, intending it to be a device which will claim attention and somehow insinuate itself into the passions of the recipient so as to persuade him to choose a particular course of action. That he is perfectly right in his insistence on the necessity of this kind of communication as well as its peculiar effectiveness, we will now endeavor to show. We have seen that the universal cannot move the will precisely because it is remote from the particular circumstances in which actions are realized. The listener may assent to a universal judgment and yet be unmoved with regard to his particular mode of living. This realization apparently led Kierkegaard to repudiate moral science as inadequate, for it seems to overlook the essential difficulty in persuading others. He goes even further and rejects speculative proofs for the immortality of the soul on the grounds that such proofs are unable to move the knower to a life which would express his conviction that death is not the end.

> Systematically, immortality cannot be proved at all. The fault does not lie in the proofs, but in the fact that people will not understand that viewed systematically the whole question is nonsense, so that instead of seeking outward proofs, one had better seek to become a little subjective. Immortality is the most passionate interest of subjectivity; precisely in the interest lies the proof.[46]

The same can perhaps be said of his rejection of the proofs for the existence of God. Now it is certainly obvious that if practical doctrine does not move the will, speculative doctrine will be even less capable of doing so. What Kierk-

egaard seems to be demanding is succinctly answered in the following words:

> It has been said that the demonstrations of God's existence and of the immortality of the soul - some have included Faith as well - could hardly be certain unless they irresistibly compel one to pursue the good and to be a saint, as if such knowledge had to be practical truth and thus constitute prudential judgments.[47]

Can one man influence the will of another? Obviously this question must first be answered before we worry about the method of doing so. If the question asks whether anyone can act as an efficient cause on the will, the answer is no, for not even God acts directly on the will. His action is an indirect one.[48] An act of the will is the mean, as it were, between a faculty and the object, and, this being so, its act can be influenced either on the side of the will itself or on the side of the object. On the part of the will itself, only the faculty and the cause of the faculty, God, can be said to incline the will from one thing to another. On the part of the object of the will, we must distinguish two objects. There is first of all the object to which the natural inclination of the will is necessarily inclined. This is the ultimate end which is posited by God, and thus only He influences the will with regard to this object. Secondly, there is the object which is not the ultimate end but has some likeness or order to that end. The will is not drawn necessarily to such objects because there cannot be found in them singularly an order

to the ultimate end which is desired naturally. It is only by means of this last kind of object that another can have any influence on the will and such an influence is, of course, not necessary.

One man can indirectly influence the will of another by presenting objects to him as good, by proportioning them to the recipient in such a way that they will have an appeal to him as an individual.

> Quia vero voluntas movetur ab exteriori objecto sicut a bono apprehenso, inde est quod qui suggerit aliquid esse bonum, dicitur illud mittere in cor hominis, indirecte faciendo ipsum apprehendere aliquid ut bonum, ex quo voluntas movetur.[49]

It is interesting to see that St. Thomas calls the method per modum suggerentis an indirect one.[50] We remember that Kierkegaard held that such a method would make use of art the better to realize its ends, and once again he finds support in a philosophy which holds that "poetae est inducere ad aliquod virtuosum per aliquam decentem representationem."[51] St. Albert makes this more precise when he writes,

> Aliter etiam est in poetica, quae ex fictis et imaginatione movere intendit ad delectationem, vel abominationem, vel appetitum, vel amorem, vel odium. Et ideo fabula et recitatione factorum heroicorum, et in oratione cantu utitur modulato brevi et longo, ut demulceat auditum, ut facilius provocet.[52]

St. Thomas says elsewhere that the majority are better convinced by representation than by argumentation, adding that the truth can be hidden in fables and thus gotten across to the simple by the artist.[53]

Since a man often proportions objects to his own sensible nature by emphasizing one side of it rather than another, so too can one man influence another.

> Cum enim eadem res sub diversis conditionibus considerari possit, et delectabilis et horribilis reddi, ratio opponit sensualitati mediante imaginatione rem aliquam sub ratione delectabilis vel tristabilis, secundum quod ei videtur; et sic sensualitas movetur ad gaudium vel tristitiam.[54]

The role of the imagination in this process should not be overlooked, for it enables us to see the role of art and better understand what Aristotle meant by its cathartic function. An artistic presentation has a way all its own of insinuating itself into the passional nature of man and disposing for either good or evil. We have already seen the effect such a disposition has on the judgment of reason, so the indirect method of communication or persuasion ultimately influences the highest faculty in man. Anyone sensible to the salutary effects of a Shakespearien tragedy, for instance, will immediately recognize the subtle effectiveness on the will of the indirect method. We are by no means taking the stump for a cheapened and moralizing art, unfortunately exemplified by so many "Catholic" novels. It need by no means be the prime motive of the artist to move men to virtue, his art has an intrinsic teleology which he as artist cannot ignore. What is being suggested is that art which achieves its end as art will achieve the further end of purging the emotions of the spectators and disposing them to the good, and this, as it were, unconsciously. But

that it is equally true that the orator, the preacher, and the parent can make use of certain artistic devices so as to proportion moral truth to the recipient and that this will always be the most effective method will surely be conceded. Conversely, no bad influence is more insidious than that which is couched in artistic representations. It is always true that no one can refute a poet; the fact that this is a double-edged sword may increase the difficulty of a bad influence, but it also serves to show the powerful effectiveness of this tool in the hands of a well disposed person.

Kierkegaard, we remember, insisted that indirect communication frees the recipient from the one communicating in that the former is isolated by the application of the truth to himself. This is true in any type of practical advice no matter how directly it may be given, for ultimately the decision to make use of the advice rests on the one who receives it. Yet it should be noted that it is an essential part of one's moral formation to rely on the advice of others, to take counsel with the more experienced, in order to discover what course should be taken. This can only be a transitional state, however, since each man is held to the acquirement of the virtue of prudence.

> Dicendum quod dum homo bonum operatur non secundum propriam rationem, sed motus ex consilio alterius, nondum est omnino perfecta operatio ipsius, quantum ad rationem dirigentem, et quantum ad appetitum moventem. Unde si bonum operetur, non tamen simpliciter bene, quod est bene vivere.55

It would seem that the very nature of the effect of indirect communication is such that Kierkegaard need not have urged that the recipient will himself be responsible for the resultant appropriation of the truth. This effect it would seem, is nothing more than a certain disposition, for the very notion of communicating indirectly via a book indicates that what is said will be somewhat general and could not have immediate relation to a particular action.

Indirect communication, as we have just interpreted it, seems to find support in traditional philosophy. As discussed, there are certainly examples of it in the works of Kierkegaard, and yet, his existential dialectic was much more than the telling of tales to make evil reprehensible and the good desirable. He carried the method into considerations of abstract problems as well, and in this area it becomes more and more like the Socratic dialogue. On a purely intellectual level, he opposes views, introduces the most dizzying contradictions, shouts yea and then nay in rapid succession so as to draw the reader emotionally in to the discussion where he will have to take a stand. Such is his method even in quite speculative matters and it is fitting that he called it dialectical. But such a device has more value as a propaideutic than as the final word on a subject where we may presume some truth can be had. In the practical order as well such dialectics plays a necessary role, as St. Thomas notes when discussing the virtue of eubulia.[56] In both of these areas Kierkegaard's method, although far from doctrinal, can yet

be defended. Today we would say that it is the psychological method as, for example, in trying to convince another to do a certain thing, we might ironically urge him to do the opposite; paint that which we do not want him to do in attractive colors, but in such a way that our underlying sarcasm would be the more effective in persuading him. Kierkegaard has mastered this art to such a degree that he has tried to make categories of the psychological states[57] which must precede a choice. But at this point, it would be well to point out a few difficulties which arise when we examine Kierkegaard's theoretical statements of the method of indirect communication.

It would seem obvious enough that this method has as its main advantage that it facilitates persuasion, and yet Kierkegaard insists that he uses it to obscure the truth, to make things difficult. One need only read what he has written to see that this is true. Although he began his writing career with a book which would seem to make use of indirect communication in much the same way as all art does, his later books tended to become such dialectical knots that it is dubious that they have ever influenced anyone in the way he intended. And yet there are certain facets of these books which save the method in its more obvious aspects. To assert a truth and then humorously deny it, this is a recognizable use of indirect communication. To avoid coming to any conclusion with finality, but continually to call it into question and affirm that even if it were true no one could possibly accept it, this again is understandable. But when we can no longer

tell whether what is being said is to be taken seriously or whether it represents in truth the mind of Kierkegaard, we begin to suspect that this involved chinese-puzzle requires more patience than it could possibly be worth. Certainly this defeats the purpose of the existential dialectic.

The very nature of indirect communication precludes the possibility of a theoretical explanation of it which will be satisfactory; but that some introduction to this method was necessary will be readily admitted when we turn to the flesh and blood application of it in the pseudonymous works. The rapid shifting of points of view, the dizzying cadenzas which run the gamut of the emotional scale, can easily overpower the unwarned reader. It has been the better part of valor to see the logic with which the mode of communication follows on the great interest of Kierkegaard, as well as the somewhat confused ethical theory which underlies the Dane's ambitious endeavor. Since we have been shipping oars retrospectively at the end of each section of this introductory part, it would be superflucus to reiterate the warnings and criticisms which have punctuated our presentation. In abstracting what is of value in Kierkegaard, we do not, of course, wish to deny the confusion and danger which characterizes his outlook. The modern existentialists are, after all, not guilty of too great a distortion when they make use of Kierkegaard's works and direct his thought to ends he knew not of. For his over-insistence on indirect communication issued in an anti-intellectualism which can easily end in destroying the religious outlook which he held so dear. Kierkegaard's contention that

moral matters could only be approached indirectly and that an objective inquiry into them is untruth and a misunderstanding leads to a subjectivism which admits of no criterion other than a personal one. And, with a paradoxicality Kierkegaard should have appreciated, ends by destroying indirect communication, for without an objective basis, the existential dialectic becomes a subtle tyranny by means of which one man could win others to a world-view which could have no more validity than any other logically possible one. Prof. Holmer seems willing to rest with this as the Kierkegaardian position.[58]

Kierkegaard was above all a theologian, and it is when he interprets Christianity that the latent danger of his approach comes most decidedly to the fore. When he applies the method of indirect communication to Christ, and speaks of the incognito of His humanity, His anguish at His divine inability to express Himself directly to men, our problem will no longer be one of moral philosophy but rather of dogmatic theology. Strangely enough, in his later years Kierkegaard questioned whether a mere man could legitimately make use of indirect communication and came to think that it was proper to God alone. It is with such considerations that we come to a better understanding of what indirect communication meant to him. But this will be a much later stage of our little study. We are now equipped to turn to the pseudonymous works of Kierkegaard and a close study of the existential dialectic which was intended to bring Christendom back to Christianity.

PART TWO

COMMUNICATING INDIRECTLY

Chapter One

Either / Or

Si enim per fabulas veritas
obumbretur, non potest scirí
quid verum sub fabula lateat,
nisi ab eo qui fabulam con-
fixerit.[1]

Kierkegaard's first work, Either/Or, as the very title suggests, was an attempt to pit two ideas the one against the other in such a way that a choice would be mandatory. The two ideas, or better, life-views, are aesthetics and ethics, and they represent the first two stages of the movement described by the existential dialectic.

> There are three existence-spheres: the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious. The metaphysical is abstraction, there is no man who exists metaphysically. The metaphysical, ontology, is but does not exist; for when it exists it is in the aesthetic, and the ethical, in the religious, and when it is it is the abstraction of or the prius for the aesthetic, the ethical, the religious.[1a]

Kierkegaard discusses aesthetics and ethics in other works besides Either/Or,[2] and in presenting these spheres we will attempt to bring together his many statements. We, after all, are engaged in communicating directly.

1. The Aesthetic Sphere.

In this first stage, we find described what Kierkegaard called an aesthetic or poetic existence. The use of both these terms serves to broaden the scope of the sphere as well as to create a certain confusion as to which aspect is most important. A concentration on the qualification "aesthetic" could lead one to emphasize the role of pleasure, sense pleasure, whereas the term "poetic" suggests what is seemingly an opposed line of thought. Kierkegaard is not immediately helpful here.

> The task which has to be proposed to the majority of people in Christendom is: Away from the poet! or away from having one's life in that which the poet declaims. The first movement (away from the poetical) constitutes the total significance of the aesthetic production within the totality of the authorship.[3]

This apparent confusion will actually enable us to trace an evolution of Kierkegaard's thought, or, better, his recognition that the grosser manifestations of sensuality do not exhaust the possibilities of that mode of life. Nevertheless, it is with these that he begins.

We may find it a bit paradoxical to note that Kierkegaard does not consider the first sphere of the existential dialectic to be existential; it does not, he claims, "win through to existence."[4] If we keep in mind our preliminary discussion of existence as we proceed through this sphere, this will be seen to be a most revealing remark. Our first contact with the aesthetic sphere is meant to convey the

deep melancholy that underlies this mode of life.[5] But of much more importance is the study of Mozart's Don Giovanni. In this study the intimate relationship of music and sensuality is pointed out, and our attention is called to the apparent autonomy of the sensual, of the passions. "Music has, namely, its moment in time, but it does not pass away in time except in an unessential sense. It cannot express the historical in the temporal process."[6] The sensual is of the moment, music is of the moment, therefore the sensual can be expressed perfectly only in music. We are told that the musical erotic has been expressed absolutely in Don Giovanni, who is the culminating stage of the erotic. The sensuality of which it is question owes its being to Christianity.

> To say that Christianity has brought sensuality into the world, may seem boldly daring. But as we say that a bold venture is half won, so also here; and my proposition may be better understood if we consider that in positing one thing, we also indirectly posit the other which we exclude. Since the sensual generally is that which should be negatived, it is clearly evident that it is posited first through the act which excludes it, in that it posits the opposite principle. As principle, as power, as a self-contained system, sensualism is first posited in Christianity; and insofar it is true that Christianity brought sensualism into the world.[7]

Sensuality as it existed before the advent of Christianity was, we are told, only a psychical determination, not an opposite principle. The Greeks could make of the sensuous a harmony and unity in the soul; Christianity rejects this notion and puts the sensuous to one side in such a way that it is a positive principle. What interests us here is not

the Hegelian prestidigitation whereby the negative becomes something real; of much greater importance is the complete opposition of Christianity and sensuality, of spirit and flesh. Later we will return to this notion to ask a most basic question of Kierkegaard.

Don Juan is this opposite principle incarnate, the sensuous-erotic genius.[8] Being "flesh incarnate"[9], Don Juan represents desire, not as it exists in an individual, but as a power opposed to that of the spirit.[10] He is, therefore, essentially a seducer.

> Don Juan is a seducer from the ground up. His love is not psychical but sensual, and sensual love, according to his conception, is not faithful, but absolutely faithless; he loves not one but all, that is to say, he seduces all. He exists only in the moment, but the moment is in its conception considered the sum of moments, and so we have the seducer. Everything for him is a matter of the moment only.[11]

Far from seducing consciously, Don Juan does so spontaneously. Later, in Diary of the Seducer, Kierkegaard moves on to another kind of seducer, the scheming, poetic, Johannes, who represents most graphically the prudence of the flesh. The movement from Don Juan to Johannes is, in one sense, from the abstract to the concrete, from a part of human nature to that nature as a whole. Yet, in another sense, it is a movement toward the more abstract as we shall see.

The aesthete in Christopher Fry's Venus Observed decides to marry because to him time

> Seems like nothing so much
> As a blinding snowstorm of virginity,
> And a man, lost in the perpetual scurry of white,
> Can only close his eyes
> In a resignation of monogamy.

Johannes the Seducer thinks otherwise. He has set himself the task of living poetically, and his abiding interest is not seduction, but the method of seduction. Reality is meaningful only insofar as it provides him with material for poetic reflection, and he is not poor enough or rich enough to distinguish poetry from reality.[12] He differs essentially from Don Juan, for, in his own words, "quod antea fuit impetus, nunc ratio est."

The ethical judgment of aesthetics will cast much light on what Kierkegaard sees as the content of the latter sphere, but for the moment it will be well to see why Kierkegaard thought of aesthetics and speculation as somewhat the same thing. The cry, Away from speculation!, is something of an echo of, Away from poetry![13], for "the aesthetic and intellectual principle is that no reality is thought or understood until its esse has been resolved into its posse."[14] This may seem surprising, when we reflect that speculation is not existential whereas aesthetics is a stage in the existential dialectic. However, Kierkegaard has urged that aesthetics is not truly existential, as we have seen. Aesthetics, the poetic life, has come a long way from Don Juan to enable Kierkegaard to couple it with speculation, and to understand this strange alliance we must pause and inquire what he means by being a poet.

> What does being a poet mean? It means having one's own personal life, one's reality in quite different categories from those of one's own poetic work, it means being related to the ideal in imagination only, so that one's own personal life is more or less a satire on poetry and on oneself.[15]

Poetry, then, is a kind of abstraction, a retreat from life.

And the aesthete has his own understanding of either/or.

> My philosophy is easy to understand, for I have only one principle, and I do not even proceed from that. It is necessary to distinguish between the successive dialectic in either/or, and the eternal dialectic here set forth. Thus, when I say that I do not proceed from my principle, this must not be understood in opposition to a proceeding forth from it, but is rather a negative expression for the principle itself, through which it is apprehended in equal opposition to a proceeding or a non-proceeding from it.[16]

Behind this Hegelian jibberish is something most essential to what Kierkegaard understands by aesthetics, for it is because it does not recognize an either/or that aesthetics is likened to speculation. When he speaks of Hegel and the fact that his philosophy has nothing to do with existence, Kierkegaard makes his point by referring Hegel to the either/or. Hegel, we will remember, was of the opinion that the opposition of contradiction was abrogated for pure thought and with this Kierkegaard does not wish to take exception.

> Hegel is utterly and absolutely right in asserting that viewed eternally, sub specie aeterni, in the language of abstraction, in pure thought and pure being, there is no either/or. How in the world could there be when abstract thought has taken away the contradiction, so that Hegel and the Hegelians ought rather be asked to explain what they mean by the hocus-pocus of introducing contradiction, movement, transition, and so forth into logic. If the champions of an either/or invade the sphere of pure thought and there seek to defend their cause, they are quite without justification.[17]

And, of course, Hegel was wrong when he implied that what was true for pure thought was also true for existence, namely, that there was no either/or. Now aesthetics shares the neutrality enjoyed by speculation with regard to the either/or; it too rises above the conflict of existence and mediates by thought the oppositions with which one is everywhere faced in daily existence. But aesthetics and speculation have another important element in common, that of the external.

We saw in the first part of this study how Kierkegaard attacked speculative history because it accorded primacy to the external and quantitative rather than to the internal and qualitative when it was question of human actions. But such is the case in poetry also; in drama, for instance, the quantitative predominates, the outward and visible.[18] Aesthetics cares not whether it is dealing with the real or not, all it requires is that it be a possibility.[19] Nor does poetry reconcile men with existence as Aristotle thought, "for poetry is unjust to men by reason of its quantitative estimate, it has use only for the elect, but this is a poor sort of reconciliation."[20] Now this is obviously a criticism of poetry, and we may wonder what it has to do with the aesthetic sphere.

One who lives in the ethical sphere of existence, the Judge William of the second volume of Either/Or, gives us the answer to this difficulty. He notes that the end of aesthetics as a sphere is the enjoyment of life, and at the bottom of the variety of ways in which this goal can be realized there is a

common factor. "But 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."[21] He gives as examples health, beauty, glory, etc., but the important thing here is that the external is said to define the aesthetic view. It is this that the aesthetic sphere has in common with speculation and poetry, and it is seen that Kierkegaard has not united the three in an arbitrary manner.

Judge William has more to say of aesthetics which is of help in understanding it as a sphere. He notes that when the goal of aesthetics is stated simply as "enjoy life" a certain multiplicity is introduced, for pleasure is multiple. One who accepts this maxim would be an extreme aesthete and of a rare species, but something he would have in a greater measure would be melancholy which was once, the Judge notes, numbered among the capital sins as acedia. The life of pleasure always entails melancholy or acedia.[22] What is more, the aesthetic life is a life of despair, whether the aesthete realizes it or not, and it is despair precisely because it is dependent upon the external. Despair is the element of hope for the aesthete.

2. The Ethical Sphere.

Although Either/Or presents a choice between opposing views of life, only one of these views is truly capable of choice, the ethical. We have seen how the aesthete remains poised

above the alternatives of choice in such a way that he chooses neither, <u>voluntas</u> becomes <u>noluntas</u>.[23] Only one who lives ethically understands choice and thus the either/or, for the disjunction takes on for him another and deeper significance than it has for the aesthete. There is but one either/or, "namely, when truth, righteousness and holiness are lined up on one side and lust and base propensities and obscure passions and perdition on the others."[24] Choice becomes so important that he sees that the important thing is not to cultivate one's mind, but to mature one's personality.[25] The Judge has a lot to say about choice, and he assures us that it is not a choice between good and evil that he counsels (he is addressing the aesthete who has been told his life is one of despair), but rather the choice whereby good and evil achieve significance.[26]

> It is, therefore, not so much a question between willing the good <u>or</u> the evil, as of choosing to will, but by this in turn the good and the evil are posited. He who chooses the ethical chooses the good, but here the good is entirely abstract, only its being is posited, and hence it does not follow by any means that the chooser cannot in turn choose the evil, in spite of the fact that he chose the good.[27]

But what is the aesthete to do, what can he choose enmeshed as he is in a life of despair? One might expect a counsel to hope, but the Judge proposes a more somber remedy. The aesthete is in despair,

> So then choose despair, for even despair is a choice; for one can doubt without choosing to, but one cannot despair without choosing. But when a man despairs he chooses again - and what

> is it he chooses? He chooses himself, not in his immediacy, not as this fortuitous individual, but he chooses himself in his eternal validity.[28]

This choice which initiates the ethical life can be seen to be a corrective of the aesthetic sphere; the choice is an absolute one and that which is chosen absolutely is oneself in his eternal validity.[29] There is, then, a certain independence of the external. But to say one chooses oneself is a bit abstract; one chooses himself as this concrete, historical individual with any guilt acquired before this choice.[30] The Judge is impatient with Greek and medieval conceptions of the choice of self, which he qualifies as too abstract. They were right, he concedes, in insisting that one must choose himself, acquire certain virtues, etc., but they were deficient in that which should follow on all this, namely, a relation of oneself to the world around one. There is no excuse for retreating into the monastery, that is an aesthetic device.[31] The ethical life is one of duties, and the Judge enumerates certain general duties which apply to every man: e.g. it is the duty of every man to marry, it is the duty of every man to have a friend.

We will end our discussion of the ethical sphere with this mention of general duties, for they are the foundation for the inadequacy of ethics according to Kierkegaard. It is because they are said to be applicable to every man that Kierkegaard came to speak of the teleological suspension of the ethical absolute. It will be observed that no attempt

has been made to propound a doctrine of morals; indeed the Judge had no intention of doing this.[32] The ethical is only a transitional sphere on the way to the religious[33]; and yet, as we shall see next, it is a rather difficult transition to make, existentially or intellectually.

3. A Critical Note.

The motto of volume one of Either/Or is: "Are passions then the pagans of the soul? Reason alone baptized?" It is quite evident that passions are the key to the aesthetic sphere, at least when it is question of the two seducers, Don Juan and Johannes. Don Juan, we have seen, is an abstraction; he represents the passions considered as autonomous and he is said to be neither moral nor immoral. The disciple of St. Thomas will find this a perfectly just estimate, for passions, considered in themselves are not moral; they can, however, be said to participate in morality insofar as they come under the command of reason.[34] Likewise, it is fitting that Don Juan be called the sensual genius, for passions are said primarily of the sensitive appetite.[35] With regard to the supremacy of the moment for the sensual, Kierkegaard is once again in agreement with St. Thomas.

> Sed concupiscentia inclitat ad accipiendum 'propter ipsum iam', idest propter illud quod in praesenti est: videtur enim quod in praesenti est delectabile, esse simpliciter delectabile et bonum, et ex eo quod non consideratur ut futurum.[36]

In the case of Johannes the seducer, the situation is al-

tered. The role of passion depicted in the diary is not abstract, but considered as part of human nature. Passions are related to the higher faculties, reason and will, in either of two ways: either they precede them or they follow them.[37] When passions precede reason they corrupt its judgment for <u>qualis unusquisque est, talis finis ei videtur</u>.[38] In this way we lose mastery over our actions, and if we accomplish good on the impulse of passion this can only be accidentally.[39] If passions follow on reason and will, we can be said to have mastery over the movements of the lower appetite. However, this is not always for the good; in the case of the <u>prudentia carnis</u> the good of the flesh is taken as the ultimate end and the higher powers are put in the service of the flesh.[40] This would seem to be what Kierkegaard means Johannes the Seducer to represent, and it is fitting that he observes a certain infinity in sensual desires when such is the case. We recall that reason, when it is at the service of sensitive appetite, is the cause of unnatural desires[41] and that thereby a certain infinity is introduced in the sensitive appetite.[42] If our analysis of Kierkegaard is correct, then, what he is saying poetically and by indirection is perfectly true.

The further question of the similarity between aesthetics and speculation suggests another basic agreement between Kierkegaard and the tradition. Science and poetry are said to rise above contrariety, the either/or, in such a way that

they are safe from its involvement. The intellect draws things to itself and receives them according to its own mode; things which in themselves are contraries are not contrary in the mind.

> In anima autem intellectiva non potest esse aliqua contrarietas. Recipit enim secundum modum sui esse; ea vero quae in ipsa recipiuntur, sunt absque contrarietate, quia etiam rationes contrariorum in intellectu non sunt contrariae, sed est una scientia contrariorum.[43]

One cannot be both sick and healthy, and yet medecine considers the both. With regard to being, one contrary excludes the other, but with regard to knowledge, one contrary helps us to know the other.[44] Even error causes no distress to the mind, for either it is known to be error, which is an instance of knowing something true, or error is thought to be truth and the mind delights in it as if it were.[45] Thus in a very real way we get above the contrariety found in things when we know their natures; indeed the knowledge of one contrary is the means of knowing the other and the two achieve a certain unity in the mind. This does not, as Kierkegaard thought, destroy the opposition of contradiction.[46]

Much the same thing is repeated in poetry, as when the imitation of that which in real life would cause pain is nevertheless delighted in.

> The truth of the second point is shown by experience: though the objects themselves be painful to see, we delight to view the most realistic representations of them in art, the forms for example of the lowest animals and of dead bodies.[47]

One would be horrified were he witness of a murder; and yet a playing of Hamlet is a delight. The contingency and contrariety of actual existnece are surmounted by the artistic imitation and can no longer hurt the spectator.[48] This common observation alone suffices to show both what science and art have in common and what Kierkegaard intended by a "poetic life." There have been artists who have tried to appropriate to their own daily existence the prerogatives of their art, feeling that just as their poetry rose above the contrariety of life, so too could they. Could they not depict both the good and the bad? Well then, they could be both good and bad and remain unsullied. They were not like the rest of men. Perhaps this is what Kierkegaard had in mind; since he lived in the age of romanticism in art, it is likely. The romantic endeavored to poetize his own existence in such a way that he ignored duty, avoided responsibility, hurrying blindly after the bluebird of "beauty." We have seen how the ethical sphere tried to correct this abstraction from the realities of life.

Nevertheless, the Judge's counsel to choose despair is rather surprising. If he means that the aesthete should realize that happiness cannot be found in sense pleasure, wealth, honor, etc., well and good. St. Thomas approached this demonstratively; Kierkegaard approaches it poetically by attempting to portray the despair. Thus he underlines the melancholy, or <u>accidia</u>, of the aesthete. <u>Accidia</u> is a sadness before a spiritual good following on the opposition of flesh

and spirit. That which is a good for the spirit is an evil for the flesh insofar as it is contrary to the desires of the flesh.[49] It is difficult to accept the Judge's explanation of the choice which brings good and evil into being, since whatever is chosen is chosen as a good. Perhaps he intends a distinction between the apparent and the true good. We remember that the choice is of oneself in his "eternal validity." A recognition of the true ultimate end of man has its effects on the reason's judgment on what is good and what is bad.

It is easy to see why either/or achieves a different significance in the ethical sphere. There, the contrariety to be found in things is said to take its toll, and this is doubtlessly because it is question of the will and of choice. Although the intellect draws things to itself, the will moves towards things as they are in themselves and thus one delight will be contrary to another.[50] When one wills, the contrariety which exists between things in themselves asserts itself and the happy neutralism of science and art disappears.

Up to this point, it would seem that Kierkegaard is moving towards a position which would recognize human nature as a whole with respect to action. He has related passion to reason and will, it would seem, and although no science of ethics has been proposed, there are certain points with which we are in agreement. Unfortunately, all this was soon to be set aside and what seem to be only minor themes become pre-

dominant later. Ethics improves on aesthetics in that the former is less dependent on the external; Kierkegaard has just begun on the long road which leads to complete independance of the external and when he finishes we will have more to say about this penchant. Also, the counsel to despair which leaves one uneasy is but the first instance of many when Kierkegaard will lay the stress on passions which paralyse rather than move appetite. We will see more of this in the following chapter and it is important to note that it is characteristic of Kierkegaard to play up passions which are in a deep sense inhuman. This aspect will loom large when we make our final assessment of indirect communication.

Chapter Two

Towards The Religious

Huiusmodi autem veritati, cui ratio humana experimentum non praebet, fidem adhibentes non leviter credunt, quasi indoctas fabulas secuti.[1]

The pseudonymous works move rather quickly from the aesthetic to the ethical, but the further movement into the religious was a longer and more cautious step. Kierkegaard was of the opinion that Christianity had been terribly misunderstood, and he was anxious to separate all lesser religious views from the unique height occupied by Christianity. But in order to move towards the religious, he had first to manifest the inadequacy of the ethical sphere and thereby the necessity for something higher. Kierkegaard's way of doing this is by appealing to Job and Abraham as representatives of the passions proper to the religious sphere: fear, trembling, the passion following on the recognition of absurdity, and the concept of dread. At the bottom of these discussions is the problem of sin.

Judge William has insisted that the ethical demands that one reveal himself; this revelation of self is an anti-

dote to the secrecy and obscurity of the aesthetic. Such a revelation presupposed a certain community among men, certain general duties and obligations common to all, which would be as the framework within which the manifestation of interiority would have meaning. This is the basis of the inadequacy of the ethical, its insistence on a common good, a general existential way capable of realization by every man. One of the general duties of the ethical sphere is marriage, and should a man find that it is impossible for him to marry, he is *eo ipso* outside the ethical and general, a singular and hidden element appears which makes him an exception. Kierkegaard first explores several examples of such singularity and then gropes toward the notion of sin by discussing the psychological state that permits it. It will be seen in the next chapter how these points prepare the way for "hidden inwardness" and Christianity.

We have already seen the basic problem of *Fear and Trembling* which concerns itself with Abraham on Mount Morija. We saw that the teleological suspension of the ethical absolute contained a nest of confusion; at this juncture, however, we will examine the use to which Kierkegaard puts his doctrinal error. This book is called a "dialectical lyric" the problem of which is secrecy. It would deal with a person who must keep his reasons for acting secret and

> Johannes de silentio (the pseudonym to whom the work is attributed) is therefore not himself such an existing individual; he is a reflective consciousness who with the *tragic hero* as *terminus*

> a quo, with the interesting as confinium, and the religious paradigmatic irregularity as terminus ad quem, repeatedly runs himself into collision with the understanding, while the lyricism of the book results from the reaction.[2]

By playing the hero of Greek tragedy against Abraham, the author attempts to show that the case of the latter poses an essential difference from the former. The tragic hero is termed a knight of infinite resignation; Abraham is the hero of faith. In the case of Abraham, the ethical is a temptation.

> The ethical constitutes the temptation; the God-relationship has come into being; the immanence of ethical despair has been broken through; the leap is posited; the absurd constitutes the notification.[3]

The notion of absurdity is a new element, and to understand it we must take a quick glance at Repetition, the work in which Job is referred to.

This work studies the case of a young man who finds that, having become engaged, he cannot go on to marriage. This poses a problem since his engagement is a promise and he wants to break his promise. He finds himself unfit for marriage, feels that he cannot contract it, but his does not feel responsible for this state of affairs. In a word, he is at once guilty and not guilty. The case demands a new way by means of which he can regain his integrity. This cannot be had through the ethical, for ethically it is the duty of every man to marry. In his plight, the young man bursts out the following lamentation which sums up Kierkegaardian existen-

tialism.

> My life has been brought to an impasse, I loathe existence, it is without savor, lacking salt and sense. If I were hungrier than Pierrot, I should not be inclined to eat the explanation people offer. One sticks one's finger into the soil to tell by the smell in what land one is: I stick my finger into existence - it smells of nothing. Where am I? Who am I? How came I here? What is this thing called the world? And if I am to be compelled to take part in it, where is the director? Whither shall I turn with my complaint? Existence is surely a debate - may I beg my view to be taken into consideration?[4]

Later, he reads the Book of Job, and finds that Job too was on trial although he was innocent.[5] And just as Job received everything back double "when all conceivable human certitude and probability pronounced it impossible,"[6] so the young man must hope in virtue of the absurd. He regains his honor, receives repetition, when he learns by the papers that his beloved has married another.

Much the same problem is represented by the diary "Guilty?/ Not Guilty?" which appears in Stages on Life's Way. Following the diary is a commentary by Frater Taciturnus, which contains a few remarks which will contribute to our understanding. Guldam, whose diary it is, has met with no external obstacles to his love; his troubles are all from within.[7] He feels guilty, and the problem of repentance is raised.

> Here the dialectic form of repentance is this: he cannot get to the point of repenting, because it is as though it were still undetermined what he is to repent of; and he cannot find repose in repentance, because it is as though he ought constantly to be doing something, undoing what was done, if that were possible.[8]

This is Kierkegaard's poetic way of approaching the notion of sin, which will bring us into Christianity proper. But in speaking of the inadequacy of the ethical, he does not intend that it will be completely canceled out of the religous sphere.

> ...the ethical desires to be separated from the aesthetic and from the outwardness which is its imperfection, it desires to enter into a glorious alliance, and that is with the religious.[9]

If we think the ethical we are leaving behind is strange, we have a surprise in store for us when we discuss the religious sphere. But before leaving the area which lies between the ethical and religious, we must say a word or two about another book, The Concept of Dread.

Let us first recall that Kierkegaard is trying to draw men towards the religious and note the way in which he chooses to do this. He depicts the fear and trembling of religious singularity, the absurdity which characterizes religious thought. This is a rather strange manner in which to draw men, but Kierkegaard persists in it when he turns to sin. His discussions of guilt are not in function of possible forgiveness; rather he chooses to depict the horror of a guiltless guilt. One does not quarrel with the appeal to passion, that is as defensible as it is necessary; what bothers is the choice of the passions to which appeal is made. His study of dread is but another instance of this strange procedure.

Sin is something existential and cannot therefore, according to Kierkegaard, be considered scientifically.

The Concept of Dread is accordingly, "a simple psychological deliberation oriented in the direction of the dogmatic problem of original sin."[10] It is not, we are assured[11], an instance of indirect communication because it attempts to impart knowledge. Sin is important because it shows the inadequacy of ethics[12], but the work will discuss only the state which precedes sin and makes it possible.[13] It would be a mistake to deal with Kierkegaard's statements concerning original sin; it becomes increasingly more apparent that he is really only interested in how man other than Adam come to sin. Dread is the psychological state which precedes sin, and is "the first reflex of possibility, a glimmer and yet a terrible spell."[14] That original sin is not the real problem can be seen from the following:

> The nature of original sin has often been examined, and yet the principal category has been missing - it is dread, that is what really determines it; for dread is a desire for what one fears, a sympathetic antipathy; dread is an alien power which takes hold of the individual, and yet one cannot extricate oneself from it, does not wish to, because one is afraid, but what one fears attracts one. Dread renders the individual powerless, and the first sin always happens in a moment of weakness; it therefore lacks any apparent accountableness, but that want is the real snare.[15]

Just as Kierkegaard cannot understand the role of the serpent in the first sin[16], so he affirms that guilt can have no external cause, that if the individual is tempted he tempts himself.[17] This is perhaps the most revelatory remark to be gleaned from this book. But there is also a return to the problem of guilty innocence, or innocent guilt. Dread is the explanation of the fact that one can feel guilty while being

innocent,[18] for dread is the recognition of the possibility that one can do wrong.[19] The book ends with a discussion of the usefulness of dread, ("the possibility of freedom"), with regard to faith. One who realizes that anything can happen, one who is educated in possibility,[20] and understands the anguish of dread will be brought to faith. The sophistry of remorse (as exemplified in Repetition, et al.), can be disarmed only by faith which conquers dread, not by doing away with it altogether, but by using it for a higher purpose.[21]

In order to speak of ethics as a temptation, Kierkegaard has had to misrepresent ethics. To say, "It is the duty of everyman to marry" is false, even though the conservation of the species is a precept of natural law. Such a precept does not require that each member of the species reproduce himself.[22] Likewise, the self-revelation which is said to be characteristic of ethics is a misunderstanding; Kierkegaard would seem to be asking that the prudential decision be somehow communicable. It is important to note this abuse of the hidden and revealed because Kierkegaard is going to exploit it in the strangest way.

Since Kierkegaard's purpose is a religious one, it would seem defensible that he would first try to evoke the passion of fear since fear can be a preparation for charity.[23] However, what one fears is the punishment of God which fear is the initium sapientiae. The object of this initial fear

is not, as Kierkegaard maintains, the possibility that God will hold us to mutually contradictory duties. The notion of absurdity will be discussed in the next chapter.

Although "guilty innocence" as spoken of in Repetition and "Guilty?/ Not Guilty?" is a mock problem, (something Kierkegaard later admits[24]), the discussion in the Concept of Dread is of interest. Dread is possible due to our fallen nature; we experience the loss of integrity even if it is not known to be the result of sin, and we realize that we can sin. Kierkegaard seems to want to define liberty in terms of the ability to sin,[25] but for the moment we will forego emphasizing what is false and point out what has some validity. When he goes on to make possibility the object of dread, he is on more solid ground and many of his observations are invaluable. When he points out that the man who has been educated by dread and possibility learns to distrust himself, he is not far from the position that the gift of fear of the Lord is complemented by the beatitude of poverty of spirit.[26] In short, he seems to be saying that the effect of dread is humility. We may lament a certain disproportionate emphasis on fear and dread in the Kierkegaardian literature, but it is also true that many of his statements about these passions are very enlightening. The Concept of Dread ends by making the notion of guilty innocence less unpalatable, for it seems to be based on the recognition that one can sin. Nor is it too far afield to relate this to original sin, since our

disrupted nature is an effect of the sin of Adam. If there would be any quarrel in this area, it would be with Kierkegaard's penchant to deny any malum culpae in the inheritor of original sin.

It seemed fitting to make at least these few general remarks here, while postponing a full-blown critique until we see the complete trajectory of the existential dialectic at which time we will be less apt to concentrate on secondary points. We go on now to the strictly religious sphere and a discussion of Kierkegaard's concept of faith and absurdity.

Chapter Three

Faith and the Absurd

> Ergo sentit quod fides sit de aliquibus, quorum contraria de necessitate concludi possunt. Cum autem de necessitate concludi non possit nisi verum necessarium, cuius oppositum est falsum impossibile, sequitur secundum eius dictum quod fides sit de falso impossibile, quod etiam Deus facere non potest: quod fidelium aures ferre non possunt.[1]

The young Kierkegaard who lighted another cigar and decided to devote his life to making existence stand out as difficult must have fulfilled his own fondest hopes. He stressed difficulty even if this meant the invention of agonizing contradictions which would paralyze rather than impel to action. We have seen some of this in the foregoing, especially in the works which grope toward Christianity; we turn now to the last precision before, and thence to the specifically Christian sphere.

From what has been seen, we can easily surmise the rôle that sin is going to play in Kierkegaard's delineation of the Christian mode of existence, but of even greater importance is the notion of absurdity. Human actions as such had to be

freed from the speculation which detected a palpable necessity in history, but Kierkegaard swung so far to the opposite extreme that he seems to reject anything other than practical knowledge as superfluous. He carried this penchant into his discussion of Christianity which he insisted was a way of life and not a doctrine; it is in this realm that his anti-intellectualism produces the "category of the absurd." Not only should we not waste time speculating about revealed truths, we should be constantly aware that what we believe is a contradiction. Kierkegaard rejected dogmatic theology, but his own negative brand implies speculation and became quite dogmatic itself. And yet, in spite of his strange stand, he felt that his thought was consonant with traditional theology.

1. The Religion of Hidden Inwardness.

The Postscript takes a long and laborious route toward clothing the problem of the Philosophical Fragments in its historical costume.[1a] In the former work, Kierkegaard attempts to show how all his previous writings were ordered to it as to their end. It is quite late in the book that he turns to the problem itself: how can an eternal happiness be based on something historical? Kierkegaard recognizes two factors in answering this question, a pathetic as well as a dialectic. The first becomes a most detailed exposition of existential pathos as religiousness A, a natural religion which precedes Christian religiosity or religion B.

Existential pathos "is present whenever the idea is

brought into relation with the existence of the individual so as to transform it."[2] Obviously this definition is saved in the ethical sphere as well as the religious, but in the latter it has as its absolute telos an eternal happiness. This is the initial expression for the religious sphere,[3] and its demands are most special ones. "But the absolute telos has the remarkable characteristic that it demands acknowledgement of the absolute telos every moment."[4] Living in view of an eternal happiness must always be a risk and one should not ask for assurances of success beforehand; if there were absolute certainty there could be no venture, for we venture only when we are uncertain.[5] This initial expression will strive to attain an absolute relation to the absolute end and a relative relation to all relative ends,[6] and thus life becomes most strenous because there is a double movement to be executed.[7] First one must effect the absolute relation to the absolute telos, and then he must take great pains to keep the fact of this relationship hidden from all others.

> He is a stranger to the world of the finite, but does not manifest his heterogeneity, his separation from worldliness, by a foreign mode of dress. This would be a contradiction, since he would thereby qualify himself in a worldly manner. He is incognito, but his incognito consists in having an appearance entirely like others.[8]

True inwardness demands absolutely no outward sign; its essential expression[9] is internal, suffering. The individual has decided to relate himself to the absolute telos, but he finds that he is absolutely commited to relative ends. "Now the individual begins, not indeed by relating himself at one

and the same time absolutely to the absolute telos and relatively to relative ends, since through being fast in the immediate he is precisely in the opposite situation; but he begins by exercising himself in the absolute relationship through renunciation."[10] The result of this attempt is suffering, and Kierkegaard insists that this is not something which will be surmounted when facility in relating oneself properly has been attained. This suffering must persist as essential for the pathetic relationship to an eternal happiness;[11] reflection must be centered upon the suffering and not away from it.[12] Nevertheless, one should rejoice in this suffering since it has significance for an eternal happiness.[13] Suffering arises from a special type of religious conflict which Kierkegaard names with the German, Anfechtung.

> In temptation, it is the lower that tempts, in Anfechtung it is the higher; in temptation, it is the lower that allures the individual, in Anfechtung it is the higher that, as if jealous of the individual, tries to frighten him back. Anfechtung therefore originates first in the essentially religious sphere, and occurs there only in the final stage, increasing quite properly in proportion to the intensity of the religiosity, because the individual has discovered the limit, and Anfechtung expresses the reaction of the limit against the finite individual.[14]

The antipathy which Kierkegaard is speaking of will come out more clearly when he turns to Christianity as an affront and a scandal.

The decisive expression for religiousness A is the consciousness of guilt.[15] Guilt does not arise from the fact that the existing individual is not related to his eternal happiness as to his absolute telos, but is something concom-

itant with this relationship.[16] He is guilty because he exists, but this does not enable him to blame existence and thus feel innocent. The guilt in question is not a particular failure, but the totality of guilt which comes into being as soon as the individual relates himself to an eternal happiness:[17] the individual becomes essentially guilty.

> In the consciousness of guilt it is the selfsame subject which becomes essentially guilty by keeping guilt in relationship to an eternal happiness, but yet the identity of the subject is such that guilt does not make the subject a new man.[18]

As if aware that the reader will try to collate what is here said with the problem of Repetition, Fear and Trembling, et. al., Kierkegaard adds: "With regard to every exister pure and simple it is true that if he suffers only innocently... he is not related to an eternal happiness and has avoided the consciousness of guilt by existing abstractly."[19] No, the individual must embrace his guilt, retain it in smoldering inwardness. "The eternal conservation of the recollection of guilt is the expression for existential pathos, the highest expression for it, higher than the most enthusiastic penance which would make up for the guilt."[20]

So much for religiousness A which precedes Christianity and would seem to be Kierkegaard's conception of the place occupied by Judaism.[21] This religiousness is characterized by its immanence, its inward appropriation.[22] For it, an eternal happiness is something simple, and "the pathetic becomes the dialectical factor in the dialectic of inward appropriation."[23] It would seem that Kierkegaard has already painted a picture

of a religiosity most difficult of attainment, containing the repellent temptation called Anfechtung which makes of the whole enterprise something inhuman and impossible difficult.[24] Christianity is presented as something infinitely more harrowing.

2. Credo quia absurdum.

In the frightening fugue of his authorship, Kierkegaard became most adept in the counterpoint of contradictions which he intended should show the inhuman difficulty of Christianity. Even in lesser existnetial expressions he evokes a pathos and anguish with fingers made nimble by daily practise on the scales of dialectic, but the Hegelian rationalization of Christianity was bound to provoke the most extreme reaction from our author. His weapon was the notion of absurdity and Christianity was set forth as the "crucifixion of the understanding."[25] He summed up what he had to say in the following phrase: "The reader will remember: a revelation is signalized by mystery, happiness by suffering, the certainty of faith by uncertainty, the ease of the paradoxical-religious life by its difficulty, the truth by absurdity."[26] Before going into this discussion on the nature of revealed truth, it is instructive to note what Kierkegaard had to say concerning proofs of the existence of God.

Beyond the borders of what is known, there is something against which reason collides, namely, the unknown. We can call this unknown God, but "the idea of demonstrating that

this unknown exists, could hardly suggest itself to the reason."[27] If God does not exist, we could not prove it, and if He does exist it would be folly to attempt it. If God exists, His existence will be presupposed at the outset. If proving that God exists means proof that the unknown which exists is God, the attempt is unfortunate for then an existence is not proved; rather, the content of a conception is developed. The point is that we always reason from existence.

> I do not for example prove that a stone exists, but that some existing thing is a stone... If it were proposed to prove Napoleon's existence from Napoleon's deeds, would it not be a curious proceeding? His existence does indeed explain his deeds, but the deeds do not prove his existence.[28]

Turning to Spinoza's dictum that in God <u>essentia involvit existentiam</u>, Kierkegaard takes exception with the notion of degrees of being. "In the case of factual existence it is meaningless to speak of more or less being. A fly, when it exists, has as much being as God."[29] He goes on to say that a proof for the existence of God implies an act of faith,[30] and reiterates that we must presuppose God as existing in order to prove that He exists.[31]

> God is a highest conception, not to be explained in terms of other things, but explainable only by exploring more and more profoundly the conception itself. The highest principles for all thought can be demonstrated only indirectly (negatively).[32]

Thus the existence of God would seem to be <u>per se nota</u>.

Kierkegaard's statements about the existence of God are always kept separate from his treatment of faith. Those things which are of faith are said to be absurd, whereas the

the existence of God would seem to be so pre-eminently knowable that no demonstration of it is necessary. Kierkegaard was not the first to present the truths of Christianity as contrary to reason. Tertullian, to whom the phrase which heads this section is attributed, arrives at much the same position when he addresses himself to those who would understand the mysteries of faith.

> Crucifixus est dei filius; non pudet, quia pudendum est. Et mortuus est dei filius; prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est. Et sepultus resurexit; certum est quia impossibile est.[3]

Obviously what Tertullian is getting at is that the mysteries of faith are such that we cannot understand them; that is, measured on the scale of our reason they would seem to be impossible. But this word, "impossible", cannot be accepted in its full sense, for the mysteries of faith are, and are therefore possible. The question then arises, can Kierkegaard's exposition of the absurd be interpreted in this way?

In reply we note that in many instances Kierkegaard is merely pointing out the frailty of our reason. Thus, in <u>Repitition</u>, where he speaks of Job, he says that Job received everything back double when every conceivable human hope had disappeared. When Job is said to hope "in virtue of the absurd" this can only mean that he puts his hope in something higher than human reason. Unfortunately, absurdity does not retain this defensible meaning throughout the authorship.

> And faith is the ideality which resolves an <u>ense</u> into its <u>posse</u> and then draws the conclusion inversely with passionate ardor. If the object of faith is the absurd, it is not the historic which

> is believed, but faith is the ideality which resolves an esse into a non posse - and then will believe it.[34]

Kierkegaard wants to distinguish knowledge from faith, for when we know a thing we cannot be properly said to believe it. To effect this, he would make those things which are of faith so opposed to reason that they are against it. Thus to believe in Christ entails that the eternal is temporal and the temporal eternal. This is not merely above reason, it is a flat contradiction, an absurdity. Not only can we not understand such things, but the attempt to do so is infidelity.

> But a believer who believes, i.e. believes against the understanding, takes the mystery of faith seriously and is not duped by the pretense of understanding, but is aware that the curiousity which leads to glimpsing is infidelity and betrayal of the task.[35]

On the basis of the doctrine of absurdity, Kierkegaard conceived of a new science, Christian oratory, which would be based on Aristotle's Rhetorica. Noting the opposition of probability to knowledge, Aristotle speaks of faith (pisteis) in relation to the probable; opinion, not science, is had of the probable. Christian faith, Kierkegaard suggests, could be served by this new science which would present something as improbable so that a man could believe it.[36]

As we have already noted, Kierkegaard does not always crawl out on this speculative limb, but in the few points which have been presented we find difficulties which cannot simply be ignored. For him faith is a perpetual possibility of offense; a scandal to the Jews and folly to the Greeks,

Christianity must always offend and scandalize human reason.[37] His difference from us is largely a propositional one; for us faith is not against but above reason. In his rabid anti-intellectualism, Kierkegaard would indeed crucify the human understanding, but in so doing he would also make a liar out God. We remember that he holds speculating about Christianity to be a misunderstanding of its message. The bastard speculation which produced the pages concerning the absurdity of faith would have done well to have a greater respect for the range as well as the limitations of our intellectual powers.

3. The Truth Will Set You Free.

One is reluctant to take seriously what Kierkegaard has said about proofs of the existence of God, for they give evidence of shameless superficiality. The great unknown which Kierkegaard would make synonymous with God, does indeed pass for knowledge of the deity among the great masses of humanity and only a slight reflection on the world of our experience brings this conception into being.[38] The fact that such knowledge of God is fraught with errors and most imperfect does not seem to bother Kierkegaard; indeed he assumes that this unknown will be treated as unique, that all will hold that God is one. Even a hatred of philosophical history should not have blinded him to the lessons he could have learned from the past in this regard.

God is indeed per se nota insofar as He is truth and truth is the object of the intellect. But for us He is not

immediately known, and if we are to have certain knowledge of His existence we must arrive at it from a consideration of those things which are most known to us.[39] The examples of a stone and the deeds of Napoleon which Kierkegaard brings forward are ample indication of the facetiousness of his treatment. We have an immediate experience of the stone and as for Napoleon, we could perhaps never prove with certitude that he did exist, but would accept it on human faith. However, Kierkegaard is perfectly justified in rejecting Spinoza.

> Nec hoc debet movere, quod in Deo idem est essentia et esse... Nam hoc intelligitur de esse quo Deus in seipso subsistit, quod nobis quale sit ignotum est, sicut eius essentia. Non autem intelligitur de esse quod significat compositionem intellectus. Sic enim esse Deus sub demonstratione cadit, dum ex rationibus demonstrativis mens nostra induitur huiusmodi propositionem de Deo formare qua exprimit Deum esse.[40]

Kierkegaard urges that if God exists it is folly to prove His existence, implying that if God exists we should surely know of it. For him, a proof of God's existence would not only make this existence known to us, but would be the cause of God's coming into existence. It bemuses one to note that men who know Kierkegaard well have never taken these statements to task. Thomte, as is his custom, merely paraphrases Kierkegaard,[40a] but Swenson who shows some capacity for independent thought is content to repeat and defend Kierkegaard in this connection.[40b]

There is, of course, an element of truth in what Kierkegaard is saying. In a very real way God remains unknown to us after we have proved his existence, for the proof con-

cludes <u>that</u> He is, not <u>What</u> He is. This is true even in the realm of revealed truths; we learn what God is not rather than what He is.[41] Ours is a <u>cognitio per negationes</u>.

> Et quanto plures negationes de eis cognoscimus, tanto minus confusa est earum cognitio nobis, eo quod per negationes sequentes prior negation contrahitur et determinatur, sicut genus remotum per differentias.[42]

The prrof of God's existence draws its dignity from the side of the object and not from the mode of the proof, for as demonstration it is not the most perfect kind.[43] To go from creatures to God is not <u>per viam causalitatis</u>[43a] as if the effects were proportioned to their cause and a knowledge of the former could tell us what God is. There is not, as Kierkegaard suggests, "an absolute relationship"[44] between God and His works so that these works lay open to us the divine nature.

These few words needed to be said about Kierkegaard's cavalier treatment of the proofs for the existence of God, but further exposition would be a detour we can ill afford to make if we are to keep a certain proportion in our critique. The focal point in the religious sphere is absurdity, and we will bend our better efforts toward assessing it.

When Kierkegaard says that the certainty of faith is signalized by uncertainty, he is putting his fingeron something very true. His statements on rhetoric and opinion bring him tentalizingly close to the position of St. Thomas, but he withdraws again down the alleyway of absurdity. The

fact is, faith has something in common with opinion as well as science, and it is by making precise what these factors are that we come to understand faith.

The intellect is moved either by its proper object, or by the will which moves all the other powers.[44a] We are doubtful of something when it does not sufficiently move our minds to accept one part of a contradiction as opposed to another; we have opinion when one side appears more probable, but we never divest ourselves of the formido alterius. Then again, there are times when we do adhere to one side of a contradiction, whether this is caused by the nature of the object, or by the will which moves us to accept. In the latter case, we say that we believe, for it is the will which is moved by the object and not the intellect. In matters of divine faith, the will, moved by the promise of an eternal life, causes the intellect to assent to what is offered for belief althought the intellect is not moved as if it understood. When we have science of a thing we assent to it and there is no further cogitation, but in faith assent and cogitation play equal rôles, so much so that St. Augustine defined faith as cum assensione cogitare.[45] In faith, the assent comes from the will and not from the intellect.

> Sed quia intellectus non hoc modo terminatur ad unum ut ad proprium terminum perducatur, qui est visio alicuius intelligibilis; inde est quod eius motus nondum est quietatus, sed adhuc habet cogitationem et inquisitionem de his qui credit, quamvis firmissime eis assentiat.[46]

This movement of the intellect will never cease in this life

because its termination comes from without, from the will, and thus the mind is said to be captivated by faith.[47] This explains why the mind can be plagued by the direct opposite of what it believes, and yet never waver in its assent.[47a]

Faith is like science in that it is certain; it differs from science because it lacks the evidence which prompts the assent of science. Faith has in common with opinion and doubt the shuttling of cogitation, but it will differ from them essentially because of its certitude. What is meant by the certitude of faith? Two things are involved in certitude, firmness of adhesion and evidence. Faith is totally lacking in the second element, but it adheres more firmly to its object than any science ever could.[49]

The formal object of faith, that by reason of which the believer assents to any doctrine which may materially constitute the object of his faith, is the First Truth which is God: the believer assents because has revealed what he believes.[50] Thus, although dependent upon will in a very special way, faith resides in the intellect as in its subject, for truth is the object of intellect.[51] Now it is precisely because God as Truth is the formality under which all material objects of faith are believed that Kierkegaard's notion of absurdity approaches the blasphemy of calling God a liar. Revealed truth is above reason and exceeds absolutely our natural capacities; but things which are of faith cannot be contrary to that which we know naturally. The first prin-

ciples are, as it were, innate and are so easily recognized as true that no one can think a thought which will be contrary to them, although we may verbally state their converse. Nor can things believed in virtue of divine faith be contrary to the first principles; the first principles are true and only the false can be contrary to what is true. Therefore, if the truths of faith contradicted what we know naturally, they could only be false, and this indeed would be absurd.[52] And it is the more absurd because both the truth and the falsehood would be due to God, whether we accept natural knowledge as true and that of faith as false, or vice versa. In either case, God would be a liar, and such absurdity is to be repudiated rather than enthroned as existential pathos.

Kierkegaard's presupposition that Christianity is not a doctrine but an existence communication, that is, solely ordered to action, is obviously false. One example should suffice. Not until Christ revealed it did men know the mystery of the Trinity. This is an essential part of the Christian revelation, and yet it has no conceivable relation to the positing of an act; it could never be a premise of a practical syllogism. It is, therefore, speculative and Christ, were He interested in having us avoid speculation, could quite easily have made no mention of this truth. Further, we would have had to have been created something other than we are if speculation were the mortal sin Kierkegaard would make of it. But then his stand is undermined by his own laborious speculations which are, after all, something other than "existing." We

can see that theology is inevitable from the nature of the truth revealed as well as from the nature of our minds. All men by nature desire to know, and the believer who assents due to the influence of his will, embarks as we have seen on an endless cogitation by which he strives to dispel some of the darkness contributed by the mind in the face of so much truth. There is, of course, a danger here, the danger that one think he can understand these truths, but this possible pitfall does not destroy the utility of the effort.

> Utile tamen est ut huiusmodi rationibus, quantumcumque debilibus, se mens humana exerceat, dummodo desit comprehendendi vel demonstrandi praesumptio: quia de rebus altissimis etiam parva et debili consideratione aliquid posse inspicere iucundissimum est.[53]

Incomprehensible to us, these truths are not absurd, not impossible: these latter terms could only be applied if man were the measure of all things. St. Thomas has recorded for us some penetrating words of St. Hilary in this respect:

> Haec credendo incipe, procurre, persiste: etsi non perventurum scisam, gratulabor tamen profecturum. Qui enim pie infinita prosequitur, etsi non contingat aliquando, semper tamen proficiet prodeundo. Sed ne te inferas in illud secretum, et arcano interminabilis nativitatis non te immergas, summam intelligentiae comprehendere praesumens; sed intellige incomprehensibilia esse.[54]

At this juncture we must advert to one of the most disconcerting facts of the Kierkegaardian literature. The position just criticized is without a doubt held by Kierkegaard as well as pseudonymous authors; the fact that we have quoted from his Journals in presenting his doctrine is ample proof of this. And yet, chameleon-like, Kierkegaard in other places sets down a much more modified version which is con-

trary to the concept of absurdity just set forth and is compatible with traditional thought. The following entry in his Journal is an example.

> A true sentence of Hugo de St Victor... "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." That is what I explained (i.e. in the Postscript); not every absurdity is "the absurd" or the paradox. The effect of reason is in fact to know the paradox negatively - but no more.[55]

If he had confined himself to expressions like this, some reconciliation would have been possible. So too when he says of faith: "While naturally it is a matter of course that for him who believes it is not the absurd."[56] When he says that revelation is an offense to speculation,[57] he could mean that for one who puts his ultimate reliance in human wisdom (sapientia verbi), faith presents difficulties.

> Ille in sapientia verbi docet qui sapientiam verbi accipit pro principali radice suae doctrinae, ita sc. quod ea solum approbet, quae verbi sapientiam continent: reprobet autem ea quae sapientiam verbi non habent, et hoc fidei est corruptivum...[58]

But these are isolated islands of orthodoxy, and the spirit of absurdity which Kierkegaard breathed upon the waters dins much louder in our ears when we read his writings.

We have seen the movement described by the existential dialectic which would lead men away from aesthetics and ultimately to hidden inwardness and absurdity. In the next part of this study we will consider Kierkegaard's repudiation of

indirect communication and the religion of hidden inwardness. It is to be noted that Hidden inwardness carried over into Christianity. At first glance, this would seem to indicate that Kierkegaard came to think that he had written his many books in vain; we will see that he merely recognized their insufficiency alone. In ending, we will attempt a concluding summary which will assess the general movement described by the existential dialectic in terms of humanism which Kierkegaard embraced at the outset. We will be asking whether Kierkegaard himself recognized what it meant to exist as a human being.

PART THREE

REPUDIATION OF INDIRECT COMMUNICATION

Chapter One

Second Thoughts on Communication

Sic ergo confiteri fidem non semper neque in quolibet loco est de necessitate salutis; sed in aliquo loco et tempore, quando scilicet per dimissionem huius confessionis subtraheretur honor debitus Deo, et etiam utilitas proximis impendenda.[1]

Most studies of Kierkegaard indulge in lengthy biographical treatments either with the intention of psychoanalyzing the dead Dane or, by immodest eulogy, attempting to canonize him. The present study has diligently avoided any narratio singularium because of the conviction that Kierkegaard's personal life is subject to a multitude of interpretations none of which casts lasting light on what he has written. Kierkegaard himself would seem to share this opinion. "Precisely in the degree to which I understand a thinker I become indifferent to his reality; that is, to his existence as a particular individual, to his having really understood this or that so and so, to his actually having realized his teaching, and so forth."[2] Nevertheless it is true that the theory of indirect communication was due in large part to his personal character; it is equally true that his decision to discontinue communicating indirectly was also due to personal causes. And

yet, even on this point it would seem wiser to concentrate on the objective aspect of what Kierkegaard has to say.

The repudiation of indirect communication can be unsettling when we recall our earlier attempts to justify it as a most efficacious means of persuasion. But it is the notion of "hidden inwardness" which explains Kierkegaard's later dissatisfaction. It was his doubts with regard to this latter which led to his second thoughts on indirect communication. After briefly noting Kierkegaard's reappraisal of what he had done, we will consider, again briefly, his application of indirect communication to Christ.

It need hardly be repeated that Kierkegaard's intention was a religious one, that everything he wrote was geared toward an existential delineation of the Christian life. We have seen that the existential culmination of his efforts was the religion of hidden inwardness, which he took to be the desideratum which would couple an absolute dedication to an eternal life with a total lack of exterior show. He came to see the danger of his position in Training in Christianity.

> On the other hand, if so-called established Christendom maybe does not expressly call itself the Church triumphant, perhaps disdaining this name as an externality, it nevertheless produces the same confusion by means of 'hidden inwardness'; for, again, established Christendom, where all are Christians, but only in hidden inwardness, resembles the militant Church just as little as the stillness of death resembles vociferous passion.[3]

Could not this desire to remain hidden be prompted by the disinclination to shoulder the difficulties following on being marked as a Christian?[4] Nothing, he concluded, was more contrary to Christianity, which desires to make all things manifest, than hidden inwardness.[5] Cornelio Fabro seems to think that what Kierkegaard was seeking was sacramental confession[6], but surely the difficulty is deeper (and perhaps less supernatural) than that. It will be remembered that Kierkegaard has insisted that all practical knowledge and Christianity above all, can only be communicated indirectly. Hidden, mysterious and obscure, one must never present Christianity as a doctrine. Unfortunately, Kierkegaard never recanted on this point; his rejection of indirect communication and hidden inwardness has relevance to the individual Christian.

> The communication of Christianity must ultimately end in 'bearing witness', the maieutic form can never be final. For truth, from the Christian point of view, does not lie in the subject (as Socrates understood it) but in a revelation which must be proclaimed.[7]

Christianity can make use of the indirect method, but he who uses it must end by being a witness. Such communication is ultimately rooted in human intelligence, and in Christianity God must be allowed to take over.[8]

Behind hidden inwardness is, of course, the desire to avoid seeking vain glory[9]; each time Kierkegaard thinks of this he falters in his rejection of hidden inwardness. Yet, in commenting on the text that the tree is known by its fruits, he states that it cannot be true that love should be asked to

conceal itself.[10] This does not mean that exterior actions are an infallible index to the interior state[11], and for this reason we can never judge another. Then, as if pronouncing the final word on hidden inwardness, he writes:

> If therefore some eccentric and fanatical, or hypocritical, person were to teach that love was such a secret emotion that it was too select to bear fruit, or so secret that its fruit neither proved anything for nor against it, moreover, that not even the poisonous fruit proved anything, then we should remember the Gospel words: the tree is known by its fruits.[12]

We would seem to have heard the last about indirect communication and hidden inwardness, but Kierkegaard puts them to further use in applying them to Christ. There are two kinds of indirect communication, that which makes use of the "double reflection", and that which arises due to the relation between the communicator and his communication.[13] It is in this second sense that Christ communicates indirectly. No matter how directly Christ might say, "I am God" the fact that He is an individual human being creates a difficulty on the part of the recipient.[14] This difficulty means that faith is required if one is to accept what Christ says about Himself.[15]

In recognizing the difficulties inherent in hidden inwardness, Kierkegaard comes to a saner and more orthodox position on something which is quite central to his thought. That this reassessment does not alter the inhuman tenor of his theology will be seen in the following chapter when a résumé of the

existential dialectic will be given and criticized as a whole. There we will note what is of value and what is dangerous in the notion of hidden inwardness, but more important, by tracing Kierkegaard's thought with relation to marriage and the passions, we will show that the existential dialectic describes a movement fundamentally inhuman.

Chapter Two

Concluding Summary

If we are correct in assuming that we have found a central thread which provides an insight into what Kierkegaard meant his many writings to effect, we are now enabled to deliver a final judgment on the existential dialectic. For our purposes it will be expedient to give in capsul form what has occupied our attention over the preceding pages that we may the better appraise Kierkegaard's thought. Far from being needless repetition, this will bring together what may have seemed highly disparate lines in the obscurity of indirect communication, and indicate what precisely was their function in relation to the goal intended.

Kierkegaard set out to disillusion his countrymen who thought that they were Christians thanks to their location in a Christian country, but whose lives failed to exemplify what Kierkegaard considered the religious mode of existence. Their lives, he felt, were lived in aesthetic categories, or, worse, they hovered above life lost in the speculative stratosphere. An instinctive dialectician, Kierkegaard realized that he would only be heard if he spoke out in terms of the lifeview of those he would change. He wanted to indicate

what it meant to live as a human being, lead people away from aesthetics, away from speculation, to a human mode of existence. Quite rightly he judged that speculation was not a properly human occupation, and the fact that speculation seemed to escape the either/or which precedes and permits choice angered him. It was because the will played little or no rôle in the abstract sciences that Kierkegaard castigated philosophy for ignoring what it is to be a man. Such knowledge, he concluded, is non-essential because it is not ordered to action. Action makes a man what he is, morally, and only knowledge that had relation to activity, to will, could be regarded as essential knowledge. We saw that Kierkegaard felt that much the same thing was true of poetry: one who lived in aesthetic categories also escaped the either/or. Thus it was that the disjunction, either/or, became the device whereby he tested lifeviews to ascertain whether or no they were human, whether they involved the whole man.

In this way Kierkegaard arrived at the ethical sphere of existence and, although he offered no moral science as such, we found that many implied aspects of the ethical sphere were in accord with Aristotelian moral philosophy. However, at this juncture a most important point was made, one that determined the direction of the remainder of the existential dialectic, namely, the relation between the outer and the inner, the interior state of man and the external manifestations of it. Some have said that the ethical sphere is actually Kierkegaard's idea of what Hegelian ethics were. Be this as it may,

the ethical sphere as presented contains certain elements which Kierkegaard meant to indicate its insufficiency and would prepare the way for a higher mode of existence, Christianity. Thus he embraced, in the ethical sphere, the notion that the interior and exterior were convertible the one with the other. Moreover, he presented ethical universals in such a way that they would seem proportioned, as universal statements, to no matter what particular action. This has as its effect, of course, the negation of the rôle of prudence. And it is a completely rationalistic view, for it would only be necessary to know what one has to do in order to achieve goodness. These aspects of the ethical sphere indicate its inadequacy as ethics, but Kierkegaard preferred to conclude that something higher was required. Thus, one who applied a universal prudentially to his own life became an exception and prefigured the isolation which Kierkegaard characterized the religious mode of existence.

The religious sphere saw therefore the externality of the ethical sphere as an imperfection and would correct it by receding into hidden inwardness there to work out its salvation existentially and in a way that would in no wise be indicated externally. And, because of his prior rejection of all speculative thought and his conviction that Christianity was an "existence communication", i.e. having relevance for action alone and not for thought, Kierkegaard evolved the theory of absurdity. Faith has to do with that which is absurd, an affront, an offense to the speculative reason. By accepting the crucifixion of the understanding, the man of faith lives in

perpetual suffering and anguish which must never seek alleviation. Kierkegaard's notion of sin is largely in keeping with his Lutheran backgrounds grace covers up sin, but does not remove it. Therefore, one must be constantly aware of his guilt, fasten his thought on it, not attempt to let it go for a moment. But we do not have to wait until the religious sphere to find indication of currents which go contrary to the nature of man.

In volume one of Either/Or, when it is question of Don Giovanni, the statement is made that Christianity posits sensuality by negating it. Christianity is spoken of only in terms of spirit, and it is absolutely and forever opposed to the flesh. At this point, one might feel inclined to believe that "flesh" is there understood in the pejorative sense, and pass lightly by. Later developements in the existential dialectic indicate that such a reaction would be a mistake. In volume two of the same work, we encounter the notion of anxiety which is meant to translate the melancholy said to be proper to the aesthetic sphere. We saw that this anxiety was the fleshly man's reaction before a spiritual good. Once again, this is not an alarming remark. It is only later when we encounter the repellent temptation of Anfechtung (which would seem to have a close relation to anxiety) in the religious sphere that we begin to ask ourselves questions. Remember, Anfechtung is the proper effect the supernatural has on man; it is no longer question of the man so much as of the supernatural. The implication is that there is something inhuman, anti-natural, in Christianity.

Now, are these merely small points having little to do with the mainstream of the existential dialectic, or do they indicate something quite proper to Kierkegaard's thought?

Let us recall the Judge's counsel to the aesthete that he choose despair. We earlier indicated that there is a way of interpretating this that would make it consonant with sane doctrine, but should we so interpret it? To put the accent on despair is surely an odd way of proceeding; it is an accent that becomes ever more acute as the existential dialectic progresses. In leaving behind the ethical sphere a great deal is made of acting in virtue of the absurd. Once again there is a favorable interpretation of these words, but once again we ask if it would be true to Kierkegaard to allign him with schools of thought which take human nature as it is in speaking of moral situations. Kierkegaard's use of the passions in his effort to move the wills of men is somewhat strange. His choice indicates a proclivity for passions which would press a man down rather than inspire directly to action. The fear and trembling (which is insane in that it is fear of something God could not do), the dread, the despair to which Kierkegaard makes appeal seem to tell us something very important about his dialectics. Underlying his choice seems to be a predilection for the unnatural, the contrary to human nature. There are other instances of this.

A minor liability of eschewing a biographical bouquet in this study is that we have not discussed Kierkegaard's rather dramatic engagement which he broke abruptly and which influenced

and colored his thought till the end of his life. Kierkegaard's engagement was broken for religious reasons, and we find his personal difficulties reflected in Repetition, "Guilty?/ Not Guilty?" and elsewhere. It is no accident that Kierkegaard tries to convey the singularity of the religious, the fact of being an exception, by depicting men who feel that they cannot marry. Spirit is opposed to flesh, Christianity is spirit. How then can marriage be reconciled with Christianity? Kierkegaard's answer is that it cannot. Woman for him is the essence of concupiscence,[1] and she corrupts every man who marries.[2] Christianity would lead away from marriage and,

> Along comes Protestantism and introduces Christianity - in relation to marriage, marriage becomes what is pleasing to God. How disgusting, this lying Christianity which lies to mankind, partly because it is more comfortable to repeat the nonsense men talk, partly because the 'parson' in his capacity of master of the stud and breeder is egotistically interested in increasing the herd, in seeing that procreation continues on a grand scale.[3]

The parson's blessing of marriage is hypocricy.

> That is what this man of God, the priest, is for; he blesses this important step (the importance of which consists in not doing it), and so it is well pleasing to God - and I have my will, and my will becomes worship, and the priest has his will, he has ten dollars, not earned in the humble way of brushing people's clothes or serving beer or brandy at the bar; no, he is employed in God's service, and to earn ten dollars in that way is - divine worship. (Bravissimo!)[4]

The duty of the priest is to employ every means to dissuade the couple from marrying because Christianity counsels against marriage.[5] A Christian is not called to be a husband; rather he is called to be a witness to the truth, and,

> A witness to the truth is a man whose life from first to last is unacquainted with everything which is called enjoyment - and, ah, whether to you has been granted little or much, you know how pleasant is that which is called enjoyment! But his life from first to last was unacquainted with what is called enjoyment; on the other hand, from first to last it was initiated to what is called suffering ...by inward conflicts, by fear and trembling, by trepidation, by anguish of soul, by anguish of spirit, being tried besides that by all the sufferings which are commonly talked of in the world.[6]

These citations are from the last writings of Kierkegaard when his thought had arrived at its term, and they indicate the deep-seated inhumanity of the existential dialectic, a factor which has been present all along. Kierkegaard said that he would indicate what it means to exist as a human being, that he would deliver men from tasks which were not proportionate to their nature. And yet, his emphasis on fear and despair, his terribly confused understanding of moral activity, his inability to reconcile marriage with Christianity, body with spirit, issues in a doctrine which is basically repellent and basically false. He moved from the obscurity of aesthetics to the ersatz revelation of "ethics" and on again into hidden inwardness from which he never completely freed himself. In ending this study of Kierkegaard, we will relate these major positions of the Dane to the thought of St. Thomas. What rôle does the external play in human action? What of fear and despair as Kierkegaard uses them? An answer to these questions, implying as it will a word on <u>angelism</u>, Kierkegaard's views on marriage and speculation, will give in a summary way the Thomistic verdict on the existential dialectic.

Kierkegaard begins his discussion of externality and the human act in a perfectly defensible way. "The real action is not the external act, but an internal decision in which the individual puts an end to the mere possibility and identifies himself with the content of his thought in order to exist in it."[7] It is when he seems to be saying the external plays absolutely no rôle in the human act that he overlooks something rather fundamental.

> In actu autem voluntario invenitur duplex actus, scilicet actus interior voluntatis et actus exterior, et uterque horum actuum habet suum objectum. Finis autem proprie est objectum interioris actus voluntatis; id circa quod est actio exterior, est objectum eius. Sicut igitur actus exterior accipit speciem ab objecto circa quod est; ita actus interior voluntatis accipit speciem a fine, sicut a proprio objecto.[8]

Moreover, the interior act is as form to the exterior action, for the will uses the body as an instrument. Nor can bodily actions be moral or immoral without the formality of the interior act. The material aspect of the human act is the exterior action, and with regard to it, it happens that circumstances have to be taken into account. An action can be consonant with or repugnant to reason without regard to circumstances; thus, taking the goods of another is repugnant to reason and is said to be theft. The circumstances of place and time can also be ordered by reason, however, and reason can order that such and such should not be done in a certain place. Thus theft in Church adds a special repugnance to reason, and place is no longer just a circumstance, but is considered as a special condition of the object specifying it

as good or bad.[9] Of course, only those circumstances which add either repugnance or consonance with regard to reason can specify the act.[10]

The exterior act can be considered, as has just been done, with relation to reason. When, according to genus and circumstances, it is consonant with reason, it is said to be good. However, it can also be good or bad in relation to the end, and then an act which is good in the first manner, e.g. giving alms, if directed to the end of human praise, is bad. In this second way the exterior act is related, not to reason, but to will the proper object of which is the end.[11] It is to be noted that the complete goodness or badness of the exterior act does not depend on the will alone; an action which is not consonant with reason does not become good by being directed to a good end.[12] This multiplicity does not destroy the unity of the human action, for the interior and exterior act are one moral act. If the exterior act has no goodness or badness in itself, any goodness said of it will come from its direction to the end. If, as is the case with the acts we have been considering, the exterior act can be said to be good or bad in itself, then its goodness or badness is other than that of the interior act and there is a certain reciprocity between them. If the exterior act is bad, it vitiates the intention of the will; if the intention of the will is bad the exterior act shares in this disorder. Thus, morally speaking, there is a unity of the two, for, unless both are good, goodness is lacking.[13] "Bonum causatur ex integra causa, malum autem ex

singularibus defectibus."[14] It can also happen that the exterior act adds to the goodness of the interior action itself.[15] We have already considered, in the first part of our study, the unforeseen effects of an action which do not, of course, add to or diminish the goodness or badness of an action.[16]

It can be seen from the foregoing that Kierkegaard's movement toward inwardness, especially in the delineation of the religious sphere, violates something proper to human acts. In moral virtues, choice is primary, but this does not cancel out the exterior act.

> Et quamvis electio sit principalior in virtute morali, ut supra dictum est, tamen manifestum est quod ad omnimodam perfectionem virtutis moralis requiritur non solum electio, sed etiam operatio exterior.[17]

Man is a composite of body and soul and any doctrine which would so emphasize spirit that it ignores the rôle of the external and bodily in morals is simply false. Kierkegaard began by criticizing Hegelian ethics as being unaware of what it is to be a man; his own thought on human action is susceptible of the same accusation. Not even his distaste for the "historical judgment" of Hegelianism justifies Kierkegaard's position, for the interior act alone does not constitute the full story of human activity.

The stoicism, or even angelism, with which Kierkegaard flirted throughout his authorship seems the more surprising when we think of his many references to passions which would seem to connote the activity of the sensitive appetite and

the body. This is not necessarily true, of course, as "passion" is an analogical term which comes to be applied to the intellective as well as the sensitive appetite. The passions of which he does speak are of special interest with regard to the above-mentioned denial of human nature, for the same denial seems to be repeated here. We will note first the nature of accidia to which Kierkegaard refers both at the beginning and toward the end (under the name Anfechtung) of the existential dialectic.

Accidia, or melancholy, is a kind of sadness and as such its object is an evil. Nevertheless, St. Thomas defines it in terms of a good: "Accidia autem est taedium vel tristitia boni spiritualis et interni."[18] Both the good and bad are divided into real and apparent, and although the spiritual good is a real good it is as an apparent evil that it is the object of accidia. This is not without fault.

> Tristitia enim secundum se mala est quae est de eo quod est apparens malum et vere bonum; sicut e contrario mala delectatio est quae est de eo quod est apparens bonum et vere malum.[19]

Such sadness before the spiritual good can so weigh a man down that he refrains from every good work. It should be noted that even a saint is susceptible to imperfect movements of accidia, but he does not consent to them.[20] But Kierkegaard teaches that such sadness and suffering, as Anfechtung, is to be taken as a sign of the religious life and is not to be gotten rid of, but rather accepted. Such acceptance seems to imply an act of the will and thus one would become guilty.[21]

St. Thomas teaches that <u>acedia</u> gives rise to despair,[22] and it is therefore not surprising that Kierkegaard goes on to speak of despair. Fear too is indirectly the cause of despair[23] and fear of the Lord can be the cause of despair. Kierkegaard's description of such fear would seem to lead most certainly to despair and, paradoxically enough, the result of such fear and despair is that a man will give himself over to sensuality.[24] Kierkegaard is in effect driving men to that from which he is purportedly leading them. It is true that the spiritual good is an arduous good, but for this reason it is the good which must first be stressed: "arduum non est ratio accedendi vel appetendi, sed potius bonum."[25] Nor is this defect remedied by <u>The Works of Love</u>; it is one of the last works and love is the first of the passions. Kierkegaard has chosen to pursue a course which not only violates the demands of human nature, but he concentrates on passions which are said to be unnatural,

> ...quia huiusmodi motus sunt contra rationem inclinationis naturalis, puta quod desperatio refugit bonum propter aliquam difficultatem, et timor refugit impugnationem mali contrarii; ad quod est inclinatio naturalis.[26]

It must be said, however, that <u>Sickness Unto Death</u>, which is Kierkegaard's treatise on despair does not deserve the above censure; it is a well-balanced and enlightening treatise on despair as well as the best thing he ever wrote on sin.

The culmination of Kierkegaard's unnatural dialectic is to be found in his definition of the "witness to the truth." The description he gives would seem to be of that insensible man whom Aristotle deplores. Such a man denies all pleasure and as such he is unnatural.

> Et inquit quod non multum contingit quod aliqui deficiant circa delectationes, ita ut minus gaudeant quam oportet, idest quam requiritur ad sanitatem et bonam habitudinem corporis et ad decentem conservationem cum aliis, in quo consistit vitiosus defectus, quam supra in secundo nominavit insensibilitatem: quae non convenit humanae naturae, quia etiam reliqua animalia discernunt cibos, in quorum quibusdam delectantur, in aliis autem non. Et sic acceptare aliquas delectationes videtur pertinere ad communem naturam generis.[27]

Nor is it the case that the celibate eschews all pleasure,

but only venereal pleasure and this according to right reason.[28]

Kierkegaard's fulminations against marriage and his weird ideal of a witness indicate a basic misunderstanding of human nature. His denial of the external act's importance, his insistence on unnatural passions, his denial of pleasure, all these add up to a weighty indictment against Kierkegaardian existentialism. The existential dialectic or indirect communication, as theory, is a most apt instrument for achieving the goal Kierkegaard set himself. But once that dialectic is set in motion it follows a line, as we have seen, that recedes further and further from the ability to influence action.

Most of Kierkegaard's difficulties are a direct result of his rejection of speculative thought. He attempted to write of action in terms of the flux in which we act while ignoring the general norms and abiding conditions of action. The study of man's nature is not a practical enterprise, but some knowledge of that nature is required if we would speak of human action. The practical intellect is an extension of the speculative and not wholly distinct from it, and the

correctness of practical science must ultimately depend on speculative science.[29] Kierkegaard ignored this because of a basic and not uncommon confusion of science and virtue.

One does not have to be a moral philosopher or theologian in order to become good. Science may be helpful for action, but it is not indispensable. However, practical science is not synonymous with moral virtue and if he who would write about the practical dismisses with speculative science error follows inevitably. Prudence is the most necessary virtue for human life.[30] Since this is true, ethics may share in this necessity, but it cannot achieve truth if it is unanchored in speculation. The necessity of prudence is relative, not absolute: it is most necessary for man. Prudence could be absolutely most important and ethics the highest science only if man were the most perfect being.[31] Speculation is absolutely more perfect than practical philosophy because the former has a higher object.[32] It is more perfect, absolutely speaking, to know a very little about beings higher than man than to have an exhaustive knowledge of man. This may seem a small distinction, but if it is denied or overlooked the universe is stood on its head and man is the measure of all things.

With Kierkegaard, existentialism begins by rejecting all useless knowledge. It will direct its attentions only to that which has relevance to human existence. We have seen that it comes to make impossible demands on a nature which

it does not sufficiently understand. Kierkegaard came to suspect the weakness of what he was about, but never to the degree that he recognized the need, in the order of sciences, for speculation. Modern existentialists have continued in this denial of useless knowledge and it is perhaps only fitting that they must conclude now that it is man who is useless: l'homme est une passion inutile.

NOTES

Foreword

1. In II Metaph., lect. 1 (ed. Cathala), n. 288.

2. The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard, ed. Alexander Dru, (Oxford University Press, London, 1938), p. 226, n. 722.

3. Ibid., n. 1000.

4. In III Metaph., lect. 1 (ed Cathala), n. 342.

5. "... sed etiam illis qui superficialiter locuti sunt ad veritatem investigandum, licet eorum opiniones non sequamur; quia isti etiam aliquid conferunt nobis. Praestiterunt enim nobis quoddam exercitium circa inquisitionem veritatis." - In II Metaph., lect. 1, n. 288.

6. In I Metaph., lect. 3, n. 63.

PART ONE

Chapter One

1. In III Metaph., lect. 7, (Cathala), n. 611.

2. Concluding Unscientific Postscript, translated by David F. Swenson & Walter Lowrie, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1941), p. 296.

3. Ibid., p. 84.

4. Ibid., p. 276.

5. Ibid., pp. 181-182.

6. We follow principally Ia, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1 and Q. D. de Veritate, q. 25, a. 5, c. See as well Charles De Koninck, "The Nature of Man and his Historical Being" in Laval théologique et philosophique, (Vol. V, No. 2, 1949), pp. 275-276.

7. Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 20.

8. IaIIae, q. 18, a. 1.

9. Postscript, p. 288.

Chapter Two

1. The Philosophy of History, translated by J. Sibree, (Willey Book Co., New York, 1900), p. 13.

2. Ecrits concernant la politique et la philosophie du droit, Edition Lasson, p. 5.

3. Phenomenology of Mind, translated by J.B.Baillie (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1931), p. 81.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 93.

6. The Philosophy of History, p. 8.

7. "Logic and dialectics were now no longer to be regarded as a mere organon for a knowledge of reality, but were thought to contain this knowledge in all its fullness and totality and to allow of its being made explicit." - Ernst Cassirer, The Problem of Knowledge, (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1950), p. 2.

8. The Philosophy of History, p. 9.

9. Ibid., p. 8.

10. Ibid., p. 11.

11. Ibid., p. 14.

12. Ibid., p. 15.

13. What is Existentialism?, Partisan Review Series, No. 2, New York, 1947, p. 22.

14. Postscript, p. 107.

15. Ibid., p. 120.

16. Ibid., p. 126.

17. Ibid., p. 139.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid. , p. 141. Cf. The Philosophy of History, p. 13.

20. Ibid, p. 131 note.

21. Ibid., p. 132.

22. Philosophical Fragments, translated by David F. Swenson, Princeton University Press, (Princeton, 1946), p. 60.

23. Ibid., pp. 60-61.

24. Ibid., p. 61

25. Ibid., p. 62.

26. Ibid., p. 61.

27. Ibid., p. 62.

28. Ibid., p. 63.

29. Ibid., p. 63.

30. Ibid., p. 65.

31. Ibid., p. 66.

32. Contra Gentiles, III, cap. 86; cf. In IX Metaph., lect.3. n. 1812.

33. Ia, q. 82, a. 1.

34. Contra Gentiles, III, 86.

35. "Unde cum bonitas Dei sit perfecta, et esse possit sine aliis, cum nihil ei perfectionis ex aliis accrescat; sequitur quod alia a se eum velle, non sit necessarium absolute. Et tamen necessarium est ex suppositione; supposito enim quod velit, non potest non velle, quia non potest voluntas eius mutari." - Ia, q. 19, a. 3.

36. Contra Gentiles, II, cap. 30.

37. In I Peri Herm., lect. 14, n. 6.

38. Q. D. de Veritate, q. 23, a. 4, ad 1.

39 Ibid. "Necessarium vero ex suppositione est quod non est necessarium ex se, sed solummodo posito alio; sicut Socratem cucurrisse: Socrates enim, quantum est de se, non se habet magis ad hoc quam ad huius oppositum; sed facta suppositione quod cucurrerit, impossibile est eum non cucurrisse."

40. In II Physic., lect. 15, (edit. Pirotta), n. 522.

41. In VI Ethic., lect. 2, (edit. Spiazzi), n. 1138.

42. The present is, of course, necessary ex suppositione.

43. In I Peri Herm., lect. 13. n. 11.

44. Q. D. de Veritate, q. 22. a. 5.

45 In II Physic., lect. 8, n. 430.

46. Ibid., n. 427.

47. Ibid. n. 428.

48. Ibid., n. 430.

48a. Ibid., n. 429.

49. In II Physic., lect. 7, n. 405.

50. Phaedo, 96; The Dialogues of Plato, Jowett translation, Random House, (New York, 1937), Vol. I, p. 481.

51. Postscript, p. 274.

52. Ibid., p. 278.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., p. 267.

55. Ibid., p. 279.

56. Ibid., p. 153 et seq.; Fragmente, p. 32.

57. Postscript, p. 119.

58. Ibid., p. 143.

59. Ibid., p. 275.

60. Ibid., p. 294.

61. Ibid., pp. 115-116.

62. Ibid., p. 302.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., pp. 303-304.

65. Ibid., p. 305.

66. Ibid., p. 288.

67. Ibid., p. 175.

68. Ibid., p. 68.

69. Ibid., p. 287.

70. Ibid., p. 195.

71. Ibid., p. 182.

72. Ibid., p. 200.

73. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon, Random House, (New York, 1941), p. 598.

74. In de Trinitate, q. 5, a. 1.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid., and Ia, q. 14, a. 16.

77. In I Ethic., lect. 3, n. 35.

78. Q. D. de Veritate, q. 3, a. 3.

79. Ia, q. 14, a. 16.

80. Kierkegaard speaks of the speculative as if there were but one degree of abstraction; moreover, he assimilates abp speculation to what would be the immateriality of mathematical knowledge. It is true that such knowledge is susceptible to being called "essentialism", but K. misguidedly confuses our knowledge of physical things with the second degree of abstraction.

81. Postscript, p. 70 note.

82. Ibid., p. 302.

83. Ibid., p. 278.

84. Ibid., p. 177. Underlining ours.

85. IaIIae, q. 57, a. 5.

86. Fragments, p. 30.

87. Postscript, p. 305.

Chapter Three

1. In X Ethic., lect. 14, n. 2144.

1a. Without doing too much violence to the context, we can cite the following lines from the title essay of The Will To Believe (Longmans, Green & Co.; New York, 1937), p. 17: "Our great difference from the scholastic lies in the way we face. The strength of his system lies in the principles, the origin, the terminus a quo of his thought; for us the strength is in the outcome, the upshot, the terminus ad quem." It is not to be forgotten that James is here speaking of truth in general, which for him becomes the most curious mixture of speculative and practical truth with overtones of the good and bad hypotheses of science. That we are not here twisting him to our own devices can be seen in the preface to the work cited, p. xi.

2. In de Trinitate, q. 5, a. 2; In VI Ethic., lect. 1, n.1123.

3. IaIIae, q. 57, a. 5, ad 3.

4. IaIIae, q. 57, a. 3.

5. In VI Ethic., lect. 4, n. 1173; IaIIae, q. 57, a. 4.

6. IaIIae, q. 57, a. 4.

7. On the distinction between actio and factio, see In IX Metaph., lect. 2, nn. 1786-1788; In VI Ethic. lect. 3, n. 1151; IaIIae, q. 57, a. 4.

8. IaIIae, q. 57, a. 4.

9. Ibid.

10. Cajetan, In IamIIae, q. 57, a. 5, n. II.

11. Ibid.

12. IaIIae, q. 57, a. 6.

13. Cajetan, loc. cit., n. III.

14. See note 2 above.

15. Cajetan, In IamIIae, q. 57, a. 5, n. VII.

16. In II Ethic., lect. 2, n. 259.

17. IaIIae, q. 94, a. 4. Cajetan, in his commentary on the first article of this question, makes the mistake of stating that proper principles of moral science are per se nota just as the proper principles of a speculative science. That this is most certainly not the case can be seen in the article just cited.

18. Cf. Q. D. de Veritate, q. 16, a. 1; In, q. 78, a. 12; In II Sent., d. 24, q. 2, a. 3.

19. Cursus Philosophicus, (ed. Reiser), T. I, pp.276-277.

20. In VI Ethic., lect. 7, n. 1200.

21. In II Ethic., lect. 2, n. 256.

22. In VI Ethic., lect. 3, n. 1152.

23. In IamIIae, q. 57, a. 5, n. VIII.

24. In II Ethic., lect. 2, n. 259.

25. In IamIIae, q. 57, a. 5, n. VI.

26. In VI Ethic., lect. 2, n. 1131.

27. Cajetan, loc. cit., n. IX.

28. Cf. IIaIIae, q. 64, a. 7. "Morales autem actus recipiunt speciem secundum id quod intenditur, non autem ab eo quod est praeter intentionem, cum sit per accidens..." See as well, IIaIIae, q. 43, a. 3; IaIIae, q.72,a. 1; and especially IaIIae, q. 20, a. 5.

29. IIaIIae, q. 60, a. 4, ad 2.

30. See Henri Pichette, "Considerations sur quelques principes fondamentaux de la doctrine du spéculatif et du pratique"; Laval théologique et philosophique, Vol. I, No. I (1945), p. 70. This is a truth which Kierkegaard has expressed well in Crainte et Tremblement, pp. 98-99: "Quiconque possède un grain d'erectioris ingenii se garde du moins de devenir un mollusque froid et flasque; et quand il aborde les grandes choses, il ne perd jamais de vue que, depuis la création du monde, la coutume et l'usage a toujours été que le résultat vienne en dernier lieu et que, lorsqu'on veut vraiment tirer la leçon des nobles actions, il faut regarder au commencement. Si l'homme qui veut agir prétend se juger au résultat, il ne se mettra jamais à l'oeuvre. Si le résultat est capable de combler de joie le monde entier, le héros n'en sait rien; car il n'apprend le résultat qu'après l'accomplissement total; et ce n'est pas par là qu'il est devenu un héros; il le fut parce qu'il commença."

31. Eduard Geismar, Lectures on the Religious Thought of Soren Kierkegaard, Augsburg Publishing House, (Minneapolis, 1938), pp. 49-50.

32. Crainte et Tremblement, traduction française P.H. Tisseau, Editions Montaigne, (Paris, sans date), p. 81.

33. Ibid., p. 84.

34. Ibid., pp. 82-106.

35. Ibid., p. 88.

36. Ibid., p. 91.

37. Ibid., p. 92.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p. 93.

41. Ibid., p. 97.

42. Ibid., p. 105.

45. Ibid., p. 107.

46. Ibid., p. 191.

47. In II Sent., d. 47, q. 1, a. 4.

48. Ibid.

49. For this reference, see note (47) above. The reference in (47) should have read, In II Sent., d. 21, q. 1, a. 1.

50. IaIIae, q. 98, a. 5.

51. See IIaIIae, q. 104, a. 5, ad 2; and In I Sent., d. 47, q. 1, a. 4.

52. In I Sent., d. 47, q. 1, a. 4.

53. IaIIae, q. 100, a. 8.

54. Ibid., ad 2.

55. Cajetan, In IaeIIae, q. 100, a. 8, n. II.

56. IaIIae, q. 100, a. 8, ad 3. See Q. D. de Malo, q. 2, a. 4, ad 13.

57. IIaIIae, q. 64, a. 6, ad 1.

58. Cajetan, In IaeIIae, q. 100, a. 8, n. II.

59. Kierkegaard and the Truth, doctoral dissertation, Yale University (1945), pp. 121-123.

Chapter Four

1. Super VII Evangelii Ioannis, lect. 2, (edit. Cai), n.1031.

2. The Point of View, translated by Walter Lowrie, Oxford University Press (London, 1950), p. 131.

3. Ibid., p. 21.

4. Postscript, p. 223.

5. Ibid., p. 217.

6. The Concept of Dread, translated by Walter Lowrie, Princeton University Press, (Princeton, 1946), p. 19.

7. Postscript, p. 72.

8. Ibid., p. 68.

9. Ibid., p. 69.

10. Ibid., p. 73.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., "First and Last Declaration", appended without pagination.

13. The Point of View, p. 22.

14. Ibid., p. 25.

15. Ibid., p. 41.

16. Ibid., pp. 25-26.

17. Ibid., p. 356

18. Ibid., p. 38.

19. Ibid., pp. 39-40.

20. Ibid., p. 40.

21. Ibid., p. 29.

22. Ibid.

23. Journals, n. 1000.

24. Training in Christianity, translated by Walter Lowrie, Oxford University Press (London,1941), p. 132.

25. Postscript, p. 137.

26. David F. Swenson, Something About Kierkegaard, Augsburg Publishing House, (Minneapolis,1941), p. 117.

27. Either/Or, translated by David F. and Lillian M. Swenson, Princeton University Press, Vol. I, preface.

28. e.g. Paul L. Holmer,"Kierkegaard and Ethics, " inETHICS, Vol. LXIII, No. 3, Part I, (April 1953), pp. 157-170.

29. Something About Kierkegaard, p. 115.

30. Q. D. de Virtutibus in Communi, a. 6, ad 1.

31. Q. D. de Veritate, q. 11, a. 1.

32. Ibid., ad 6, ad 9, ad 13, ad 14, ad 17.

33. Note that the discussion of the teaching process is based on that which is science per prius, and the De Magistro of St. Thomas does not mean to imply that every science can be taught in the same way. Just as Mathematics seems to save the per prius of "demonstration" and "science" most perfectly, so too Doctrina refers first

to mathematics, and will be saved to varying degrees in the other sciences. On this, see In de Trinitate, q. 6, a. 1, solutio 2.

34. In III de Anima, lect. 16, (edit. Pirrota), nn. 845-846.

35. Q. D. de Malo, q. 3, a. 6, c.

36. IaIIae, q. 1, a. 7.

37. In de Trinitate, proemium.

38. We follow Q. D. de Veritate, q. 24, a. 8.

39. Q. D. de Veritate, q. 24, a. 7.

40. Ibid., ad 6.

41. Q. D. de Veritate, q. 24, a. 8.

42. In III Ethic., lect. 13.

43. IaIIae, q. 77, a. 2, ad 1.

44. See Cajetan In IaeIIae, q. 57, a. 5, n. VIII.

45. Q. D. de Malo, q. 6a.

46. Postscript, p. 155.

47. Charles DeKoninck, The Nature of Man and his Historical Being, p. 277.

48. Q. D. de Veritate, q. 22, a. 9. What follows depends largely on this article.

49. Super XIII Evangelii Ioannis, lect. 1, n. 1742; see also Q.D. de Veritate, q. 17, a. 3, ad 2.

50. Super Ioannem, loc. cit.

51. In I Post. Analyt., lect. 1, n. 6.

52. De Praedicabilibus, (édition de l'Université Laval), p. 21b.

53. In I ad Timotheum, lect. 2.

54. Q.D. de Veritate, q. 25, a. 4.

55. IaIIae, q. 57, a. 5, ad 2.

56. IIaIIae, q. 51, a. 2, ad 3.

57. Which will be seen to be synonymous with passions.

58. "Kierkegaard and Ethical Theory," p. 163.

PART TWO

Chapter One

1. In III Metaph., lect. 2, (edit. Cathala), n. 468.

1a. Stages on Life's Way, translated by Walter Lowrie, Princeton University Press, (Princeton, 1945), p. 430.

2. In the Stages, Repetition, Fear and Trembling, and the Postscript.

3. The Point of View, pp. 74-75.

4. Postscript, p. 226.

5. Either/Or opens with a series of diapsalmata, the writings of a young man, which are meant to convey to us the fluctuation of moods, the rapid alteration from ecstatic happiness to deepest melancholy, which characterizes the aesthetic life. It can also be taken as a delightful sketch of the adolescent mentality.

6. Either/Or, Vol. I, p. 45.

7. Ibid., pp. 48-49.

8. Ibid., p. 49.

9. Ibid., p. 71.

10. Ibid., p. 69.

11. Ibid., p. 71.

12. Ibid., p. 253.

13. The Point of View, p. 75.

14. Postscript, p. 288.

15. Journals, n. 861.

16. Either/Or, Vol. I, p. 31.

17. Postscript, p. 270.

18. Ibid., p. 348.

19. Ibid., p. 286.

20. Stages on Life's Way, p. 414.

21. Either/Or, Vol. II, p. 152.

22. Ibid., p. 159.

23. A word used in a not dissimilar sense by José Ortega y Gasset in The Revolt of the Masses, New American Library, (New York, 1950), p. 75.

24. Either/Or, Vol. II, p. 133.

25. Ibid., p. 137.

26. Ibid., pp. 142-143.

27. Ibid., p. 143.

28. Ibid., p. 177.

29. Ibid., p. 179.

30. Ibid., p. 182.

31. Ibid., p. 202.

32. Ibid., p. 270.

33. Stages on Life's Way, p. 430.

34. IaIIae, q. 24, a. 1.

35. IaIIae, q. 22.

36. In III De Anima, lect. 15, n. 829.

37. Q.D. de Veritate, q. 26, a. 7.

38. Q.D. de Malo, q. 3, a. 11.

39. Q.D. de Veritate, q. 26, a. 6.

40. IIaIIae, q. 55, a. 1.

41. IaIIae, q. 30, a. 3.

42. Ibid., a. 4.

43. Ia, q. 75, a. 6.

44. In VII Metaph., lect. 6, n. 1405; IaIIae, q. 35, a. 5.

45. Q.D. de Veritate, q. 26, a. 3, ad 8.

46. IaIIae, q. 64, a. 3, ad 3.

47. Poetica, 1448b9.

48. See Oscar Wilde, Intentions, Methuen (London), pp.167-8.

49. Q.D. de Malo, q. 11, a. 1.

50. Q. D. de Veritate, q. un., a. 6, ad 8.

Chapter Two

1. Summa Contra Gentiles, I, cap. 6.
2. Postscript, p. 234.
3. Ibid.
4. Repetition, translated by Walter Lowrie, Princeton University Press, (Princeton, 1946), pp. 114-115.
5. Ibid., p. 131.
6. Ibid., p. 133.
7. Stages on Life's Way, pp. 376-377.
8. Ibid., p. 408.
9. Ibid., p. 400.
10. Subtitle.
11. The Concept of Dread, p. 21; Postscript, p. 241.
12. The Concept of Dread, p. 15.
13. Ibid., p. 19.
14. Journals, n. 967.
15. Ibid., n. 402.
16. The Concept of Dread, p. 43.
17. Ibid., p. 98.
18. Ibid., p. 39.
19. Ibid., p. 38, p. 82.
20. Ibid., p. 142.
21. Ibid., p. 104.
22. See IIaIIae, q. 152, a. 2, ad 1; Contra Gentiles, III, 136.
23. IaIIae, q. 43, a. 1, ad 1.
24. The Concept of Dread, p. 104.
25. Ibid., p. 96.
26. IIaIIae, q. 19, a. 12.

Chapter Three

1. De Unitate Intellectus, (edit. Keeler), cap. V, p. 79.
2. Postscript, p. 14.
2. Ibid., p. 347.
3. Ibid., pp. 347-385.
4. Ibid., p. 359.
5. Ibid., p. 380.
6. Ibid., p. 365.
7. Ibid., p. 367.
8. Ibid., p. 366.
9. Ibid., pp. 386-468.
10. Ibid., 386.
11. Ibid., p. 396.
12. Ibid., p. 397.
13. Ibid., p. 404.
14. Ibid., p. 410.
15. Ibid., pp. 468-493.
16. Ibid., p. 470.
17. Ibid., p. 471.
18. Ibid., p. 474.
19. Ibid., pp. 475-476.
20. Ibid., p. 479.
21. Ibid., p. 480, note.
22. Ibid., p. 494.
23. Ibid., p. 497.
24. Ibid., p. 495.
25. Ibid., p. 496.
26. Ibid., p. 387, note.
27. Philosophical Fragments, p. 31.

28. Ibid., pp. 31-32.

29. Ibid., p. 32, note.

30. Ibid., p. 34.

31. Ibid., p. 33.

32. Postscript, p. 197.

33. Quoted in Ueberweg, History of Philosophy, Vol. I, Scribners, (New York, 1887), p. 304.

34. Stages on Life's Way, p. 398.

35. Postscript, p. 505.

36. Journals, nn. 513-514.

37. Training in Christianity, pp. 83-85.

38. Summa Contra Gentiles, III, cap. 38.

39. Ibid., I, cap. 11.

40. Ibid., cap. 12.

40a. Reidar Thomte, Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Religion, Princeton University Press, (Princeton,1949), p.111, p.152.

40b. Something About Kierkegaard, p. 56, pp. 156. Swenson does say, however, apropos of the act of faith which Kierkegaard says is necessary in any proof, that this "belief" is what logicians commonly call judgment. Although this does not absolve Kierkegaard of the confusion he is guilty of, Swenson's remark is enlightening. Cf. Q. D. de Veritate, q. 14, a. 1, c. "Unde etiam et apud Arabes prima operatio intellectus vocatur imaginatio, secunda autem vocatur fides..."

41. In de Trinitate, q. 6, a. 3.

42. Ibid.

43. In I De Anima, lect. 1, n. 4.

43a. In de Trin., q. 6, a. 3.

44. Fragments, p. 32.

44a. This paragraph follows sedulously Q. D. de Veritate, q. 14, a. 1. See also, In I Post Analyt., lect. 1, nn. 5-6.

45. IIaIIae, q. 2, a. 1.

46. Q.D. de Veritate, q. 14, a. 1.

47. II Corinth., X:5.

47a. "Inde est quod in credente potest insurgere motus de contrario huius quod firmissime tenet, quamvis non in intelligente vel sciente." Q.D. de Ver., q. 14, a. 1.

48. In XI ad Hebraeos, lect. 1; Q.D. de Veritate, q. 14, a. 1, ad 5; IIallae, q. 2, a. 1.

49. "Ad septimum dicendum quod certitudo duo potest importare: scilicet firmitatem adhaesionis; et quantum ad hoc fides est certior omni intellect et scientia, quia prima veritas, quae causat fidei assensum, est fortior causa quam lumen rationis, quod causat assensum intellectus vel scientiae. Importat etiam evidentiam eius cui assentitur; et sic fides non habet certitudinem, sed scientia et intellectus: et exinde est quod intellectus cogitationem non habet. - Q.D. de Ver., q. 14, a. 1, ad.7.

50. IIaIIae, q. 1, a. 1.

51. "Actus autem proprius fidei, etsi sit in ordine ad voluntatem, ut dictum est, tamen est in intellectu sicut in subjecto, quia objectum eius est verum, quod proprie pertinet ad intellectum." - In XI ad Hebraeos, lect. 1.

52. Contra Gentiles, I, cap. 7. However, as can be seen in note (49) above, faith is more certain than the first principles. But once again this certitude is with regard to adhesion and not to evidence. "Ea autem quae sunt fidei, licet in se sunt verissima, non tamen ex propriis rationibus terminorum eorum nobis veritas apparet, sed tantum in communi iudicantur vera esse eo quod divinitus sunt revelata..." Sylvester of Ferrara, In I Contra Gentiles, cap. 7, n. I.

53. Contra Gentiles, I, cap. 8.

54. Ibid.

55. Journals, n. 1033.

56. Ibid., n. 1084.

57. Ibid.

58. In I Corinth., cap. 1, lectio, 1.

PART THREE

Chapter One

1. IIaIIae, q. 3, a. 2.

2. Postscript, p. 289.

3. Training in Christianity, p. 209.

4. Ibid., pp. 90-91.

5. Journals, n. 1226.

6. Soeren Kierkegaard, Diario, I, a cura di Cornelio Fabro, Morcelliana-Brescia-1948, p. 446.

7. Journals (Dru), n. 809.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., n. 811.

10. The Works of Love, translated by David F. and Lilian M. Swenson, Princeton University Press, (Princeton,1946),p.9.

11. Ibid., p. 11.

12. Ibid., p. 12.

13. Training in Christianity, p. 133.

14. Ibid., p. 134.

15. Ibid., p. 140 et seq.

Chapter Two

1. Journals, n. 1321.

2. Ibid., n. 518.

3. Ibid., n. 1385; see as well, Postscript, pp. 160-161.

4. Attack Upon Christendom, edited and translated by Walter Lowrie, Princeton University Press, (Princeton,1944), pp. 219-220.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 7.

7. Postscript, p. 302.

8. IaIIae, q. 18, a. 6.

9. Ibid., a. 10.

10. Ibid., ad 3.

11. Ia IIae, q. 20, a. 1.

12. Ibid., a . 2.

13. Ibid., a. 3.

14. Ia IIae, q. 19, a. 6, ad 1.

15. Ia IIae, q. 20, a. 4.

16. Ia IIae, q. 20, a. 5.

17. In X Ethic., lect. 12, n. 2119.

18. Q.D. de Malo, q. 11, a. 1.

19. IIa IIae, q. 35, a. 1.

20. IIa IIae, q. 35, a. 3, ad 3.

21. IIa IIae, q. 35, a. 1, ad 1.

22. IIa IIae, q. 20, a. 4.

23. IIa IIae, q. 20, a. 4, ad 2.

24. In Ephesios, cap. 4, lect. 6.

25. Ia IIae, q. 25, a. 3, ad 2.

26. Ia IIae, q. 41, a. 3.

27. In III Ethic., lect. 21, n. 630.

28. See IIa IIae, q. 152, a. 2, ad 2; In II Ethic., lect. 2, n. 263.

29. John of St. Thomas, Cursus Theologicus, edit. Solesmes, T. I, p. 395. See too Q.D. de Ver., q. 2, a. 8, c.

30. Ia IIae, q. 57, a. 5.

31. In VI Ethic., lect. 6, n. 1186.

32. In I De Anima, lect. 1, nn. 3-6.

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