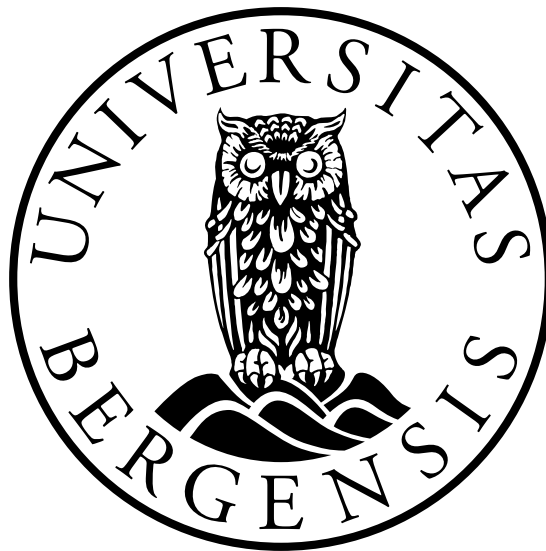


Corporeality, Consciousness and Religion

A Study in Søren Kierkegaard's Anthropology

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	II
Preface	V
INTRODUCTION	1
1. <i>Perspective and Main Thesis</i>	1
A. Existential Philosophy and Subjectivity	3
B. Eclectic Versions of Kierkegaard's Anthropology: Isolated Subjectivity	6
2. <i>Interpretive Approach Anthropology as Basic Element in Kierkegaard's Thought</i>	11
A. Anthropology and the Interpretation of Christianity	11
B. Anthropology and the Interpretation of Existence	16
C. Anthropology, Psychology and Dialectic of Existence	25
D. General Problems of Method	39
I. ANTHROPOLOGICAL STRUCTURE: EXISTENCE AND CONSCIOUSNESS	44
1. <i>Reality and Consciousness in German Idealism</i>	44
A. Introduction: Kierkegaard and German Idealism	44
B. Kant	51
C. Fichte	59
D. Schelling	67
E. Hegel	72
2. <i>Kierkegaard's Fundamental Anthropological Conception: "Existence" as Transformation of the Idealist Concept of Spirit</i>	83
A. Immanent Difference and Synthesis	83
B. Synthesis, Ontological Dualism and Will	88
C. Subjectivity: Self-Acceptance or Self-Creation	96
3. <i>Anthropological Knowledge</i>	105
A. Skepticism, Abstraction and Concept	105
B. Concept and Empathy	113
II. CORPOREALITY	120
1. <i>The Concept of Corporeality</i>	120
A. Corporeality, Sexuality and Self-Determination	120
B. Phenomenological Reduction to Corporeality	124
2. <i>The Unity of Corporeality and Consciousness</i>	133
A. Sensuous Transcendence	133
B. Sensuality and Consciousness. Passion, Papageno and Don Juan	139
C. Genesis, Continuity and Change	147

IV

III. CONSCIOUSNESS	153
1. <i>The Structure of Consciousness</i>	153
A. Consciousness as an Act of Grounding the Self	153
B. The Genesis of Consciousness in the Difference between Subject and Object	158
C. Consciousness and Reconquering the Original Unity of Life	165
2. <i>The Ontological Status of Consciousness</i>	169
A. The Problem of Categories	169
B. Being, Essence and Actuality	172
IV. SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS	188
1. <i>Reflective-Aesthetic Self-Consciousness</i>	189
A. Determination and Emancipation	190
B. Cordelia's History of Emancipation	194
2. <i>Moral Self-Consciousness. Adam</i>	202
A. The Typological Significance of the Adam-figure	202
B. Anxiety and Language	203
C. Determination and Freedom	212
D. The Historicity of Determination	215
E. Disintegration and Synthesis	220
F. Freedom	229
G. Historicity	232
V. CONSCIOUSNESS AND RELIGION	237
1. <i>The Aesthetic-Reflective Project of Integration</i>	237
A. Reflection as an Element of Self-Constitution	237
B. Reflective Self-Construction and Existential Dichotomy	243
2. <i>The Process of Integration in Ethical-Religious Subjectivity</i>	259
A. Volitional-Teleological Integration	260
B. The consolidation and the crisis of integration in the religious consciousness	272
3. <i>Conclusion</i>	276
The experience of finitude and mediation	276
NOTES	281
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	293
<i>Sources</i>	293
<i>Books and articles</i>	293
INDEX	299

PREFACE

On the basis of certain necessary criteria for the use of research resources, the need for large-scale Kierkegaard-studies may perhaps seem to have outlived itself. The fact that there are still many people continuing to draw upon the resources in this way, producing “scholastic” or more “popular” essays on Kierkegaard and his thought, is scarcely sufficient justification for another such project. It is too easy to account for this merely by saying that, with his complexity and ambiguity, Kierkegaard represents a sort of inexhaustible “existential” or historical “source”.

In any case, the present study of Kierkegaard is not undergirded by any such “justification of last resort”. It goes without saying that the work at hand claims to be based on several new perceptions: such a claim is a necessary precondition if the work is to be a meaningful research project. This study does not, however, so much seek to clarify new and, more or less, peripheral, “facets” of Kierkegaard, as to shed new light upon Kierkegaard’s thought as a whole. This means that its “object” is not only Kierkegaard, but also existing interpretations of Kierkegaard. At the same time, a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the entire corpus of Kierkegaard-research is out of the question. It would be impractical to carry out such a project in tandem with an analysis of the original texts; and it is Kierkegaard’s texts that deserve priority, for they are the necessary basis for joining the chorus of interpreters at all.

The interpretations with which I am here primarily concerned are therefore the comprehensive interpretations, that is, those attempting to delineate Kierkegaard’s contours and his specific character as a thinker. It is my assumption that the last word has not been spoken in this connection, even though much has been said which is both telling and profound.

The more-or-less accidental paths, which have led me to this “discovery” – or even towards my interest in Kierkegaard at all – are of no importance here. The only thing of general significance to the matter is this; that interest in Kierkegaard’s thought as a whole is not something “objective”, but something “subjective”. This means that Kierkegaard is to be viewed as philosophical *subject*; his thought has relevance for the present-day discussion of philosophical problems, and this relevance is not independent of Kierkegaard’s historical context and situatedness, but is conditioned by it. Within the schematic framework of the history of philosophy, Kierkegaard represents what can be called “the crisis of idealism”, and to a great extent, this crisis is still an ongoing one.

It is this crisis – that is, the experience of the boundaries of thought itself – which is a sort of lowest common denominator of what is called existential philosophy, of which Kierkegaard, with good reason, has been seen as an important founder. Thus, the study of Kierkegaard is a natural part of the study of this problem-complex, e.g., in the form of

questions concerning the relationship between “theory” and “practice”, “knowledge” and “faith”, etc.

The following interpretation takes as its starting point the fact that Kierkegaard represents a unique and “original” form of this “crisis”. He stands in immediate connection with the “classical” version of idealism, from which he simultaneously distances himself in a decisive way. It is the thesis of this interpretation that not only the break with idealism, but also the positive connections with it are part of the same whole, and that both must be accounted for and clarified in order to come to a proper understanding of Kierkegaard’s thought as a whole.

More specifically, the thesis runs as follows: Kierkegaard’s break with the idealist ideal of a unity between reality and rationality still involves a “formal” acceptance of that ideal as a “mediating ideal”. Kierkegaard’s analysis of existence, as expressed in his presentation of the “stages” of human life, can be seen as an attempt to think through the question of the unity of reality in a situation in which the idealist idea of unity has been overtaken by “post-idealist” skepticism.

In this sense, his philosophical goal is analogous to Kant’s: to work out a “sanitized metaphysics” on the basis of a critique of rationality, that is, a demonstration of the “boundaries” of competence for reason. This does not mean that Kierkegaard’s thinking constitutes a philosophical system. It is too much an attack on “the System” for that to be the case. At the same time, this delimitation is certainly quite systematic. To put it simply: Kierkegaard’s thought places limits on “the System” by means of a “reduction” to the person’s “self-experience”. This introduces a fundamental restriction on the territory of this self-experience in comparison to Hegel’s systematic idea: the concept of the Absolute as a “self” or subject.

It is this reduction of the absolute self to the human self, which is Kierkegaard’s “system-idea”. Defining Kierkegaard’s thought as “anthropology” is one way of expressing this.

The main thesis of the following interpretation is thus that Kierkegaard’s analysis of existence, or his “doctrine of stages”, constitutes an “idealistic” anthropology, that is, a presentation of the conditions of human life, which accentuates “unity” and “totality”. A chief aspect of this ideal integration is the constellation of biological autonomy and intentional transcendence. This “ontological heterogeneity” is a fundamental precondition defining “the self” or self-definition as a synthetic activity.

It is the difference present here, and the “problem of priorities” accompanying it, which make a historical reality of human existence. The various “stages” or possibilities of self-understanding are different modes of dealing with this heterogeneity. The consciously aesthetic form of existence tries to find equilibrium between “experience” and “reflection”. In view of the collapse of the aesthetic project of existence, ending in melancholia, the ethical and the religious “stages” tend fundamentally toward a common goal. Here, unity must be

VII

created by a development of the intentional pole, making possible “control” of the biological and the historically determinate components.

Kierkegaard’s prescription for overcoming the “crisis of idealism” clearly has an “idealistic” foundation, reflecting the fact that the prescription is related to the crisis. After a time, Kierkegaard finds his existential therapy perhaps rather “idealistic”, in the sense that it overlooks the mechanisms of compensation and neutralization implicit in the crisis-condition; this is part of the background possibly able to account for his later, more one-sided, focus on “deepening” the crisis in his attack on the Danish Church.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Perspective and Main Thesis

Even today, much of contemporary Kierkegaard-research tends to describe the Danish thinker as primarily an opponent to and, eventually, the defeater of the idealistic concept of subjectivity, in favor of language and communication, thereby also contributing to modern man's liberation from the detached self-sufficiency (solipsism) of the scientific construction of the world. Contrary to such a view, the present analysis endeavors to demonstrate the deep embedment of his thinking, language and categories belonging to the world of idealism and the Enlightenment. This cultural context is often too easily construed as merely the outward vehicle of a new mode of existentialist thinking, one supposedly rejecting radical self-reflection in favor of faith's awareness of transcendent being.

Undoubtedly, Søren Kierkegaard [SK] categorically opposes Hegel's view of Christianity, insofar as Hegel defines Christ as the myth of God's immanent history within human self-understanding. Kierkegaard's allegedly opposed understanding of the relationship between God and the world, stressing orthodox divine transcendence, is, however, shaped by the very same cultural-religious situation also shaping Hegel's view. Both partake in the same primordial discourse about modernity, self and religion, originally initiated by the Enlightenment period's basic criticism of supernatural religious traditions and attitudes. Nevertheless, religion becomes the strategic *locus* of such a reinterpretation, by its transformation into a new category of metaphysical self-awareness, thus making the subject and self-understanding the basis of any philosophically defensible talk of God in modernity.

This is also basically Kierkegaard's position, although he pointedly defies Hegel's specific approach of identifying revelation of God with cultural progress. What Kant had done was to locate religion within universal reason, thus defining historical religion as merely contingent illustration or myth. Hegel opposes such Kantian formalism, himself conceiving historical or biblical Christianity as an essential part of universal reason's process of becoming aware of itself – as determined by the absolute or God. Philosophy and theology are thus converging here, something seen by Hegel as the summit of Enlightenment's cultural ambitions. It is, in our view, at this point that Kierkegaard enters idealist discourse about modernity and its ontology of basic self-awareness, by redefining the scope of idealist self-awareness, and thereby also that of religion.

As emphasized by communication-oriented research, the Kierkegaard's stages are not levels of consciousness of the absolute, supposedly mirroring God's self-awareness. They are, rather, shaped by finite human existence, one striving for identity through successive interpretations of the self in terms of life-views or normative presuppositions. This is aimed at by reflecting on the infinite opportunities of perceptual life (the aesthetical mode), by creating one's own ethical system (the ethical mode), and finally, by man striving to establish

a self-grounding relationship to unconditioned reality, transcending the sphere of ethical self-grounding, in view of the inevitable gap between the imperative and psychological process.

Nevertheless, the approach determining Kierkegaard's philosophy of existence is itself part of a method of idealist self-grounding, originally conceptualized in Fichte's interpretation of Kant's transcendental ego, with his radical attributing to knowledge and reflection the inexplicable power of world creation. The almost simultaneous crisis of rational world construction, giving rise to the category of religion as expressing the ultimate nothingness of purely human design, is not due to the impact of new ideas, but to the internal amplification of idealist philosophy of the self. This is the same one anticipated by Kantian limits of pure reason and established by Fichte's and Schleiermacher's idea of the constructive self's ultimate dependence on absolute non-mundane power.

Contrary then to the current view, it is maintained that Kierkegaard's paradox, insisting on the primacy of God's creative act in any cultural ordering, is not purely a Christian innovation. True, in terms of personal history, it is determined by the traditional Biblical faith of his childhood Christianity. However, with regard to philosophy, his general epistemological layout stems from the same idealist conceptual framework he simultaneously opposes. The complexity of the legacy of idealism is conspicuously exemplified by Kierkegaard's trip to Berlin in 1841 in order to listen to the anti-Hegelian Schelling, the pioneer of idealist ego-philosophy, now lecturing on the primacy of religious revelation.

In both respects, on a personal and on a philosophical level, a reevaluation of the Enlightenment-axiom of the autonomous self is explored by Kierkegaard, without rejecting, however, the basic idealist premise of any philosophy of existence; that truth is, indeed, subjectivity.

What follows is an attempt to interpret SK's thinking on the fundamental conditions of human life and the various forms it takes. The interpretation will be presented in such a manner that the thought of SK emerges as an anthropological whole. This systematization is based on the view that SK's existential philosophy develops by means of an inner transformation of the intellectual concepts of philosophical idealism, and that it is therefore best understood in light of idealistic patterns of thought and its peculiar systematics. If Schelling is "the one who perfects German Idealism, in that he radicalizes its fundamental problem, the mediation of the self, to the point of grasping the inconceivability of the pure act of positing" then SK's thinking is also "idealist". "The transparent simplicity in which the self, entering into a relationship to itself, establishes itself in the power that posited it" in Kierkegaard, corresponds to reason's "acceptance of its posited being" in Schelling.¹

The present analysis has a doubly negative tendency, one within Kierkegaard research proper, the other beyond it, that is, within the current debate on existential philosophy in the broader sense. In the first case it is a matter of coming to terms with what, in my view, is an untenable interpretation of the totality of SK's anthropology. This interpretation isolates and makes absolute what might suggestively be called the *diastatic* aspect of his concept of

subjectivity, the isolated and “self-sufficient” individual, displacing the equally original *synthetic* underlying theme, the collective and biological character of the individual.² In the second case, my criticism is rooted in an observation that the current debate often contains an unjustified combination of SK with positions in modern existential philosophy and theology, based on a general and unspecified notion of some intellectual-historical connection.

There seems to be a connection between these two tendencies. The latter of the two above-mentioned “receptions” accorded to SK concerns itself only with the diastatic or isolated subjectivity. This idea is then blithely advanced as the essence of the concept of subjectivity in existential philosophy in general. There is possibly also a historical connection here, inasmuch as the first-mentioned interpretation has contributed to a more general sort of misunderstanding.

A. Existential Philosophy and Subjectivity

Examples of this misunderstanding of SK’s anthropology which stems from combining him willy-nilly with more modern positions in existential philosophy and theology (in part due to a corresponding combination within these positions themselves) is to be found in certain forms of criticism of existential theology. The main objective of these positions is to express a fundamental disagreement with the entire point of view of existential theology. Representatives of this theologically-motivated general criticism include, for example, *Moltmann* and *Pannenberg*, both of whom are generally negative towards the implications for the understanding of reality drawn from an existential theology finding its “basis” in *Heidegger’s* existential analysis. Pannenberg speaks of an anthropological constriction of the understanding of reality, which he claims stems from the fact that “historicity” gains primacy over objective and contingent history.³ Moltmann thus polemicises against what he calls “The abstract subjectification of the human being”⁴, or *Bultmann’s* transformation of “transcendental subjectivity” into a “Weltanschauung” taking its basis in SK’s concept of “glaubiger Innerlichkeit”.⁵

Without taking a stand on the philosophical and theological implications of this critique, it can in a general sense be seen as accurate with respect to certain tendencies basic to the existential philosophy on which Bultmann builds his existential theology, and thus also indirectly appropriate as a criticism of Heidegger’s existential analysis. At the same time, it is not the case that the criticism is necessarily valid for every “existential-philosophical” concept of human subjectivity. Such a concept need not necessarily represent what one, using Pannenberg’s principal category of criticism, could call an anthropological “constriction” of reality. To explain the reasons for this, that which critics characterize as an “isolated” subjectivity must be examined in more detail.

Clearest on this point is Moltmann, who, on the basis of his Marxist-inspired understanding of reality and history, distances himself most sharply from the idea of a primacy of subjectivity.⁶ In opposition to Bultmann’s concept of “self-understanding”, for

example, Moltmann maintains that: “Only in expropriation into the world does the human person experience himself. Without self-objectification, no self-experience is possible. Human self-understanding is always mediated societally, materially and historically”.⁷ This statement points, without clarification, to an anthropologically relevant basic tendency in existential analysis, namely what could be called the identification of reality with “understanding”.

Bultmann’s concept of existence gives an idea of what this line of thought implies. His main anthropological point is that human reality transcends the subject-object dichotomy, and that it is fundamentally a “non-objectification-able” or “pure” subjectivity. “If I relate myself – looking backward or looking forward – to my own self, then I have, as it were, split my ego; and the ego relating to its own self is my existential ego; the other ego, to which I relate, and which I take as that which is given, is a phantom without any existential reality”.⁸ Furthermore, it is clear that “this is why the distinction between subject and object must be wholly removed from the question of our existence”.⁹ In place of an understanding within the subject-object dichotomy, Bultmann proposes that type of “empathy” with reality itself which he, following Heidegger, calls “openness to one’s existence”,¹⁰ openness to oneself as something “factual-historical”.

The existential ego looms into sight as a form of identity-consciousness similar to Fichte’s absolute or self-producing ego, but which, unlike Fichte’s ego, does not work itself out inside the subject-object dichotomy and synthesis. It appears – in the form of an existential imperative – as *a negation of the entire idealist idea of self-grounding*.

It might give a hint of the sense in which this concept is in contradiction with the proper scope of anthropology when we bear in mind that Heidegger’s existential analysis is determined by “the demarcation [...] against anthropology, psychology and biology”.¹¹ The main reason for Heidegger’s defining and delimiting is the fact that his analysis is meant to be a heuristic and methodical project only in relation to the question of the meaning of “Being”; the goal is an “opening-up of the basic horizon for an interpretation of Being”.¹² This explicitly defined perspective upon human reality (Dasein) means that the analysis “does not aim at a thematically complete ontology of existence, and less still at a concrete anthropology”.¹³ When existential ontology is used as the “anthropological” basis for a theory of authentic personality, as is the case in Bultmann’s concept of self-actualization through concrete personal choice, this must further find expression in a corresponding delimiting of the ontological perspective: “Existence is in each case an event in the decisions of the moment. It is not something already in existence, but something that happens in each specific case [...] the decision consists in grasping the situation, the moment, in which a demand is made of me in my existence, as a person”.¹⁴

The basic tendency of this delimiting interpretation was expressed strikingly by *Løgstrup*, by his characterization of existential analysis as “a regional ontology of historicity”. As opposed to Heidegger, he claims: “Human existence is not only historical being; it is also the use of the senses, and this sensation can only be defined in its difference from, and

opposition to, historical being”.¹⁵ In what sense and to what extent historicity and sensation stand in a simple relation of opposition to one another is a problem in its own right, but in any case, neglect of the corporeal-biological dimension is a chief feature of the program of existential analysis. Heidegger himself says this when rejecting the phenomenon: “*corporeality* [...] contains a problem-field of its own which will not be discussed here”.¹⁶

What is decisive is the fact that the abstraction from corporeality here is not a pragmatic delimitation, but the consequence of a systematic intention. Put simply, the idea is that corporeality is to be defined as a “function” of human existence, as a “constitution of understanding”. Corporeality is not viewed as an autonomous reality in relation to “understanding”, as something the latter must relate itself to as an absolutely “foreign” reality, not to be subsumed under understanding – that is, “the being-in-the-world in view of the openness of its ‘standpoint’ as the standpoint of an ability to be”.¹⁷ This becomes clear in the analysis of the “the phenomenon of reality”, for example. The senses’ “experience of resistance” does not work as an explanation, because that experience is conditioned by “self-understanding’s” openness to the world.¹⁸ This *anti-idealist* program is expressed pithily in the following formula: “However, it is not the ‘substance’ of the human person that is the spirit as a synthesis of body and soul, but his existence”.¹⁹

With this thesis Heidegger is clearly distancing himself from what he regards as the “vulgar ontological” tradition, which makes the subject-object dichotomy the basis for ontological analysis, instead of doing the reverse by first explaining this dichotomy. A decisive expression of this order of priority can be seen in phenomenon of time being understood within the framework of natural philosophy.²⁰ Heidegger reverses this relationship, and interprets the phenomenon of time in its character of an “original totality of Dasein’s constitution”,²¹ as the fundamental basis for the subject-object relation. “The ‘problem of transcendence’ cannot be reduced to a question of how the subject comes out to an object, where the totality of objects is identified with the world. One must instead ask: what makes it ontologically possible to objectify something existent that is encountered in the world? Derivation from the ecstatic-horizontally based transcendence of the world supplies the answer. [...] The derivation of being-in-the-world from the ecstatic-horizontal unity of temporality allows us to understand the existential-ontological possibility of this fundamental constitution of existence”.²²

As is well-known, the decisive significance of this penetration of the subject-object dichotomy first finds clear expression in the ontological interpretation for which existential analysis (fundamental ontology) only charts the horizon, and whose fundamental tendency may, following *Schulz*, be expressed as follows: “that it is no longer possible to go beyond principles, where the philosophy of subjectivity has brought itself to an end: The Being that appears here and now is no principle. It cannot be invalidated either as it exists on its own terms or in my subjectivity”.²³

This attack upon the philosophy of subjectivity and the idealist epistemological and grounding will²⁴ points out the tensions and disparities in Bultmann’s transferring of

Heidegger's thinking (in *Sein und Zeit*) onto the plane of existential philosophy. Bultmann fall perhaps victim to the "subjective-anthropological" misunderstanding, which was to some extent already in place in *Sein und Zeit*.²⁵ Furthermore, to the extent that Bultmann bases himself upon a Kantian schism between spirit and nature,²⁶ his concept of existence has the character of a purely ideological – *i.e.*, philosophically unfounded – rewriting of the idealist notion of the primacy of spirit.

On the other hand, it is possible to understand the internal consistency in Bultmann's thought in such a way that the Kantian element, namely the idea of grounding, and the anthropological perspective *i.e.*, are eliminated. This being the case when Christian faith is understood primarily as transcendental self-insight, a certainty that the world is created in "understanding" and that the world is thus something from which the Christian faith "liberates" one, as "self-understanding".²⁷

The main thesis of the present analysis of Kierkegaard's anthropology is that it differs markedly from the type of existential philosophy, which more or less serenely bases itself upon the conquering of the traditional subject-object schema. *The present study thus maintains that SK's anthropological thinking is determined by the principle of self-objectification, and that this structure in turn is an expression of the significance of corporeality as a constitutive factor.* To the extent that SK understands existence or the self-relationship in "understanding" as a synthesis of body and soul – *i.e.*, of natural determination and intentionality respectively – SK's thinking belongs to a horizon of understanding, which from Heidegger's fundamental-ontological standpoint appears "vulgar" or opaque to itself. My general concern is to show how this synthesis, as a unity of fact and imperative, unfolds through a process of successive forms of self-definition and corresponding forms of personal reality. Characteristically, it is this fundamental anthropological structure *Litt* finds neutralized in existential analysis: "the process whereby the spirit raises itself up by stage".²⁸ This would also imply that SK's thought coincides in general with an idealist way of thinking.

B. Eclectic Versions of Kierkegaard's Anthropology: Isolated Subjectivity

In consequence of what has been said above, the present interpretation is critical towards any understanding, which neglects or misunderstands the crucial principle of *synthetic self-constitution*, such that self-realization is understood primarily as the dissolution of a given corporeal-spiritual unity. Our point of departure may be taken from two influential interpretations, each of which, in its own way, may be said to represent this distortion. In this criticism, the present work also anticipates the general results of its principal analysis. Thus, the arguments for the points of view discussed below will not at all be complete in this section. One of the clearest expressions of the before mentioned position is Løgstrup's "committed" interpretation of SK. A sample of his interpretation, which also unquestionably expresses a founding premise for his large-scale "clash" with SK will be helpful. In his book

on Heidegger and Kierkegaard, Løgstrup presents SK's most central anthropological text on the structure of "the self" in the following way: "He differentiates the synthesis of finitude and infinity on the one hand, and the mental-bodily synthesis on the other, separating being oneself and consciousness. These are very different things: to be conscious of something is, in relation to consciousness, to relate to the relationship, whereas being oneself means that the relationship relates to its own self. In the latter case, the relationship is the positive third term – it bears its own self".²⁹

This distinction between relating oneself to a relation (supposedly the structure of consciousness) and a relation, which relates itself to itself (supposedly the logic of the ethical position) gives a completely slanted presentation of the thought of SK and Anti-Climacus. It is an arbitrary use of the concept of consciousness, separating that which must be held together. Subsuming consciousness under a "concept of mere cognition"³⁰ is an idea foreign to SK. On the contrary, consciousness is for SK potential-actual self-consciousness, and is thus also the constitutional basis for the ethical self-relationship (cf. IV B 1, p. 148). This is set forth with great clarity in *The Sickness Unto Death* when it is said that: "In general, consciousness – *i.e.*, self-consciousness – is what is decisive in relation to the self. The more consciousness, the more will; the more will [present], the more self" (15:87).

Thus, in accordance with its own structure, consciousness is "a relation which relates itself to itself" (15:73). It grasps the mental-corporeal synthesis, which, in its capacity as a "relation of interaction", is constitutive for its object. And in this sense it is a relation to a relation. However, this is only one aspect of it, for this comprehensive or objectifying relation is not a *creatio ex nihilo*, but it grows forth from an objective correlative. The mental-corporeal interaction is simultaneously both the object of consciousness and its ground. *Consciousness is constituted in the splitting up of the original synthesis, i.e., as a qualitative development of mental control.* Consciousness is the self-transcendence of the genetically primary relation, and is thus consciousness' relation to itself.

Against this background, Løgstrup's claim that the unity of finitude and infinitude – temporality and eternity, respectively – is a "new synthesis"³¹ with respect to the basic fact of consciousness is clearly a misunderstanding. The situation is rather reverse, for this unity, seen from one side, is identical with the basic mental-corporeal cooperation. This is the self-relation of consciousness in view of its own possibility. Anti-Climacus expresses this clearly in the following passage: "Man is a synthesis of infinitude and finitude, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short, a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two. Viewed thus, a person is still not yet a self" (15:73). This relation only becomes a "new" or "self"-constituting synthesis when its asymmetrical structure is realized. And only in this sense may the formula also designate the self-relation as Løgstrup has it, but only in a one-sided and misunderstood fashion. This ambiguity rests on the fact that this formula – unlike the formula for the self-relation using the terms mind and body – has two links, so that "the positive third" (15:73) only occurs as an implication in one of the links, the one that is designated as "infinitude", "the eternal", and "freedom". This is indicated, for example, in

Haufniensis' formula for the identity of self-determination and historicity: "The synthesis of the temporal and the eternal is not a second synthesis, but the expression of that first synthesis, as a consequence of which man is a synthesis of mind and body, borne by spirit" (6:176).

What tricks Løgstrup into this misunderstanding, and what at the same time is a correct point in his presentation, is that the structural identity of consciousness and the ethical self-relation is not the same as an ontic identity. Indeed, this is the same disproportion between possibility and actuality, which dealt with in *The Sickness Unto Death*, namely, the disproportion that constitutes "despair". Løgstrup may therefore be correct in saying that "this doubling of the ethical relationship is thus quite different from the reflective state of consciousness".³² The latter statement may indeed serve in the aesthetic existence as a formula for despair. But the difference should not be taken to mean that this form of existence is a relation to itself "as to something given", while the ethical existence means that "I (relate) to myself in my possibility".³³ On the contrary, what is essential in the ethical self-relationship is the fact that possibility and facticity are congruent. It is not only the Judge who makes this clear (cf. e.g. 3:236), but Anti-Climacus' theory of "the self" also does this, and with even greater precision.

Løgstrup's failure to grasp this causes him to see infinitude (and eternity) as an existential requirement in order to *detach* oneself from finitude. It is true enough that such negativity vis-à-vis facticity is part of the meaning of infinitude, because the synthesis of self-determination presupposes the development of the inherent existential dualism – which Anti-Climacus categorically defines as a "break with the whole of immediacy" (15:111). However, this is a preliminary form of infinitude and does not exhaust its possibilities. If infinitude fixates itself at this preliminary and negative stage, it indeed becomes a form of despair, namely "a fantasized existence in abstract infinitization or in abstract isolation" (15:90).

A principal consequence of Løgstrup's untenable schism between consciousness and the ethical self-relation is thus his isolation of a negative and diastatic significance of the concept of infinitude; his analysis finishes with the erroneous assertion that – and this is, in sum, the content of his "clash" with SK – "the infinite demand in Kierkegaard does not have a specific content in relation to that which the human person fails, and before which he recognizes that he is nothing; it means, on the contrary, that the human person in a purely abstract way, should recognize himself to be nothing".³⁴ Not only is SK's anthropology misunderstood in this interpretation, but there is also a confusion of anthropological structure and ontic content (in this case the concept of religion) which undoubtedly also distorts this latter central aspect of his thought.

Anz' version of SK's concept of subjectivity is also built upon a definite interpretation of the category of infinitude. His presentation of ethical-religious subjectivity is similar to Løgstrup's in that it also isolates self-determination from the mental-corporeal whole. The difference is that, formally, Anz correctly understands the dimension of infinitude as

constitutive element in consciousness, insofar as SK's concept of self-actualization is presented as a critical re-working of the Cartesian tradition of philosophical-reflexive self-grounding. SK endues "earnestness" to "the Cartesian retreat into absolute self-consciousness".³⁵ According to Anz, the main ontological consequence of this starting-point in the reflective "constitution of one's own self"³⁶ is that: "Truth exists only in and through human self-consciousness; being is mediated only through consciousness".³⁷

The weakness of Anz' interpretation is not result of his assigning of SK's thinking to the rationalist notion of justification or grounding (*i.e.*, the primacy of subjectivity in approaching reality), but is due, rather, to a particular exposition of this notion. *Fahrenbach* unquestionably touches upon this point when asserting that his own interpretation is determined by "Heidegger's interpretation and calling into question of Western metaphysics (especially that of the modern period) as a metaphysics of subjectivity".³⁸ Against this background, SK's position seems to be a radicalization of the idea of subjectivity. The self-grounding of the subject becomes its self-negation, in the sense that in the face of resistance from the objective correlative of this grounding – *i.e.*, the world or cultural context – the subject gives up and is cast back upon itself as "pure" subjectivity. "He has no possibility of identifying himself with the experienced unity of nature, with the infinite riches of the soul, with the fullness of the heart, with the powers of the objective spirit".³⁹ The omnipotence of subjectivity narrows itself into an introverted power over the self, because the object of its grounding is absorbed into the subject of grounding. The reality of subjectivity, and thereby reality in general, is concentrated in a kind of emotional-eschatological individuality. The fact that Anz here lumps SK together with Bultmann is symptomatic of his view, defining the position as "removal from the world [Entweltlichung]". "When the absolute subjectivity is removed from the world, this not only detaches it from 'contingent finitude', but at the same time also prevents it from seeing the truth that establishes and orders the *world*".⁴⁰

This understanding of SK is wrong because, like Løgstrup, it attributes to SK a schism between consciousness and self-consciousness, which actually abolishes the anthropological logic of his thought. The unity of life is not lost in self-reflection in such a way that it must be "compensated for" in existential inwardness. The unity of life is the purpose which above all gives this subjectivity its meaning, precisely against the background of lost immediacy. If the dominance of subjectivity leads to the "annihilation of the contrary element"⁴¹, implying that "every mode of humanity in keeping with nature [...] loses its meaning"⁴², "that the human nature departs from this nature (corporeality, including the psychological states, to the extent that these have a bodily basis)"⁴³, we cannot speak of a "breakdown", but of an anthropological contradiction in terms.

The case this work makes against Anz' interpretation was adumbrated in the criticism of Løgstrup, but may best be found in the following exposition of SK's anthropology, where, as mentioned, an attempt will be made to disprove the notion that SK agitates for a diastatic or "objectless" subjectivity in a manner similar to Bultmann's concept of "existence" as "monistic self-understanding". Both in his anthropology and his interpretation of

Christianity, emphasizing “the individual”, the paradox, and suffering, SK’s fundamental premises are essentially different from Bultmann’s. What is denied is not the idea of social integration as such, but the notion that the unity of life can be attained through cultural synthesis. Furthermore, in this constellation of anthropology and interpretation of Christianity, one must allow the “context” and the “principle” to illuminate one another mutually. This form of “critical” understanding must precede any critique expressed in the “clash”, which will otherwise easily degenerate into an eclectic and arbitrary “self-interpretation”.

One example of this somewhat context-blind approach is Anz’ presentation of Haufniensis’ therapeutic formula for the “demonic” or split personality (“But precisely for that reason, truth is a work of freedom, so that it constantly brings forth the truth” [6:220]) as a denial of inter-subjectivity. “What Hegel calls objective spirit, is for Kierkegaard only circumstances of a natural, sociological, intellectual kind”⁴⁴. However, the matter at hand has nothing to do with a subjectively stipulated validity, but is in fact an expression of the reverse, an abolition of arbitrariness, when the individual accepts all facets of his facticity, *i.e.*, “accepts all of the consequences” [6:220]. It becomes almost comical when his tendency of skipping over the necessary, literal meaning leads him to interpret Anti-Climacus’ concept of “a freely-acting cause” [6:69] as an expression for human freedom “without God”⁴⁵, while it obviously has to do precisely with divine creation. Such minor misinterpretations are not sufficient to compel the total interpretation of which they are a part, but they are indicative of the methodical consequences of a rash, “critical” engagement, and are a sign that the textual study was undertaken to obtain a verification of an “a priori” with regard to “history of spirit”. Later, in his SK-works of the ’50’s and ’60’s, Anz made significant changes to his fundamental point of view: “But I have since come to take the view that the determinative function of anxiety, which is always one factor when he speaks of the ’moment’, by its very meaning excludes absolute subjectivity. One must hold fast to this, against all the misdirection due to the Idealist terminology which Kierkegaard uses”.⁴⁶

2. Interpretive Approach Anthropology as Basic Element in Kierkegaard's Thought

A. Anthropology and the Interpretation of Christianity

First of all, the problem that has to be discussed pertains to the relation between the general problem pursued – *i.e.*, the question concerning Kierkegaard's anthropology – and the types of sources available, SK's authorship and remaining papers. To put the question radically: is it possible to construct a systematic anthropology on the basis of these sources at all? Isn't SK's primary interest an understanding of Christianity, and isn't his "anthropology" thus an integral part of his "theology"?

One may get the impression that this is the case if one examines isolated statements by SK, for example, when the main task of his authorship is understood as "to lift Christianity completely and wholly into reflection" (IX A 226; Cf. X2 A 106 and 18:106), or when it is said that "Christianity is indeed the only explanation of existence which holds water" (IX A 358). However, for SK, to "reflect" upon Christianity does not mean to present it in a systematic-dogmatic form or to characterize it as a "philosophy of life", but more or less the opposite. He wants to liberate Christian faith from the particular "systematic" form it has been given in his time, both when it comes to doctrine (speculative theology) and to life (Christian culture). He wishes to abolish what he calls "Christendom". This is demonstrated both in "practice" (the subject matter of his authorship) and in "theory" (*i.e.*, the appended "rationalization" of the authorship).

SK's general anthropological intention receives expression, for example, in Climacus' retrospective examination of the authorship from *Either/Or* onward. It can be clearly seen here that the red thread is the "stages" – or the fundamental possibilities of self-understanding – of human life: the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious forms of existence. The temporary terminating point in *Stages on Life's Way*, Quidam's religious "boundary-existence", emerges as a sort of synthesis of the aesthetic and ethical stages. The precondition for "really being offended" by religion is that one be "aesthetically developed in fantasy" and at the same time capable of "grasping the ethical with primitive passion" (8:227; Cf. 8:237). But as a "determination of existence" this exposition of the fundamental possibilities of existence must differ radically from that view of human life gained via a speculative concept of unity – *i.e.*, "the immediate mediation" which means that unity is guaranteed against "the immanent transition" and thus never comes into contact with the "ethical" requirement (9:247ff.).

It is clear that this analysis of existence, precisely because it is an alternative to speculative idealism, exists within the framework of general philosophical reflection, and that, viewed in this way, it stands outside of the "paradox" of Christian revelation. To be sure, the specific Christian concepts of sin and redemption are presented as a "hermeneutic-heuristic" framework, since the supreme methodological plan – at any rate, as SK later sees it

– is “the description of one path one may follow in order to become a Christian” (18:106). This does not abolish his philosophical intention, however, but rather confirms it. For it is only against this general human background that it is possible to reach SK’s principal “theological” intention: to present Christianity as “existential communication” (10:76, 228, 232, 239).

It is on this basis that dogmatic Christian points of view are present within the general anthropological framework – e.g., in *The Concept of Anxiety*, which has a clear “dogmatic” frame of reference – in that the aim of the work is defined as “a simple psychological-indicative consideration of the dogmatic problem of original sin”. Christianity emerges with even greater clarity as a presupposition in *Philosophical Fragments*, where with simple radicalness it sketches the fundamental difference in principle between Christianity and humanism. Here, indeed, we see the introduction of “Christian-religiosity” (9:226), but still in relation to “existence”, to human self-activity, which is the sphere constituting meaning for the Christian faith.

The *Postscript* pursues this tendency further. This is not done by presenting Christianity with systematic, dogmatic precision and completeness, but by repeating from a new point of view the “detour” concerning the interpretation of existence, the display of the fundamental possibilities of human life, which had led up to *Philosophical Fragments*. This is done in form of a philosophical discourse on the concept of “existence” itself, that is, on humanity’s fundamental ontological situation. Accordingly, the philosophical adversary is identified, though only between the lines, by means of sporadic attacks and allusions, and (in the concrete, epic interpretations of existence) by criticism of “the System”. Here, too, the presentation of Christianity remains within the boundaries of *Philosophical Fragments*, since it essentially limits itself to its “categorical” content (cf. 10:211), presenting what is the opposite pole from the immanent human understanding of self and of reality. What is in principle new about “religiosity B” is that it “posits the opposition between existence and the Eternal absolutely” (10:238). Its content is “the consciousness of sin”, which is “the expression of a paradoxical transformation of existence”, that is, the subjective expression of the fact that “the salvation of the individual will indeed depend upon his being brought into a relation to that historical fact” (10:238; Cf. 10:249).

So much for the pseudonymous authorship up to the *Postscript*, which SK viewed, both at the time of writing (cf. 10:285) and later (cf. 18:87, 106), as a turning point in the work of liberating Christianity from an “illegitimate” synthesis with the generally human and with aesthetic-speculative understandings of life. Christianity must now be presented differently from what it was earlier; it must be focused more directly. This does not, however, mean that SK now at long last appears with a systematic dogmatic pretension, because the framework for the interpretation is provided by the principle of “existential communication” in the *Postscript*. The transformation – both as it was planned and as it was carried out with modifications – takes place within this *didactic* framework. The methodological principle is to go “decisively into that which is Christian” (IX A 175), to “present Christianity in all its

recklessness” (IX A 226), *i.e.*, as an open judgment against the “cultural Christianity” of the period. This is the principal intention forming the background for the major later writings, *The Sickness Unto Death* and *Training in Christianity*, which concern themselves with “the situation of contemporaneity”, *i.e.*, “that Christ’s life is infinitely more important than its consequences” (IX A 227). The hermeneutic and methodological unity with the earlier parts of his authorship is found in the retention of indirect communication as a form of presentation (cf. IX A 213). As a function of this – despite the self-revelation in the *Postscript* – a new major pseudonym is introduced, “Anti-Climacus” (cf. 18:64), who makes concrete the line of demarcation, asserted in principle by Climacus, between Christianity and autonomous self-development.

What is decisive from our point of view is that, in his didactic and polemical presentation of Christianity, the direct and indirect connections with general human actuality – *i.e.*, with the subject matter of anthropology – are retained. Climacus sums up this unity of existential analysis and interpretation of Christianity in one formula when he says that “religiosity A must be present in an individual before there can be any question of taking notice of the dialectical [religiosity] B” (10:226), *i.e.*, Christianity. For only in this way can Christianity be presented as something radically different from the forms of self-understanding, which grow exclusively out of general human self-activity, and thus be saved from being swallowed up by “immanence”.

It is in accordance with this view of the problem that Anti-Climacus – despite the fact that he in principle gives priority to what is “purely” Christian (cf. e.g., X A 510 and X 2 A 192) – again tackles anthropological analysis. Humanity’s fundamental possibilities for self-understanding (and the constitutional foundation of these possibilities) are given their most striking and detailed presentation in *The Sickness Unto Death*. Along with *The Concept of Anxiety*, this work is SK’s most important contribution to philosophical anthropology. Its abstract, conceptual-analytical form gives it an almost “Hegelian” flavor. The method behind the plan is that “the forms of despair permit themselves to be discovered abstractly by reflecting upon the elements of which the self, as synthesis, consists” (15:87).

In accordance with this, just as the *Postscript*, *The Sickness Unto Death* provides only a minimal presentation of Christianity as a dogmatic system or theology in a traditional sense, even though certain fundamental dogmatic concepts may be said to somehow make up important presuppositions for the field of problem anthropology takes as its starting-point. In this sense, the type, the extent, and the direction of the problems, which are posed are all regulated by Christian dogmatics. In the same manner as in *The Concept of Anxiety*, it is the concept of sin which exercises the regulative function. Interest in the conditions and forms of expression which the reality of sin takes on in human life motivates the presentation of the general forms of existence and of consciousness – from the sensory-receptive naïveté (“innocence” and “despairingly not to be conscious of having a self”), to the self-conscious and reflective, but fundamentally un-free, resistance to reconciliation with the divine ground of existence (“anxiety about the Good” and “despairingly willing to be oneself, defiance”).

What is defined as “anxiety” in the former case, with an accent upon the “psychological” aspect – *i.e.*, the individual’s experience of him self – is broadened and deepened in the latter case into an “existential ontological” category of “despair”, where the structural dimension of self-understanding is the primary focus. Only the second part of *The Sickness Unto Death* can reasonably be characterized as directly dogmatic and theological, since it develops the thesis that “despair is sin”. But still, the principal goal is essentially the same as in *Philosophical Fragments* and the *Postscript*: to accentuate Christianity’s break with an immanent or “self-referential” understanding of the self in a clear and principled manner: “sin is not a negation, but a position” (15:148).

To the extent that SK’s interpretation goes further than the setting-up of this “incompatibility-formula”, it moves on the level of edification or preaching, where Christianity is placed in relation to “that single individual” in a decisive manner. Here, as opposed to the pseudonyms (we could also say, the philosophical and discursive works), SK makes no concessions (at least according to the plan) to the “differences between one person and another with respect to intellect, culture, etc.”, for the point is that all are placed on the same plane “in the universally human”, and confronted with the task which is equally difficult for all: “to be an individual person” (18:160f.); and this task in every case exceeds “a person’s strength” (18:162).

If one accepts SK’s explanation that his principal intention is to show the individual the way to Christianity and to confront him with Christianity’s demand and Christianity’s offer in a situation in which he must choose, one could reasonably ask why SK was not himself satisfied with an “edifying” interpretation Christianity. The answer (though not, of course, the only answer) lies in the historical situation and the occasion to his authorship. “That single individual” to whom SK addresses his edifying discourses is not someone who is easy to reach, but is someone who has been beaten down by anonymous cultural forces, including the “authorized” understanding of life and of Christianity. This makes necessary the above-mentioned “detour” through the various fundamental human possibilities, in order to help dissolve what he sees as spurious forms of mediating the generally human by means of Christian faith. It is this intention, which by means of slight idealization, is defined by the present work as a *theological hermeneutics*, and which conceptually receives its definition in SK’s writings on the authorship. It is here that Climacus’ thesis about religiosity A as precondition for religiosity B is developed into a hermeneutic and didactic theory for the entire authorship. The fact that, viewed psychologically, this smacks of an *ex post* rationalization makes no difference. It in no way prevents one from recognizing that this is a tenable interpretation of the topical and logical coherence of the authorship, in this case as an argument for the necessary “primacy” of anthropology in the interpretation of Christianity.

The most general argument in favor of this relation may be identified in the simple hermeneutical reasoning SK gives in *The Point of View for My Activity as an Author*: “that if one truly is to succeed in leading someone to a definite place, one must first and foremost take care to find that person where he is, and start there” (18:96). In relation to an

interpretation of Christianity, the “place” is “Christendom”, the situation in which Christianity has been “naturalized” (cf. 10:251) into a social-cultural entity. And to “begin” in “Christendom” means to enter into and to clarify the premises upon which it is constituted, that is, the “aesthetic-ethical [...] categories” (18:95). “For in order to be truly able to help another, I must know more than he – but yet, first and foremost, I must understand what he understands” (18:97).

SK develops his anthropological themes within the framework of this dialectics between “understanding together with” and “understanding better than”. “Understanding better than” implies an insight into what constitutes the forms of self-understanding experienced by contemporaries as normative for the given cultural actuality; these forms themselves, in their collective anonymity and superiority, bind and confirm the individual’s self-understanding. Gaining insight into the fundamental possibilities of human life is a pre-condition for exerting influence, the existential maieutics, able to compel the individual to take notice (cf. 18:101) of the fundamental character of his own existence and to take note of the fact that freedom is not without conditions, and that un-freedom is precisely the illusion that freedom is.

In the retrospective look on the authorship found in *The Point of View for My Activity as an Author*, this anthropological theme is only hinted at in a general way, namely in the definition of “aesthetic productivity” as a form of indirect communication, that is, as “a quite new military science [...] which is totally saturated by reflection” (18:103). Thus, our understanding of the character and extent of anthropology must be based on a study of the authorship discussing *both* its “epic” presentation of the forms of self-understanding *and* the more directly anthropological theses and discussions. In relation to this wide-ranging intellectual undertaking, a description of the maieutic process such as the following must appear an enormous simplification: “If, then, a person lives in this fantasy – that is, lives in quite other, in purely aesthetic, categories – if by means of an aesthetic presentation someone is able to win him over entirely and captivate him, and then, by bringing forth religion quickly enough, that with the speed of abandon he runs right into the most decisive categories of religion (...)” (18:103). This argument – which, it should be noted, is in hypothetical form – is not meant to apply to the factual content of “aesthetic productivity”, but can perhaps be taken as an ideal picture of the hermeneutic logic undergirding it. In summary, this could be expressed as follows: the hermeneutic character of the authorship is based on the hermeneutic structure of existence or self-understanding, *i.e.*, that self-understanding (and change in self-understanding) is conditional upon self-activity in the strict sense. To understand one self means to relate oneself to fundamental human possibilities – ways of existing – which one acknowledge as one’s *own*.

This gives meaning to the plan of setting Christianity “into reflection”, because self-reflection (or consciousness of one’s own possibilities) is a pre-condition for Christianity’s ability to be “existential communication”. This does not mean, however, that the content of Christianity should be developed through self-reflection. That, of course, was the program

which idealist philosophy and Hegel in particular, tackled in earnest, but which SK rejects. On the contrary, to put it simply, the significance of self-activity and self-reflection in relation to Christianity is that they exhaust what is humanly possible without having exhausted Christianity. Against this background, in this existential vacuum, appears Christianity's meaning or its existential significance – *i.e.*, “the decisive categories of Christianity” (18:65). That which is seen by a person as a form of progress, as an actualization of immanent possibilities of self-understanding, finally ends in negation in the encounter with Christianity, since it “is taken wholly and entirely out of reflection and back into simplicity” (18:64). For SK, in his specific historical situation, Christianity yields its meaning by way of a process of subtraction. He wants to separate from Christianity everything which does not “essentially” belong to it, but which is there only as its preconditions in the universally human sphere – the aesthetic, ethical, and generic-universal religious reality. The concrete working-through of this subtraction is what constitutes SK's treatment of his anthropological subject matter.

With regard to the relation of anthropology to the philosophical analysis of existence and to the interpretation of Christianity, it can be said, in general, that the interpretation of Christianity has a fundamentally negative and antithetical character, because the interpretation of existence is essentially set forth in order to expose the antithesis between that which is human (as autonomous self-development) *and* Christianity (as the paradoxical grounding of the self in God's unique and sovereign action). However, this antithesis has to do with the ontic, with the concrete contents of the self-understanding, and does not abolish, but rather undergirds Christianity's character as an existential mode.

B. Anthropology and the Interpretation of Existence

The present work has attempted to clarify the meaning of the subject matter of anthropology by giving a general description of the concrete hermeneutical structure of SK's authorship. Anthropology has thus emerged as a necessary element in his program of interpreting Christianity as a mode of existence. The interpretation of existence – that is, the presentation of the fundamental possibilities of human life – is the proper locus for the subject matter of anthropology. In expressing it thus, due notice is taken of the fact that the interpretation of existence generally assumes the form of an epic and ontic presentation of forms of self-understanding, a presentation which is not, in any immediate sense, on the level of anthropological argument.

However, such works as *The Concept of Anxiety*, the *Postscript*, and *The Sickness Unto Death* may be said to lie on this level. The first of these works qualifies as its task, is that of presenting what are called the “psychological” preconditions for the reality of sin, or “sin's real possibility” (6:121). This is the question about which constitutional relationships within human existence make sin (the fundamental definition of man from point of view of Christian dogmatics) possible – because “human nature must be such that it makes sin

possible” (6:120). In this sense, *The Sickness Unto Death* is on the same plane as *The Concept of Anxiety*, in that, as mentioned, *Sickness* relates to the concept of sin as its fundamental horizon, just as Haufniensis talks of keeping “the dogma of original sin in mind and in sight” (6:113). However, in *The Sickness Unto Death* the perspective is broader and more clearly has the character of existential analysis than is the case in *The Concept of Anxiety*, which was marked by a “psychological” concentration upon anxiety as a function of self-determination. Thus, the two books can be seen to complete one another, because *The Sickness Unto Death* presents the anthropological structure constituting the conditional context for the experience of anxiety. The character of the philosophical argument of the *Postscript* is determined by the fact that it clarifies and tightens up the “settling of accounts” with idealist philosophy, and particularly with the systematic principles of Hegel. Up to this point this “settling of accounts” had been an underlying theme, presented only fragmentarily in form of chance digressions included in the epic interpretations of existence, in footnotes, and in introductory remarks. In addition to the above, important sources for SK’s argument that have to be included are his doctoral dissertation, *The Concept of Irony*, and a series of philosophical fragments in the *Journals and Papers*, of which the most important is the never completed *De omnibus dubitandum est* (IV B 1-17). So, in spite of the fact that their point of departure lie in such central theological concepts as sin and incarnation (e.g., the *Postscript*), the above-mentioned writings can in my view be interpreted more or less directly as contributions to a philosophical anthropology.

Another matter is what has been termed the “epic” works, where the presentation of the anthropological problem is built into biographical presentations of self-understanding. Here, the relation between anthropology and forms of self-understanding is that the former constitutes a precondition and a framework of orientation in regard to the presentation of the latter. The presentation of concrete interpretations of existence (self-understandings) presupposes an insight into the essential possibilities of human life, into what makes a definite self-understanding possible at all. Despite the historical origin of its concrete contents, every self-understanding has its “category”. It is constituted in relation to a fundamental human possibility, whether it is well consolidated in that possibility or remains at the far boundary of it, in a transitional phase. In a retrospective note from 1846, SK writes of this orientation in relation to the totality of fundamental possibilities: “My literary merit consists in having always presented the whole range of decisive determinations of existence with a dialectical exactitude and an originality which I, at any rate, do not think is equaled in any literature” (VII 1 A 127).

This distinction between anthropology (*i.e.*, the analysis of the fundamental conditions and structures of human life) and an interpretation of existence is concealed in *Fahrenbach’s* statement that “human existence cannot ever be grasped in its structure independently of the possibilities of its self-understanding, but only along the path of a formalized interpretation of the concrete experience of existence. [...] Thus the formal structural contexts of the dialectic of existence are not to be understood as an ontologically fixed understanding of

being which precedes the human person's self-understanding".⁴⁷ In one sense, Fahrenbach is trying to make a valid point here, namely that anthropological insight has an immediate hermeneutic character, because it has relevance for the self-understanding of the philosophical subject; similarly, knowledge of the structure of existence cannot be gained independently of self-understanding – that is, it must take its point of departure in the subject's own existence, in its self-reflective character.⁴⁸ However, if he means to say this, he still contradicts himself when maintaining that "the substantial demonstration of what it means to exist [...] would on the contrary precisely lead away from the concrete movement of coming to oneself into a universal knowledge".⁴⁹ This would only happen if the presentation of the structure of existence were inadequate, so that its hermeneutic character, its status as *self*-insight, became obscured.

It is the argument of the present work that, in order to come to an understanding of SK's dialectic of existence, it is necessary to discriminate between anthropology and self-understanding or an interpretation of existence, and thus to operate with a concept of "an ontologically fixed understanding of Being which precedes the human person's self-understanding". To the extent that it is a meaningful cognitive concept at all, to speak of the presentation of structures of existence as the result of a "formalized" self-understanding is to fail to appreciate the significance of conceptual discourse in SK's thought, and is in fact also irreconcilable with the interpretation Fahrenbach gives of these concepts elsewhere.

A similar "existentialist" interpretation of SK's thought – that is, an attempt to lock him up in a sphere of private self-understanding – is made by *Blass* in connection with an interpretation of the concept of "infinite interest" from the *Postscript*. Blass claims to discern that SK does not clarify "the conditions of its possibility, *i.e.*, its ontological presuppositions",⁵⁰ and on this slender and accidental basis he finds occasion to construct a theory of SK's "denkerische Grundhaltung", which has the negative property of lacking a place for, and an interest in, "phenomenological", "ontological", and indeed, even "theoretical and investigative" questions. To the extent that this thesis is not falsified by Blass himself in his interpretation of SK's thought as a theory about "the constitution of the existing subjectivity", the rebuttal of such assertions is left to the following analysis of SK's anthropology in the present work. It is here only necessary to note that the assertion that SK does not deal with the question concerning "the conditions of possibility" for "the infinite interest" is simply a wrong one, for the entirety of SK's analysis of the categories of "existence" may well be defined as a clarification of this very question. The fact that such an analysis of conditions does not in principle go beyond the level of that which, ontologically speaking, can be included under the category of "facticity" is another matter. That the structure of existence reveals itself as a relationship of facticity is the general result of existential analysis, precisely because it becomes clear that it is impossible to go back to "transcendental subjectivity" as the productive ground for consciousness or self-understanding.⁵¹

The clearest expression of such a comprehensive *essential concept* of man may be found, first and foremost, in the above-mentioned systematic and discursive writings. It may here be seen, from varying perspectives and with approaches of varying breadth, how the fundamental existential conditions manifest themselves in differing, conceptually definable, modes of existence, e.g., in the forms or stages of “anxiety” or “despair”. A human being is not a *tabula rasa* that in some absolute sense “shapes” its own self-understanding, limited only by certain logical criteria of meaning in verbal communication or by a historical and cultural situation. A human being is incorporated in a general, ontologically explicable existential situation or structure.

I will not at this point go into the central aspects of this idea of human essence, but only present some statements, which may illustrate this fundamental anthropological perspective. For example, Climacus says: “Every person must essentially be assumed to be in possession of that which is essential to being human” (10:56). Haufniensis expresses the same thing in the following: “If every person does not participate essentially in the absolute, then everything is over” (6:199). This indicative is an immediately “edifying” imperative: “Things are not such that one person does not have the same essential task as another person” (6:271). SK expresses the existential paradigm following this insight into the classic formula “*unum noris omnes*”, that is, “if, by *unum*, one understands the observer himself, and does not go looking curiously for the *omnes*, but seriously clings to the one who really is all” (6:168; Cf. 10:54 and 238) – that is, if one does not dissolve the idea speculatively in a concept of “pure subjectivity” or “pure humanity” (6:168).

The essential similarity between “existential” and “speculative” anthropology or understanding of existence is that in both cases there is a basic assumption of the reality of a general structure of human existence. The difference between them, however, is that, in SK’s view, the dialectic of existence does not limit the realization of these fundamental possibilities to the level of cognition, with its essential aim of creating an insight into what is universally valid.⁵² The fundamental error attached to the latter view is that it abstracts from the fact that this structure actually “exists” – that it is present in “the existing subject” (16:238), in “the individual” – and, furthermore, that “the point of the individual is precisely its negative self-relation to the universal” (6:168). This duplicity or dialectic – that human essence is simultaneously a task for the individual’s self-actualization and a condition of possibility for this actualization – is the “Socratic” principle (cf. 9:170f, 10:180). This is also the anthropological basis for the principle of indirect communication, “the dialectic of communication”: “The ethical assumes that every person knows what the ethical is, and why? Because the ethical, indeed, requires every person to, at every moment, bring it to realization, and thus he must of course know it. The ethical does not begin in an ignorance which must be transformed into knowledge, but begins with knowledge, and requires that it be transformed into reality” (VIII 2 B 81:10). “The ethical” – cf. the *Postscript* which introduces this concept systematically as a synonym for “existence” or “existence” as task, e.g., 9:116ff, 10:24ff. – is basically the demand that an individual should be identical with

himself. It is simultaneously an individual paradigm and a universal paradigm for historical existence, as the universal is present in and with the individual. “Only when the individual himself is universal, only then the ethical can become realized [...] it is simultaneously both individual life and universal” (3:326).

(3:326)

The “ethical” task is essentially the same for every individual, as its actualization of the fundamental human possibilities, but the task can only be fulfilled by the individual in its historical particularity. This is so not only because realization presupposes subjectivity, but also because on a deeper level one of the elements of essential human possibility – which is the task of being human – is that the individual relate himself to and identify himself with his contingent reality. This task is not “unknown” to the individual; it becomes manifest upon self-reflection, even if the individual in his particularity may be conquered by an “error which has fastened onto generation after generation, which we are brought up with, quite grown together with, by virtue of which our verbal expressions are formed” (VIII 2 B 82:14). Human essence is a possibility which can only be actualized through self-understanding, and thus through language, which, to the degree it obscures this possibility and forms “false consciousness”, must be broken through by a new “authentic” language, corresponding to the character of existence as an “oughtness-capability” [“Skullen-Kunnen”, literally “should-could”] (VIII 2 B 89, p. 189). The opaque and anonymous self-understanding is what the “dialectic of communication” seeks to abolish in a given historical situation.

The epic-ontic interpretations of existence must against this background be understood as attempts to tear the individual loose from the anonymity of his or her historical and cultural situation and confront the individual with “the ethical”, the fundamental possibilities of human life. In “A First and Last Declaration” in the *Postscript*, it is said about Frater Taciturnus, being a “middle link” between SK and the existential figure of Quidam, that he is “a poetic-real subjective thinker, and what is experimented with is his production in psychological consistency” (10:286; Cf. 8:14). It is further remarked, with regard to each pseudonymous author, that “he [has] his definite view of life” (10:287). Together, these two concepts give an indication of the anthropological logic underlying the presentation of existential types. The fact that a view of life, or a self-understanding, is developed through “psychological consistency” gives an indication of the methodological schema already mentioned: that anthropology, an insight into the essential possibilities of a person, regulates the concrete interpretations of existence.

However, this is only a general formula for the arrangement. In accordance with its essence, a self-understanding is not only an epiphenomenon in relation to an unconscious substructure, but is also fundamentally constituted by means of self-reflection, in the broadest sense of the term. Thus, Anti-Climacus says that, insofar as “imagination” or “reflection” – that is, the capacity for language at all – is what makes possible self-understanding and a detachment from substantial, instinctual life, even “pure immediacy” has “a quantitative reflection within itself” (15:106). *In this sense, the subject matter of*

anthropology – namely, reflection upon the logical coherence of self-understanding – is fundamentally an elaboration of that self-understanding. It has the same logical structure as its object. And it is this dialectic which to a considerable degree characterizes the existential figures appearing in the epic works. The main characters are not what could be called ordinary novelistic figures, but are rather “philosophical heroes”, figures who not only understand themselves in a definite way, but who also reflect – both indirectly (e.g., “A”) and directly (e.g., the Judge) – upon the fundamental constitutional character of their self-understanding. Thus, anthropology is situated on a continuum between the totalizing grasp of the possibilities of human essence – a position belonging to SK by virtue of his role as “the author of authors” (10:287) – and the different levels occupied by the self-reflections of the various epic-philosophical figures.

These self-reflections receive literary expression in different ways with the various pseudonyms: most simply and directly with the Judge, in a rather more complicated way with “A”. In the Judge’s case, anthropological reflection finds direct expression in form of a discursive philosophical argument within the framework of a self-presentation, and with polemical barbs directed at the fragmentary and eclectic self-interpretation of “A”. The Judge also remains on this level in *Stages on Life’s Way*, even though the breadth of the subject matter has been narrowed to correspond to the superficial aestheticism – obscuring the depth of “A’s” anthropological perspective – in the negative counterpart “*In vino veritas*”.

Repetition and “Guilty? – Not Guilty?” share essentially the same literary structure and thus the same form of implication in regard to the subject matter of anthropology. In both cases there are two principal figures at differing levels of consciousness, who still share a common existential problem, as the one on the lower level of reflection is a poetic emanation of the more reflected consciousness. He thus exists as an epic illustration of the problem-complex pertaining to the reflected existence. Climacus summarizes the relationship in the following way: “Constantine Constantius [...] despairs about repetition, and the young man makes it clear that, if it is to happen, it must be a new immediacy” (9:220; Cf. 5:191). In similar fashion Frater Taciturnus recognizes Quidam as his “thought experiment” (8:203). These figures differ in character and in concrete self-understanding, because “reasonableness and the higher immediacy of youth [which] were kept separate from one another in *Repetition* – with Constantine as the reasonable one and the young man as the one in love – these two factors [are] united in one person” in Quidam (9:243; Cf. VI B 41:10 and VII 1 B 83, p. 277). Thus, even the “experimenters” represent various forms of consciousness or stages of existence, namely, existential “irony” (cf. IV A 169) and “humor” (cf. VI A 41) respectively. However, this circumstance does not alter the fundamental hermeneutic character, namely, that self-understanding is represented by a unity of the immediacy of self-experience and self-reflection, as revealing the constitutional logic of a particular form of existence. The only important difference at this level must be that, by virtue of Quidam’s composite character and self-reflection, Frater Taciturnus has less an air of reality about him

and shows himself as a more purely “philosophical”, marginal character than does Constantine (cf. 9:243). He is, as he himself puts it, “a watchman” (8:249, 261).

In *Fear and Trembling* Johannes de Silentio and his self-reflection is present from beginning to end, and his analysis of the Abraham-figure also reflects his own existential situation, as a means of placing it in relief. Abraham, as a representative of “faith”, of the religious reconciliation with factual actuality, is the ideal counterpart to his own religiously-tinged, aesthetic-reflective self-sufficiency, which can bring to realize only “the movement of infinity”, but not “the double movement”: “For my part, I can indeed describe the movements of faith, but I cannot make them” (5:36).

Either/Or, volume I, is, as already mentioned, the work which demonstrates the most complicated literary and hermeneutic structure, and thus also has the most complex way of representing anthropology as a subject matter. Victor Eremita, the editor, interprets the literary multiplicity of his work as a suitable expression for the aesthetic self-understanding, because a “trial run for an aesthetic view of life” corresponds to the fact that “a coherent aesthetic view of life [...] [can] scarcely [be] carried through” (2:19). From SK’s standpoint – that is, from a biographical point of view – this must be seen as a rationalization of fact that, to a considerable extent, this work builds upon and recapitulates “materials” and thinking which SK had developed in his capacity as an aesthetic critic and aesthetic philosopher.⁵³ He finds himself here able to “exploit” that existing fund of material in presenting, in philosophical terms, a dialectic of existence, or an anthropologically grounded presentation of a form of existence, in autobiographical style.

As an example of this we may note that the essay on “First Love” obviously builds on an older manuscript, as a fragment preserved in III B 40 tells us that the “*Diapsalmata*” to a certain extent do reflect earlier journal entries.⁵⁴ This is true despite SK’s assertion that he “had decided to use nothing old” (IV A 221), a statement he himself contradicts (if somewhat weakly) in *The Point of View for My Activity as an Author*. Here it is stated that before the writing of *Either/Or* “there existed about one page, namely a couple of diapsalmata” (18:89). (Cf. IV A 59, p. 212, where it is pseudonymously stated that “for five years I concealed a manuscript which I permitted myself to place before the reading public in *Either/Or*”.) However, the differing points of view may be reconciled if Eremita’s pronouncement is viewed as a “tactical exaggeration” and if, further, stress is placed on the relation between the length of the *written* (!) preliminary drafts and that of the completed work. From this point of view, the assertion, saying that the whole *Either/Or* “was written, every jot and tittle, in eleven months”, may be taken to be correct (VII 1 A 92).

The point, however, is not to clarify these technical questions, but only to point out that the intellectual contents of the work are intimately connected to SK’s ambitions in the areas of poetry and aesthetics.⁵⁵ In one other way they are connected to SK’s “life development” (Geismar), in that they have significance as communication with Regine (cf. VIII 1 A 422; X 1 A 266; X 5 A 146ff.). But this relationship is only a variant of the intimate connection

between SK's personal life and the anthropological and theological thought running through his entire authorship.

Thus, what constitutes the specific character of *Either/Or*, volume I, is the fact that this side of SK's sphere of interest and knowledge finds utilization in an anthropology of the aesthetic form of life, that is, an anthropology of the sort of self-understanding which – upon a basis of the natural interplay between corporeal and mental factors – balances the development of a life of the senses with reflective transparency. This utilization takes place on two levels, in the form of different self-understandings in self-reflection, and as literary analyses and conceptual definitions or aesthetics. However, both directly and indirectly, these levels shade into one another. They do so indirectly, to the extent that aesthetics takes up the elements in the constitution of a life form (e.g., pure sensuality) and analyses them. They do so directly to the extent that aesthetic self-reflection contains views on the sphere of aesthetics itself. Aesthetics is the concern of the piece on Mozart's opera music ("The Immediate Stages of the Erotic, or the Musical-Erotic"), the piece on the three female literary figures ("*Shadowgraphs*"), the reflections on a piece for the theatre ("First Love"), and the piece on the category of "the modern tragic". From an anthropological perspective, the theme running through these analyses may be defined as the breakthrough of an immediate or naive consciousness into self-consciousness or reflective freedom. In other words, they deal with the psychological genetic basis for the conscious aesthetic posture of life.

The aesthete, "A", treated as the author of these pieces, is thus the most sublime or extreme representative of this kind of self-understanding. His self-presentation in the "*Diapsalmata*" is an existential expression of this fact; his presentation is held forth as a "boundary experience" or as self-understanding's reflection upon its own essential "boundary", namely the fact that it lacks actuality. However, due to their unsystematic and fragmentary nature – in the form of "aphorisms, lyrical outbursts, reflections" (2:13) – the "*Diapsalmata*" are an immediate mirror-image of the essence of this form of existence, and are not representative of "A's" insight and his conceptual understanding of his existential situation. This we will find expressed more clearly – if more indirectly – in the thematic pieces mentioned.

In addition to this are the more clarified and systematic expressions of the aesthetic sphere of life. These are the poetic projections of "A's" self-understanding in the essays entitled "The Unhappiest Man" and "The Rotation Method", which are, respectively, cast in the form of a talk (in analogy with the aestheticizing torrent of speech in "*In vino veritas*") and in form of a program for a possible way of enjoying life, namely, as an "endurance of life" on the conditions of total pessimism, which is also the essence of the "*Diapsalmata*".

In "The Diary of the Seducer" this program is made plain, placed in a concrete historical sequence. The fact that "A" does not want to be identified with this work (I xii) is simply an expression of the fact that he stands in the same relation to it as Constantine does to the story of the young person, and as Frater Taciturnus does to Quidam. The anthropological logic of it is thus that it makes visible the possibilities, which exist within the total aesthetic universe of

possibilities. “The Diary of the Seducer” is in this sense a sort of synthesis of the two preceding essays, and in a three-fold manner; that is: in each of the two characters and in the interaction between them, the Diary presents a dialectics between naivety and self-reflection. As far as Johannes is concerned, this takes place by means of a movement from reflection to the immediate display of life in an encompassing experience of the erotic. As far as Cordelia is concerned, this takes place by means of her tacit advancing from a symbiotic identity with her cultural surroundings, towards the level of reflective self-consciousness.

To the extent that, in his reflective self-experience, Johannes is presented as a theoretician of “the interesting” – itself being the category expressing the breakthrough of reflexive freedom from within the unity of substantiality or naïveté – “The Diary of the Seducer” is also a formal and literary reproduction of the essays preceding it (cf. 2:314, 319, 325f., 341, 344, 403). Put shortly, this means that the aesthete “A” projects, in a one-sided and compromised form, into a fragment of a life story his own life-form – namely, the unity of reflection and the development of the life of the senses, plus an interest in the aesthetic (to the extent that the work of art is an adequate form of reproduction for the psychosomatic interaction).

It is especially “The Diary of the Seducer” which concentrates on the question of the relation between the various interpretations of existence and the story of SK’s personal life, as SK himself tells us that it is this work, which in particular is related to the story of his own marital engagement. This being so not only in the sense that the engagement may have supplied him with experiential material suitable for poetical presentation, but also because, as has been suggested, it was a means to solve a personal problem, the “liberation” of Regine; “for ‘The Diary of the Seducer’ was indeed something to repel with” (X 5 A 146), “in order to get her clear of the relationship” (X 1 A 266). The question in terms of method is whether this personal background – which here takes on a strongly private character, but which also, to a greater or lesser degree, continues to play a role through the rest of the authorship (a fact which in principle makes possible *Geismar’s* psychological-reductionist method of interpretation) – has a significant impact on the general or philosophical significance of his anthropological concepts.

The response to this must be that it is unreasonable that a background of personal experience and, in general, any private subsidiary motive, should be played off against views that, implicitly or explicitly, have an objective form. However, with respect to an understanding of SK’s anthropology it may be said that it is fruitful to keep this personal background in mind, to the extent that it has been determinative for the type and the extent of the anthropological and philosophical questions which are dealt with, and also for the sake of the manner in which they are developed within the framework of what have been called interpretations of existence – *i.e.*, as indirect communication.

It is, however, precisely this last point, which can exemplify just how difficult an interpretation of this connection can be. *Geismar’s* assertion that “it was essentially the relationship to Regine which first taught him [SK] to use indirect communication”⁵⁶ may

certainly have something going for it, but it still expresses only a small part of a larger context. There is also another group of factors involved here, such as the use of pseudonyms as literary convention, which at the very least serves as a ready form of technical assistance. Without doubt, SK's philosophical congeniality with Socrates, a sympathy that was also supported and encouraged by the prevailing intellectual climate of the times, was an even more important objective factor.⁵⁷

Quite apart from the multiplicity of psychological and intellectual background factors, the idea of indirect communication has a satisfactory objective basis in the concept of human existence as self-activity. As a philosophical concept it may furthermore be evaluated – and perhaps opposed – by means of philosophical arguments, but not by referring to its historical and psychological origins. The same must hold for all intellectual content in the authorship admitted to general application, regardless of its close connection with the story of SK's personal life. However, from a philosophical point of view, because it helps to clarify the meaning of the philosophical concepts, the biographical dimension is clearly fruitful as an interpretive frame of reference. Once the philosophical intention has been taken seriously, the biographical approach can be of great assistance in supplying a historical and psychological context for a philosophical evaluation.⁵⁸

C. Anthropology, Psychology and Dialectic of Existence

The aim of the preceding pages has been to demonstrate that both SK's "systematic" and his "epic" works build – in the first case, more or less directly, in the second case, indirectly – upon a conceptually explicable understanding of human existence. As mentioned, this does not mean that there is "material" completeness in the presentation. From such a point of view, SK's anthropology may be characterized as fragmentary, as it in many ways is limited by its "functional" status. This is first of all so, in that anthropology serves as a negative-maieutic or hermeneutic basis for interpreting Christianity. This is secondly so, due to the status of anthropology as a framework for the dialectic of existence, that is, as the essential premise for the concrete interpretation of existence. In this latter case, anthropology finds expression on the level of philosophical concepts, emerging within the various self-reflections of the existential figures. In addition, SK's anthropology is determined, and thus limited, by its psychological relation to his own existential crisis. However, such material incompleteness does not stand in the way of structural wholeness. The holistic perspective is present in SK's definitive goal of providing a clear exposition of the fundamental existential possibilities, a project which SK believed would provide the only possible background against which the decisive significance of Christianity could be expressed.

It is my belief that the term "anthropology" can serve as a topically-appropriate and fruitful description of SK's project, because the tendency of the material and his method is that the fundamental possibilities are not merely postulated in a "dialectical" experiment, but are exhibited in their connectedness to human constitution. Terms such as "psychology" and

“dialectic of existence”, which both are often employed in the interpretation of SK – and which find support in SK’s own terminology – do not immediately demonstrate this depth of intention.

With *Malantschuk*, for example, these concepts more or less overlap, and consequently take on rather unclear meanings. The principal point of his work, *Søren Kierkegaard’s Dialectic of Existence*, is said to be the clarification of SK’s “dialectical method”, a concept which itself seems to coincide in an unclear way with “the structure of the authorship”,⁵⁹ *i.e.*, more or less with what has here been termed its fundamental “hermeneutic” character. But otherwise Malantschuk swears by the term “psychology” as an overriding category for SK’s interpretations of existence,⁶⁰ despite the fact that he introduces SK’s thought with the heading “anthropological contemplation”, an expression he borrows from SK himself (cf. III A 3). One reason for this preference may well be that Malantschuk, like Geismar, is interested in examining the interplay between SK’s philosophical and theological thought and his personal life.⁶¹ Therefore, Malantschuk assigns psychology, in the form of introspection and sympathetic insight – “scrutinizing the hidden mechanisms of the soul”⁶² – a major cognitive function in SK’s “dialectical” presentation of the conditions of human subjectivity and forms of existence.

There can be no doubt that such a reflected or “psychologically consistent” (cf. 5:128) experience of the self or “sympathetic” insight into the psychic life of others (cf. SK’s reflections on the concept of “presentiment” in II A 18, 32, 584) is a fundamental trait in SK’s philosophical method. But neither this fact nor the fact that SK himself on occasion talks of his analyses of the conditions of existence – e.g., the analysis of the concept of anxiety – as “psychology” (cf. 6:114; IV B 97:1; 117, p. 286; 120, p. 309) is sufficient justification for the use of this concept as category for the analysis of existence. This is certainly impermissible in Malantschuk’s case, where there is discussion – unreflectively and as if it were quite obvious – of “human and Christian types of psychology” and of “three forms of the psychological”.⁶³ Thus, the moral and the religious dimensions are here placed within a psychological frame of reference. The question remains whether this can do justice to SK’s fundamental notion of the “psychological discontinuity” of self-understanding.

The characterization SK’s work as “psychology” also comes into conflict with SK’s own linguistic usage or his “scientific taxonomy” (with which Malantschuk clearly wishes to be in agreement). For SK, it is clearly an important point, on holding true for every interpretation of his thought, that “psychology” – as stated in *The Concept of Anxiety* – can only have to do with “the resting” or “the becoming”. This is metaphorical expression for the fact that psychology, fundamentally and as a *sui generis* sphere of cognition, is indifferent with regard to the “ethical” and the “dogmatic” levels of understanding (cf. 6:119f.). Psychology is composed of a descriptive analysis of the regular coherence in the psychic development or sphere of consciousness, regardless of the ontic content and of the question of value that characterizes every self-understanding. In this sense, psychology is relevant to the ethical and the religious area, in that they, too, are phenomena of consciousness. However,

according to SK, it is not up to psychology to decide, for example, what constitutes the ethical form of existence as such. What are explained in *The Concept of Anxiety*, and what are capable of being “explained” at all, are the “psychological” bases for the constitution of moral consciousness in the ambivalence of anxiety, as that which is “resting” in the situation. That this consciousness, “following from” the annulment of ambivalent anxiety by means of concrete action (cf. 6:153), is *moral* is not explained by a “psychological” science (cf. 6:143), but is identical with the individual’s self-evaluation. “How sin entered into the world is something which every person understands only by himself” (6:144; Cf. 6:201, IV C 104, p. 414).

Emphasis should here be placed on a point which Malantschuk does not seem to think necessary to mention when drawing attention to the fact that “in his psychological research [SK] has made use of” Rosenkranz’ work on psychology,⁶⁴ namely, that by limiting the area of competence of “psychology”, SK is expressing his break with idealist, “logical” ontology. In Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, “psychology” is a description of the “subjective” actualization of “the spirit” or of self-determination, that is, of spirit in its general form as self-reflection and action. Furthermore, according to Hegel’s system, moral consciousness, “die Moralität”, is an immanent, definite differentiation of this spiritual reality as “logical idea”.⁶⁵ This means in principle that the “psychological” analysis appears as an explanation to the whole of human reality. Rosenkranz’ *Psychologie* – to which SK generally adheres to the extent that he deals with “psychological” problems – is located entirely within Hegel’s ontological sphere. As Rosenkranz himself states, the purpose of his psychology is to be “only a commentary to the sketch Hegel has given in the Encyclopedia”.⁶⁶ It is precisely this absolutizing of “psychology”, or the conceptual-analytical method, which SK opposes with his concept of “*the leap*”. As we shall see later in the present work, *the leap is the ontological category for the significance of the free and voluntary self-interpretation in the constitution of the modes of existence or the forms of consciousness*.

However, “conceptual analysis”, *i.e.*, the clarification of necessary relations, also has its validity for SK within the framework of “psychology” as a description of the regular aspects of consciousness. Thus for example the successive dissolution of the state of innocence, tending in the direction of “the leap” – *i.e.*, the act of consciousness constituting moral consciousness – appears as the result of an inner necessity of anxiety. Human freedom is located and develops within the framework of psychological “consistency” (cf. 6:167, 187, 198ff.), a necessity which does not create, but which permits and renders possible the “leap” of freedom. Anxiety is precisely an expression for “the intervening condition” between psychological necessity and freedom, namely the free self-evaluation. “Anxiety is not a determination of necessity, but neither is it a determination of freedom; it is a snared freedom, in which freedom is not free in itself, but is snared, not in necessity, but in itself” [6:143].

This same dialectic of necessity is presented with even greater clarity in the forms of consciousness described in *The Sickness Unto Death*. Here the methodical system itself is

conceptual or analytical because the aim is that “the forms of despair may be discovered abstractly by reflecting upon the elements of which the self, as a synthesis, consists” (15:87; Cf. VIII 2 B 151). The whole of human existential reality can from this perspective be seen as a “determined continuity” – not, of course, as the product of a linear, causal process, but as a development and a developmental possibility within definite, logically ascertainable limits and relationships. This determination is what makes “despair” an aspect of the human essence itself.

Corresponding to this we find the “dogmatic” definition of sin as “a position, which develops out of itself a more and more weighty continuity”, or the view that “sin has within itself a consistency, and in this consistency of evil lies also a certain power” (15:157). However, this concept of sin as “condition” (15:157) is not the genuine dogmatic definition of it, but is an understanding, which has submitted to a “psychological” or “scientific” point of view. *The Sickness Unto Death* as a whole is indeed constructed as a “Christian psychological development” (15:65), in which the concept of human freedom, of man as a “synthesis of [...] freedom and necessity” (15:87), is the overriding anthropological presupposition, which is only postulated, and not demonstrated constitutionally. The aim is to show how the possibility of freedom expresses itself in the tapestry of freedom, so to speak – that is, to illustrate freedom’s misuse of itself in its worry about self-mastery.

On the other hand, the concept of freedom is presented in *The Concept of Anxiety* by means of an analysis of moral consciousness and its “psychological” bases. Consequently, sin is here defined in an opposite manner, that is, as an act of freedom: “The concept of sin and guilt posits the individual *qua* individual. No account is taken of any relation to anything in the world, to anything which has happened” (6:185). Furthermore: “Ethically speaking sin is not a condition. A condition is always the final psychological approximation to the next condition” (6:199).

The analysis of existence in *The Sickness Unto Death* is carried out within the framework of this “psychological approximation” with respect to self-evaluation, that is, with respect to self-understanding or moral consciousness. Sin, or “despair”, is described as a “psychological” reality in relation to “the moments of synthesis” and to “consciousness”, meaning that it exists under the rubric of *conceptual necessity*.

SK’s “psychology” is thus the aspect of his analysis of existence which has the strongest affinity to the “rationalistic” tradition in philosophy, in this case, German idealism and the conceptual-analytical “deduction” of human actuality from “the Idea”; to use Hegel’s expression, this is the notion that “also the finite or subjective spirit – not only the absolute – has to be conceived as a realization of the Idea”.⁶⁷ SK’s clash with this ontology does not take form of an internal revision of the concept of science – specifically, the concept of “psychology” – but could be defined as a delimiting of the “scientific-psychological” area of competence. On the basis of this, it must be said to be misleading to use the term “psychology” as a comprehensive category for SK’s presentation of the fundamental

possibilities of human life, particularly for someone like Malantschuk, claiming to have adopted SK's terminology.

But even a basically independent or "modern" use of the category "psychology" will be problematic in interpreting SK, particularly when the interpretation aims at presenting view of his thought as a whole, and when, in addition, the author does not clarify the relation between his own use of the term "psychology" – the characteristics of the subject area it is supposed to cover – and SK's use of the term and the objective points of view which SK builds into it.

Nordentoft's book, Kierkegaard's Psychology, is marked by this obscurity, in spite of its attempt to legitimize this conceptual usage. Nordentoft's distinction between "the doctrine of the stages and psychology"⁶⁸ is correct and is based on SK's own premises. Taken by itself, it is also the best point of departure for a presentation of SK's "psychology". This is because, as mentioned, SK's "psychology" is limited to the study of the regular or recurrent processes of consciousness, and is thus in principle indifferent to the concentration of consciousness in relation to a fundamental *axiological* possibility, which is the particular area of concern for the doctrine of stages. On the other hand, psychology also includes every "consciousness concerning value", in that it clarifies both the universal and the specific facets of psychic reality, and thus also clarifies self-understanding itself.

To maintain, as a fundamental principle, that "Kierkegaard's psychology is a broadening and a deepening of that which is called the aesthetic in *Either/Or*, volumes I and II",⁶⁹ is at the least, an inexact description. It may give the impression that the "aesthetic" stage by SK is put forth as the only stage suitable for psychological study. Nordentoft's claim does, however, have certain accuracy as a description of the historical course of SK's psychological studies.

Although, from a systematic perspective, a kernel of truth may be seen in Nordentoft's argument, the fact that it is combined with a historical point of view prevents a clear expression of this. The clarification of the psychology of the "aesthetic" stage may be defined as either the foundation for anthropology or a general psychology. The reason for this being that it is the structural (axiological) peculiarity of the aesthetic form of existence to invest the universal mental functions (by means of the modifications to which they are subjected in a specific historical individuality) into a life-project; that is, it converts them consciously/unconsciously into a consciousness of values or a "view of life". As SK writes, "the aesthetic in a person is that by means of which he immediately is what he is" [3:167]. The prototype of this form of existence is thus the genius, the individual who forms his outlook on life and his concrete actions by developing that which is genetically given, *i.e.*, his mental facticity. Furthermore, the separation of the genius from the socially and historically universal is only a matter of degree. "The genius is, as the word itself expresses [*ingenium*], the innate, primitiveness (*primus*), originality (*origio*), primordial, etc.), immediacy, a natural category" (15:52). The "aesthetic" subjectivity is therefore an especially well-suited object for general psychological study, even though it is in principle

present in every form of existence, marked to a greater or lesser extent by *axiological modification*.

Thus, the main objection against Nordentoft is not that he poses the question of SK's psychology in a manner, which is incorrect in principle, but that he does so in a manner which is too narrow in relation to his concrete project. A portion of his analyses in fact falls into the area, which can more appropriately be called philosophical anthropology.

This is most true of the fourth chapter of Nordentoft's book, "The Anthropological Model", which offers fundamental definitions of such aspects of human existence as "consciousness" and "the self". These are concepts, which – in the way SK develops them – cannot very meaningfully be presented as psychological categories within the framework of a modern systematic science. This is also the case with Nordentoft's presentation of "the process of individuation" in chapters I and III, where the point of view of "developmental psychology" tends to minimize the constitutional significance of this process, that is, its significance as structure in the human mode of existence. Of course, one could operate with a definition of psychology broad enough to include this dimension, a sort of "philosophical psychology", but Nordentoft, with his point of departure in and referential orientation towards Freud's psychoanalysis,⁷⁰ does not seem to favor such a comprehensive definition.

The ambiguity becomes explicit when Nordentoft himself deals with the question of the boundary between "psychology" and "anthropology", with the result of this boundary being erased by means of an "annulment" of the way in which the book poses the question, or of its limitation to SK's "psychology". "It is neither defensible nor possible to separate out Kierkegaard's psychology, in the narrow sense, as a special area of his thought admitting examination in isolation from the rest. On the contrary, the psychological is enmeshed in a more comprehensive anthropological pattern in which ethical, philosophical, and theological questions are implied. In any attempt to reproduce his psychology, the larger pattern must be included. The psychology must be presented in its context".⁷¹ Writing what has been cited above, one would think that Nordentoft puts himself on safe ground, and fundamentally this is the case. However, the question remains whether "psychology" is defined correctly in relation to its "context", or put more precisely, the question of what significance has been assigned to the concept of "context".

One cannot escape confronting the fact that Nordentoft has been forced into arbitrariness on this point, into an arbitrary and – with regard to SK – an inappropriate drawing of the boundary-line between "anthropology" and "psychology". Nordentoft does this as a result of his strategy of comparison and his attempt to correlate SK's psychology with psychoanalysis and the clinical-pathological point of view. "Anthropology" is introduced formally as an over-arching concept for human "essence" as self-activity, and its concrete subject matter is consequently that which SK discusses in the *Postscript* as "the ethical"⁷² – while the specific area of "psychology" is to focus on deviations from this essential possibility, *i.e.*, "that which is misused and incomplete".⁷³

This distinction may be countered on at least two fronts. First of all, for SK, “psychology” – that is, the understanding of the regularity or the logically ascertainable “consistency” in human self-experience or behavior – is an essential element in the understanding of that which may rightly be called human “essence”, that which incorporates every individual in a definitive and universal structure of existence. Thus, for example, “psychology” becomes intellectually fruitful in the definition of human freedom in *The Concept of Anxiety*. For it is precisely on this basis that it is possible for SK to distance himself from an abstract or conceptual-analytical definition of freedom as a *liberum arbitrium* (cf. 6:197). To take another example, sympathetic psychological insight and perhaps introspection are undoubtedly also ways of highlighting “religiosity A” as “pathos”. In general, *The Sickness Unto Death*, presenting sin as a psychological reality, is not merely a study in “deviations” from human essence – that is, deviations from the “ethical” task or freedom. The book also demonstrates in what manner this task – the actualization of “the self”, in its multiplicity and concreteness (*i.e.*, “psychologically”) – finds expression in forms of consciousness or in different forms of self-understanding. Secondly, from different point of view, this hefty formulation leaves no room for a psychological correlate to the possible realization of a concrete harmony congruent with the task of existence – for example, the partial realization of the task in the “ethical” self-consciousness, or its total realization in “turning back” to “the ground” in the forgiveness found in the God-relation, “in which there is absolutely no despair” (15:180).

Nordentoft’s “formula” is an untenable interpretation of SK, but perhaps a useful heuristic device for his own project. There can of course be no doubt that the way in which the interpretations in SK’s “psychological” authorship are arranged – his description of the fundamental human possibilities – does in practice accentuate the “pathological” aspect of the human situation, its wretchedness and foreignness in the absence of a true relation to God.

The point of discussing Malantschuk’s and Nordentoft’s “common” use of the term “psychology”, is not to pronounce judgment over the interpretive results they each produce. However, the present work does maintain that the interpretive framework they utilize in their work is not completely suited to capture that which is original and of decisive significance in SK’s analysis of human existence; to be more specific, their interpretations miss some of the character of SK’s analysis as a conceptual-philosophical discourse.

There is another situation in which there appears a completely different sort of reduction of this aspect of SK’s thought. This is when the hermeneutic connection between SK’s interpretation of existence and his interpretation of Christianity is stressed in such a fashion as to play the latter aspect off against the former, with the result of the latter annihilating the former, or indeed that they partially annihilate one another. The totality is presented as an incredibly situation-bound existential “event”. This seems to be the case in the type of fundamental understanding presented by *Diem*, when he fashions the concept of a “dialectic of existence” or “Kierkegaard’s dialectical methodology” as the expression of the total result

of SK's thought.⁷⁴ Now, to the extent that, in most cases, this concept is adapted (or is at least capable of being adapted retrospectively) to what has here been called a hermeneutic-didactic perspective, it can indeed serve as a comprehensive descriptive term for SK's authorship, just as it also has its source in SK's reflections upon his own existential situation and the moral and religious complex of problems which that situation entailed. On the other hand, this maieutic intention and the existential background do not annihilate all the content, all "objective" reflections, expressed within that perspective. That is, these reflections should simply be specifiable and meaningful, perhaps retaining their "original" depth of meaning within the framework of a sympathetically reproducing self-activity, so that the interpretation must fundamentally limit itself to recreating SK's "dialectical method" – "that one takes the path of Kierkegaard's dialectic [...] as one who himself exists".⁷⁵ That which is inadequate in Diem's form of interpretation shows itself indirectly in his own language about "the difficulties of our exposition".⁷⁶ The principal problem for Diem is that every presentation of SK's thought is "in its turn a mediation of Kierkegaard's methodology of mediation, and therefore is always one step further away from existence than Kierkegaard's own thinking",⁷⁷ or in other words, "a thinking *about* the existing thinking, and therefore always at risk of speculation".⁷⁸

This interpretive difficulty turns out to be an artificial product in view of the fact that SK's "eigenes Denken" itself contains what Diem himself finds "compelled" to "force upon" him, namely an account of his "method" – that is, the dialectic of existence in the forms of consciousness and in the form of didactic presentation, such as it emerges in his various retrospective examinations of the authorship and in his more systematic and theoretical ruminations around the problem of communication. Such a presentation of the problem can be found, for example, in the clash with idealist philosophy or "speculation" in the first part of the *Postscript*; it is thus an integral part of SK's ontological alternative to speculation.

What is self-contradictory in Diem's "method" is expressed strikingly in the following passage on the problem of communicating "the dialectic of mediation": "And this too cannot be done dialectically, although this is really what will be necessary: for good or ill, it must happen in a direct manner".⁷⁹ By reducing SK's thought to a "method", Diem also distorts the Kierkegaardian approach to the problem of communication itself, because he overlooks its "historical" aspect. That is, whether something is indirect communication or not is not an *a priori* given, because it is always relative to "the situation" in which the recipient is located. Thus, even a philosophical discourse on the problem of communication can serve as indirect communication, in the sense that it provokes one to self-activity, "oughtness-capability" (VIII 2 B 83) – by showing that this is the fundamental task of existence.

When, at one point in his later work on SK, *Die Existenzdialektik von Søren Kierkegaard* (*Søren Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Existence*), Diem asks the question: "is there not a particular theory about the human person, a specific anthropology, behind this dialectic of existence with which Kierkegaard wants to help the human person to exist?"⁸⁰ – The approach to the problem is dismissed as inappropriate in a manner altogether insufficient and

superficial. Diem does this with a reference to SK's commentary on a review of his *Philosophical Fragments*, where the point is that the reviewer turns an indirect communication into a "lecturing" speech (Cf. 9:229). The following objection can be made to Diem concerning this point. First of all, if anthropology is presupposed in the so-called dialectic of existence (that is, the presentation of concrete and personal movements of existence or interpretations of existence) it would be appropriate to explain its conflict with SK's possible negative opinion by understanding the maieutic intention involved. Secondly, SK's overall opinion cannot be derived from the above-mentioned pronouncement by Climacus, which refers to the fact that "the reader will thus receive the impression that the piece is also a lecturing one" (9:230). If one accepts Diem's argument, then, applying this criterion's consistency, one must view a series of pseudonymous writings as irrelevant for the "existential dialectician", for example, *The Concept of Anxiety*, which, according to this same Climacus, has a form, which "is straightforward, and even a bit lecturing" (9:226). Indeed, one would especially have to classify as irrelevant the *Postscript* to the *Philosophical Fragments*, which quite explicitly and in discursive form accepts anthropological presuppositions both with respect to its subject matter (the boundary between humanity and Christianity) and with respect to its form (a maieutic experiment). For a third thing, this factual connection between anthropology and the "thought experiment" or "poetry" – either that which is put in the form of an objective discourse based upon a "hypothesis", as in *Philosophical Fragments*, or that which is put in the form of concrete interpretations of existence, in which philosophical reflection is contained as an "epically" formed element – is binding for an interpretation of SK in a completely different way than are "chance" statements made by his pseudonyms.

If this connection is not made visible, the so-called "dialectic of existence" is also left hanging in loose air. It is reduced to an unmotivated literary-linguistic technique for the dissolution of "Christendom".⁸¹ Diem finds himself unable to avoid taking general notice of this fact, for what else could what he calls "to construct the categories of human existence"⁸² be, other than a philosophical anthropological project? It is Diem's rather "private" postulate that "categories of existence" are beyond both philosophical and theological areas of competence.⁸³ Diem summarizes his understanding of SK's dialectic of existence in the following sentence: "What he is concerned with is not a theory *about* the correct mode of being, but this *mode of being itself*, or about the dialectic process by which this mode of being can be attained and communicated".⁸⁴ However, it is, first of all, impossible to see how such an absolute distinction can be philosophically tenable or even meaningful at all, and, secondly, it is consequently equally impossible to make this formula fit SK. An "engagement" with the problem of finding "the method" for the establishment of "the correct mode of being" cannot avoid including reflection *about* that which constitutes it, that is, it cannot avoid an anthropological argument.⁸⁵

The conclusion with respect to Diem's overall understanding of SK – as it is expressed in Diem's category of the "dialectic of existence" – is thus that Diem's understanding appears

incompatible with the present work's approach to the problem of interpretation. This is not the place to discuss the extent to which Diem's concept of method could have a certain validity in regard to SK's understanding of Christianity, that is, as a delimitation of it when it comes to the category of "teaching".⁸⁶ This much can be said, however: that if it does not work with regard to SK's "philosophy", there is reason to assume that it will also prove inadequate with regard to his "theology".

Moving on to clear and more positive parallels to the present project in SK research, it is obvious that, at least with respect to point of departure, there is common ground between the our approach and Sløk's book on *Die Anthropologie Kierkegaards (The Anthropology of Kierkegaard)*. However, Sløk finds it so obvious that SK's authorship is a development of "anthropological definitions"⁸⁷ that he sees it unnecessary to discuss the methodological problem of the status of anthropology and its place in SK's epic-literary whole. In spite of his intention in terms of method, that "in these circumstances, everything depends on the precision with which one has outlined the beginning of the problem at issue"⁸⁸, it still seems that he here implicitly identifies these aspects. Sløk's failure to carry out his own methodological and critical program is presumably the reason that – or, rather, an expression of the fact that – his own "existential philosophical" concern and point of view comes, in all too direct a manner, to constitute the tendency of his interpretation, that is, by defining "what is the central problem" in Kierkegaard.

Sløk's main point is to show what "evidently makes the philosophy of Kierkegaard a philosophy of existence"⁸⁹. In accordance with his terminology and his philosophical point of view, which both distance themselves from all "metaphysics" and "ontology"⁹⁰, the fundamental idea in his anthropology (namely, the assertion that existence is immanently normative) seems fittingly expressed in such concepts as "transcendence" and "the human persons' possibility of taking up a different relation to his or her content".⁹¹ However, this definition is "suspiciously" close to that which, in another context, is given of the "existential" concept of freedom "in general", namely that "freedom means nothing other than the absence of all essential factors", meaning that "one distances oneself from everything and thereby puts into effect the opposition one immediately senses between oneself and any content".⁹² It would seem that this concentration upon one important anthropological problem, the concept of freedom, has forced other relevant anthropological themes in SK's thought into the background. In general, what is neglected is that which the present work would define as the "genetic-psychological" context of freedom, that is, the conditions in the general mental and physical constitution making freedom possible.

It is undoubtedly SK's view that freedom cannot be logically grounded (*i.e.*, presented as the necessary result of human self-reflection), because, as Haufniensis says, freedom "comes forth out of nothing" (6:197). In the ethical perspective, freedom is pure spontaneity, that is, self-interpretation. But it also presupposes a basis of definite mental and physical functions and a developmental cycle, which actualizes and gives form to these functions in a concrete historical context. It is SK's perception and presentation of this aspect of freedom that allows

his concept of freedom to appear as in some sense grounded, and keeps it from appearing as a sheer postulate or existential appeal.

What is valuable in *Fischer's* presentation of SK's theory of stages in *Existenz und Innerlichkeit* (*Existence and Inwardness*) is his emphasis upon this functional connection between "biology" and "ethics" – although this does not mean that Fischer actually succeeds in carrying out his program in his analyses. Fischer's emphasis is best expressed in an introductory account of the various constitutional modes of the stages of life. Despite his rather loose treatment of the textual material and his correspondingly daring and "metaphysical" interpretive formulas, Fischer touches upon a major point in regard to SK's anthropology. For example, when it is said, that "the fundamental possibilities of the human achievement of personality, which are available simultaneously to the individual at each phase of life (although they are not all developed with the same fullness) [...] also come to the human person in the form of tasks in a sequence during course of his biological development".⁹³ This is likewise the case when it is said that a human being "discovers himself as body-spirit-soul and as a living being conditioned in this plural determination".⁹⁴ Even if Fischer's thesis on "biological-ethical parallelism"⁹⁵ must be said to be an artificial construct, his general point of view on the interconnection between the conditions of mental-physical development, on the one hand, and the fundamental existential possibilities, on the other, is a position which is indispensable for an holistic presentation of SK's anthropology.

Within the almost immeasurable mass of Kierkegaard-studies there are a series of interpretive essays, which have areas of affinity with the point of view taken by the present work. This is particularly the case with respect to works from the post-war period, when SK – after to a great extent having been "managed" by scholarship having either a "theological" or a "psychological-biographical" orientation – has again come to be heard, to a greater extent and in a more systematic way, as a philosopher. From the great mass of contributions, it is here only possible to take notice of a small selection of works that have a clear affinity of design with the present project.

Fahrenbach's book, *Kierkegaards existenzdialektische Ethik* (*The existential-dialectical Ethics of Kierkegaard*), already discussed, attempts to characterize SK's existential analysis as a contribution to philosophical ethics. The work's general affinity with the present project may be seen in the fact that it attempts to present "certain philosophically demonstrable aspects",⁹⁶ and also by the fact that to a certain degree, if in a somewhat digressive form, it presents SK's connections with German idealism and their common interest in certain problems.⁹⁷ However, even in its point of departure Fahrenbach's interpretation is rather narrow in relation to the anthropological whole, as the analysis is limited to "ethical existence". This places Fahrenbach's interpretive essay in connection with the study by Sløk mentioned above, which clearly served as an inspiration to Fahrenbach, inasmuch as Fahrenbach says of Sløk's work that "it is beyond doubt one of the best interpretations of Kierkegaard at present".⁹⁸ However, it is clear from the way he defines his interpretive project, that Fahrenbach, unlike Sløk, is conscious of the fact that his attempt does not

exhaust the entirety of the anthropological material. And Fahrenbach's evaluation of Sløk's book and its limitations is fundamentally similar to the one given above; Fahrenbach writes, "In order to determine more specifically the methodological character of Kierkegaard's anthropology, it would also be useful to investigate the methodological sense of the 'psychological' consideration".⁹⁹ It must still be said that Fahrenbach, in his own analysis of "ethical existence's presuppositions in the dialectic of existence",¹⁰⁰ does not make use of the anthropological material relevant for such an approach to the problem, and which could be demonstrated in what he calls "psychological observation". This remains true of Fahrenbach in spite of the fact that he tackles the question at a deeper level than Sløk and fundamentally deals with the genetic problem of the development of "factual existence" (presence) into "consciousness of existence".

A similar concentration upon the "ethical" dimension of anthropology, or the concept of freedom, resembling the one found in Sløk and Fahrenbach, can be seen in Blass' work, *Die Krise der Freiheit im Denken Søren Kierkegaards. (The Crisis of Freedom in Søren Kierkegaard's Thinking)* The strength of this study is the systematic manner in which freedom is exhibited as a process within the framework of human constitution. Freedom is understood as a synthesis of autonomous functions of consciousness (reflection and choice), corresponding to man's fundamental ontological situation, its "duplicity", *i.e.*, the dialectic between "existence" and "consciousness of existence". To the extent that it turns into sheer construction, its systematic character is, however, at the same time its weakness, in that it finally tears the unitary or "genetic" interconnectedness of SK's anthropology (in the doctrine of stages) to shreds.

The assumptions underlying Holl's work on *Kierkegaards Konzeption des Selbst (Kierkegaard's Conception of the Self)* are in one important aspect identical with the interpretive perspective of the present work, namely in the attempt to make use of the ontological implications of SK's theory of "the self" (das Selbst) within the context of certain important ideas from German idealism (Fichte and Hegel). But when this approach to the problem is defined more specifically as "making observations of a more general nature about the formal conditions of Kierkegaard's thinking",¹⁰¹ and when the methodical grip as well as the relation to the philosophical tradition is compressed within the category "model of thought",¹⁰² the result of the interpretation is, for one thing, limited in relation to the concrete philosophical subject matter. Furthermore – and this is the principal objection – the result is characterized by an external and uncongenial understanding based on a constructed standard of measure. Holl's analysis tends toward the disqualification of SK's central philosophical point – the ontological schism between thought and reality – as a self-contradiction. Since Kierkegaard "has also created a philosophy of identity which indirectly abolishes the apparent separation between thinking and being", it is obvious that his "thesis that thinking and being are not in any sense identical, is refuted by Kierkegaard himself".¹⁰³ The decisive premise for such an evaluation is that SK's thought does not go beyond the level of a so-called "philosophy of consciousness".¹⁰⁴

Methodologically, *Wilde's study, Kierkegaards Verstandnis der Existenz (Kierkegaard's Understanding of Existence)* is basically a descriptive exposition of SK's thought, treating it as an independent universe of meaning. As such, it differentiates itself radically from the sort of all encompassing critical and evaluative interpretation represented by Holl. In view of its topic, the concept of existence, one might think that Wilde's work could be fruitfully correlated with our own interpretive attempt. However, this is not the case, neither with regard to method nor to subject matter, even though at various points it does have relevance for the present work. From a methodological point of view, the work is organized as an analysis of usage, a "verbal investigation"¹⁰⁵ of the term "existence" in SK, within the framework of an historical and genetic perspective.¹⁰⁶ The result of the study, however, turns out to be systematic, both due to the intrinsic value of the concept – a definition of what "Kierkegaard understands 'existence' to mean"¹⁰⁷ – and because of the concept's central position within the structure of SK's thought. This result is symptomatic of the fact that the attempt is marked by a discrepancy between method and subject matter. In the final analysis, this discrepancy springs from a tacit identifying of the concept and the term from the outset. To the extent that it dissolves during the course of the analysis itself, this identification really functions as an accidental point of departure for "discussing" SK, and not for seriously penetrating his thought.

Approaching the end of this summary of relevant research, I draw attention to *Kierkegaard and Consciousness*, by *Shmuëli*, as a possible party for dialogue. Shmuëli's study is certainly characterized by a central anthropological approach to SK's thought. The key to Shmuëli's interpretation is that the totality of SK's thought can be defined as "the description of the structure and behavior of human consciousness",¹⁰⁸ and that SK's philosophy of the stages may consequently be understood as a presentation of "successive steps in the gradual awakening of consciousness".¹⁰⁹ The strength of this interpretive effort is that it relates SK's thought to a fundamental ontological problem, the "problem of reality" connected to our experience of self and of the world. The weakness and the lopsidedness of his work is that his understanding is prejudiced by an interpretive priority given to the concept "consciousness", as well as by the author's own understanding of the internal problem pertaining to "consciousness", for which he does not seek sufficient support in SK himself. From this point of departure, SK's interpretation of Christianity is understood, in a fashion both overly direct and untenable, as a "solution" to the Kantian and epistemologically defined "problem of reality", *i.e.*, the possibility of transcending consciousness-immanent reality as "phenomenal", in the direction of "being *qua* being" or "transcendent reality".¹¹⁰

It can certainly be maintained that SK understands Christianity as the highest form of "repetition" (cf. 5:131), to be the true fulfillment of its intention, which is "metaphysical" in a weighty sense of the word. But the "reality-problem" thus solved cannot rightly be said to have its origin in man's definition as "consciousness". This is so even though a philosophically-couched analysis of man's fundamental difficulty, sin, must take into account the conditions for the expression of sin and the conditions of the historical and

psychological reality contained in this aspect of human constitution. (Cf., e.g., *The Sickness Unto Death*: “Despair viewed according to the category of consciousness”.)

In the section entitled “About Consciousness in General”, what Shmuëli presents as the ontological problem of “consciousness” coincides more or less with the problem of reality, which reflection – as the superior principle of existence – creates; and this level of reality is fundamentally surpassed – in an anthropological, but, of course not, in an epistemological, sense – in the ethical form of existence, where the autonomy of reflective consciousness is broken by the “ideal” will in the choice of the self. It is as a result of this tendency that Shmuëli gives a completely skewed description of the ethical stage, when saying that: “The transition from the esthetic to the ethical stage consists of awakening of consciousness, which then becomes reflective. Man frees himself from the abstractions of the esthetic stage by reflection”.¹¹¹

Taylor’s broadly-based comparison of Hegel and SK in *Journeys to Selfhood* is parallel to the present work in the sense that “the method” in Taylor’s case is also to use the idealist (in this case, Hegel’s) schema for the constitution of reality (the self-realization of reason) as a basis for interpreting SK’s anthropology. This synoptic schema gives a good general result when it comes to getting a grasp of the basic common problem determining the two philosophical positions. By means of very comprehensive accounts of the two authorships, it is made abundantly clear that both are defined by the problem of the human subject’s identity with itself. On the other hand, the comparison is not carried out with similar thoroughness when it comes to clarifying the decisive differences between the two, and thus, insufficient attention is paid to the areas, which are of particular and fundamental importance in SK’s philosophy, to the extent that it has an “anti-idealist” basis.

The analysis of the differences does not go much further than the general history-of-philosophy sort of classification, labeling Hegel and SK, respectively, as representatives of a “collectivist” and an “individualist” ontology. This rather thin result is undoubtedly connected to the use of these schematized positions as “standpoints” within the ongoing theological and philosophical debate, in this case about the “social character” of the individual. This way of using SK and Hegel contributes in particular to a repression of the more underlying dimension of the relation between them. The fundamental problem Hegel and SK share is of course a historically mediated one, which therefore cannot be the “same” for SK as for Hegel. If there is a philosophically relevant connection between Hegel and SK, it is conditioned by the generally critical attitude toward Hegel’s philosophy within the idealist tradition itself, *i.e.*, new approaches to the philosophical problems first created by Hegel’s system itself. From this problematic-historical point of view, a non-historical “dialogue” between Hegel and SK of the sort which Taylor is attempting to construct, is unable to capture the decisive lines separating the two. The present author believes, with *Walter Schulz*, that these lines of separation can only be illuminated by a critical development of the “problem of constitution” to which Hegel’s system was replying, namely, the question of the range or scope of the *rational subject* (level of *a priori* categories) as a

constitutive factor of reality. (For a more detailed discussion of Taylor's interpretation, confer section 14, "Subjectivity: Self-Acceptance or Self-Creation?")

This rather summary and evaluative array of possible points of connection between the present work and existing Kierkegaard-research is of course not intended as sufficient defense for our argument, but only as a provisional and suggestive placement of the interpretation found here. Substantive discussion of interpretive points of view must necessarily take place within a treatment of particular anthropological themes, but even here it will not be possible to provide fully-rounded and "just" discussions of the various contributions, due to a need to give priority to SK's own texts.

D. General Problems of Method

The preceding pages have presented a general delimitation of the subject matter of the present study with respect to the entirety and inner teleology of SK's authorship, and, at the same time, positions have been taken on a portion of the methodological problems necessarily arising in an interpretation of such a composite and ambiguous literary whole. This is especially true with regard to the problems connected to the indirect form of communication. It is important to take note of the fact that, in the general sense, indirect communication is found throughout the authorship, including the non-pseudonymous "edifying" writings, inasmuch as their aim is also personal self-activity. In its concrete expression, the maieutic has many forms and levels. Its concrete contents are determined, in part, by the subjectivity (the situation) the communication has in view and wishes to influence toward self-activity, and, in part, by the goal of interpreting Christianity as an existential challenge to "the individual". As far as the latter chief purpose, the discursive philosophical works must also be defined as indirect communications. They are defined by the hermeneutic and didactic logic that SK retrospectively (possibly as a rationalization) describes as: "away from the System, and so on, and towards becoming a Christian" (18:106). However, in relation to the subject matter of anthropology – the philosophical analysis of the human existential situation – they must be viewed as direct communication, even though they have an immediate maieutic function due to the objective problems with which they deal. As has been shown, this is not true in the same "direct" sense for the so-called epic writings or interpretations of existence, in which anthropological knowledge is both the premise for the presentation of concrete existential figures and is also expressed in the figures' reflections upon the presuppositions of their forms of existence.

An interpretation, having as its aim the systematic presentation of these anthropological elements, must take note of this complex literary and hermeneutic structure, and in this way respect the peculiarities of its subject matter. But in doing so, it does not have to apologize – as has become the custom in Kierkegaard-research – for apparently avoiding an "existential" understanding of SK's text, *i.e.*, neglecting his "real" intention. In adherence to this tradition, *Fahrenbach* maintains that "An interpretation of Kierkegaard undertaken in a naive

“objective” attitude is a contradiction of Kierkegaard’s view that a mediation of existence cannot be understood and interpreted like a ‘doctrine’.¹¹² The opinion of the present work is that this difference remains only a construct, even on Fahrenbach’s terms, which both the word “naive” and the quotation marks indicate. The point is that an interpretation that is “objective” – that is, adequate in relation to the conceptual underpinnings of an interpretation of existence – cannot overlook the maieutic intention immanent in it. Fahrenbach himself makes this point pithily in his criticism of Diem, when he says that “in Kierkegaard, the category has a [...] hermeneutic significance, *i.e.*, it determines fundamental forms of existence which as such are different modes of self-understanding”.¹¹³

To the extent that existential actuality is essentially self-activity or self-understanding – that is, to the extent that it constitutes what has here been called a hermeneutic process – an “objective” analysis of this “essence” or area of reality will, with “objective” necessity, have maieutic significance as long as the individual in question has the intellectual prerequisites making possible an understanding of this analysis. It is against this background that “lecturing” writings such as *The Concept of Anxiety*, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, and *The Sickness Unto Death*, may be understood as links in indirect communication, both with regard to the universally human basic possibilities and with respect to Christianity. They are links in the actualization of the former, which in turn are prerequisite for an “existential” relation to the latter (Cf. VIII B 2 88, p. 182).

Thus it is not necessarily the case, as *Holl* would have it, that an interpretation which “is concerned only with the objective side of the work [...] skirts around the problem of its appropriation”.¹¹⁴ It is precisely this “bypassing” of the hermeneutic character of the analysis of existence, which is uncongenial in *Holl*’s project.

The principal methodological problem, still necessary to address, is the relation between a systematic and a genetic mode of understanding. In both cases it is a matter of historical interpretation. The difference lies in the manner in which that interpretation is shaped in relation to the historical material in SK’s authorship. Since the approach to the problem taken by the present work is systematic – the study of SK’s anthropology in terms of religious-philosophical thinking – the question reduces itself to the following: What significance can a genetic mode of understanding have within this framework? This method may be developed in various directions: either by way of a strictly psychological-biographical dimension or by reference to “objective” connections of themes and ideas. In the latter case we deal with influences from poetry and from philosophical and theological thought, both by means of affiliation with intellectual history in general and by connections with the cultural milieu of the time, which necessarily served to mediate the broader and more general tradition.

All of these interpretive perspectives are possible in principle, and all can, according to the type of problem addressed, be fruitful. In the present case extensive use of psychological-biographical analysis must be regarded as relatively unproductive (even though it has borne fruit in *Geismar*’s work, for example). And, in pure form, the intellectual-historical perspective may easily tend toward the same result – a biographical “clarification of

motives” instead of an analysis of themes – because connections between ideas are necessarily established in a psychological and social situation. Such an understanding can of course be useful as an accessory to systematic interpretation, but I cannot join *Thulstrup* in claiming that demonstrating SK’s “contact with very special literary sources” is prerequisite for “understanding the *de facto* meaning of the texts”.¹¹⁵

In addition to these principle matters, there are quantitative technical reasons pertaining to the scholarly apparatus which make it inappropriate to provide a detailed account of the relations of SK’s thought to his immediate cultural milieu, his studies, etc. On the other hand, it is important for the present study to understand SK’s thought against the background of his broader intellectual context, where connections, according to their type, fundamentally transcend what is genetically demonstrable in a technical sense. Regardless of how much intellectual-historical retrospection may be built upon this basis, it is expedient for the present study to remain limited to demonstrating the negative-positive or “dialectical” connection with certain fundamental themes in the then-dominant philosophical mainstream, German idealism. In a general sense, this is the “natural” sphere of concepts and problems in which to place SK’s thought, and it is thus one of the prerequisites for presenting it as an integral and thought-through philosophical position.

The fact that the authorship came into being by way of a rather unique process presents us with a “genetic” problem of a completely different sort. It developed in accordance with a “didactic purpose” which was undoubtedly composite and ambiguous. Furthermore, this purpose probably only developed quite gradually into a definite and dominant intention: the negation of “Christendom” and the characterization of Christianity as a “mode of existence”, as SK puts it in his rationalizing/interpretive views of his own authorship. This contingency is expressed in the retrospective views themselves, when SK defines the authorship as his “own upbringing” (X 2 A 171). His own understanding of “the structure of the authorship” (X 2 A 106) is “an understanding which has been acquired little by little” (X 5 B 145; Cf. X 1 A 283, X 5 B 168, 214, and 18:124f.). Despite its chance nature, which is admitted to, SK’s final judgment is that there is “a totality in the whole of it” (X 1 A 116; Cf. X 1 A 300, X 6 B 4:3).

The principal methodological problem in this connection is not whether or not one agrees to SK’s own judgment, but whether the approach to the problem taken by the current work makes it necessary to take a position on this question at all. What is in any case clear is that – to the extent that it essentially concerns SK’s consciousness about the purpose of his authorship and the concrete way in which it is to be brought to realization – the question lies on a completely different plane from the present work. It has no immediate contact with the philosophical aspects with which the present work deals, namely, an anthropological understanding as the fundamental premise for the interpretations of existence, and, ultimately, for the interpretation of Christianity. The present study does not provide any basis to assume that there have been basic changes at this level, *i.e.*, in the understanding of what constitutes the fundamental human possibilities. A genuinely genetic mode of understanding

– such that questions are asked about the development of SK’s thoughts on anthropology – does not appear relevant in this connection. That sort of questioning can only be of immediate importance in individual cases where its usefulness may be demonstrated for a clarification of the systematic conception behind SK’s anthropology.

The question of a possible shift in SK’s view of man, as arises in connection with the later part of the authorship and his attack on the church in particular, is a much broader problem area. The principal view taken here is that, to the extent that this implies a new anthropological understanding, it essentially has to do with the possibility (or the lacking possibility) of bringing to realization the fundamental task of human existence, *i.e.*, self-determination. With regard to this question – the “late” SK’s personal re-valuation of the cultural and political situation – both *Deuser’s* and *Nordentoft’s* interpretation of the phenomenon of “Spätwerk” present brilliant analyses.¹¹⁶

The “methodological” point of departure of the present work thus generally coincides with SK’s own judgment, that SK’s canon implies “a totality in the whole of it”, meaning, in this case, that there is a constant anthropology present through his authorship. The following analysis aims to show in what sense this is concretely the case. This abiding belief in wholeness refers itself to coherence between the forms of existence, whereas the anthropological preconditions vary in accordance with the type of elements of this wholeness constitutive for a particular form of life in presentation.

However, this general point of view does not solve the problems of interpretation in their entirety. If an anthropological element or a fundamental possibility is essentially present as a premise for an interpretation of existence, this means that the interpretation must take place in intimate connection with its “epic” context. This puts a stop to any untrammelled “synoptic” methodology. In these cases, the characterization of anthropology must therefore take place within the framework of an understanding of the literary and ontic context. The degree of correlation is dependent upon the type of connections present in the literary material. According to *Thulstrup* “every book [must be treated] as a totality with its own approaches to problems and its special historical and psychological presuppositions”.¹¹⁷

In the case of the systematic works, there is in principle more freedom with respect to an overall “synoptic” presentation. However, these works also are each unique in the profile of problems with which they deal, so that the principle of treating each of them as an integrated literary whole must be applied to a certain extent here as well.

The systematic anthropological intention present in the interpretations of existence and in the partial analyses, and which makes it at all possible to speak of *Kierkegaard’s* anthropology as a whole, must be secured by placing these aspects in a systematic framework. A certain amount of support may be found for this undertaking in SK’s own principal systematic idea, the theory of stages. But this does not imply that, as *Thulstrup* puts it, I “wish to read the entire literary work of Kierkegaard like one big book, so to speak”.¹¹⁸

Unless such works-oriented interpretations are placed in an overall understanding of the whole, the interpretation will remain blind to the dialectic between the interpretations of

existence and the anthropology. The result becomes a misunderstood identification of the two, or what *Fahrenbach* believes to be pointing out as a tendency in *Adorno's*) interpretive attempt, namely, that “the speculative intention is wiped out by the pragmatic critique”.¹¹⁹ This is a precondition for being able to interpret SK's authorship as a philosophical contribution. The present study is in agreement with *Schulz*, saying that: “A philosophical exposition of a philosophical work is essential *systematic*, as it ‘puts together’ from their very foundations those references underlying and directing the work”.¹²⁰

As shown, such a holistic interpretation can find support in SK's “explanations” to his own authorship. These give an outline of the authorship's hermeneutic-anthropological structure, *i.e.*, the theory of stages. Support may also be found in his systematic works, chief among them *The Sickness Unto Death*. This book is the “paradigmatic” anthropological work of the authorship. At the same time, however, a critical understanding must in principle go beyond pure reproduction. It must seek to point out the non-explicit connections and presuppositions in the understanding formulated, and in the latter case also point out the sphere of understanding, which even in the most fundamental statements is only “implicitly thought of” and not “expressed”. This is not a methodological point of view in the narrow sense, but a way of calling attention to a problem of interpretation which in principle is operative wherever one deals with expressions of human activity, the specifically historical and intentional dimension of reality. The general problem of interpretation becomes critical when that which has to be interpreted is in the highest sense what can be called a product of reflection, a philosophical text, in which reflection upon “the presuppositions” is a part of the matter itself.

To reach “the outside” of such a thought-complex, in order to make “the implied thoughts” explicit, is a task transcending the level of methodological technique. But as a basis from which to start, the “classification” in regard to intellectual history or the history of philosophy will be an indispensable part of any such attempt at understanding, as long as this understanding from “the outside” is not bound to any simple schema – e.g., “idealism”, “post-idealism”, “subjectivism”, “existentialism”, etc. Instead, this understanding from “the outside” must be compared with and confirmed by an understanding from “the inside”, that is, the philosophical self-understanding of the text one interprets. Saying this does not annul the necessarily circular structure of understanding, its tacit commitment to its own sphere of understanding, but it may at least limit the arbitrariness connected with an “engaged” understanding of an isolated text.

This is the general foundation for the following attempt to characterize SK's anthropology against the background of what is understood to be the principal tendencies or fundamental ideas of German idealism. This is not a case of “historicizing method” stifling “a thinker's individuality”;¹²¹ that is, it is not a question of independence or dependence, but of an adequate understanding of SK's thought, not as a “symptom” but as “intention”.

Chapter I

ANTHROPOLOGICAL STRUCTURE: EXISTENCE AND CONSCIOUSNESS**1. Reality and Consciousness in German Idealism****A. Introduction: Kierkegaard and German Idealism**

The following pages will give a brief survey of German idealism from Kant onward.¹²² It is impossible, within the framework of an analysis of SK's anthropology, to give a well-rounded presentation of this philosophical tradition, with its conflicting variants and the enormous breadth of its subject matter. On the other hand, it is still important to clarify a number of the fundamental traits, which may serve as avenues of access to our understanding of SK's philosophy. This will be a necessary background in order to produce an interpretation of his anthropology on a systematic-philosophical plane, and not just level it down to anthropological "elements" or "views of life" in self-reflection.¹²³

It is of course well known by anyone studying SK's writings that he had relations to German idealism and Hegel in particular, the explicit side of this being his thorough polemic against "speculation". Quite apart from this, knowledge of the general development of the philosophy of his period, viewed in conjunction with the fundamental tendencies of SK's existential analysis (namely, the problem of individual freedom and identity), can make it very clear that, as a philosopher, SK's thinking is intrinsically related to the problems that the history of philosophy has labeled "post-idealist".¹²⁴ In his clash with the idealist perception of reality, SK, just like the "humanistic" Marx, must put up with thinking within the fundamental framework of this same tradition. Change comes about when the concepts are "broken through" by means of new presuppositions and new ways of posing the problems.

To this extent, Anz is right in his "demonstration" of SK's affinity to the idealist conceptual tradition and ontology.¹²⁵ Anz' fundamental error is that he does not give sufficient attention to the hermeneutical problem, and therefore has a tendency to treat philosophical concepts as if they were static things with have more or less identical meaning in the various philosophical and psychological contexts.

A strictly historical and genetic analysis of the traditional context for SK's thought would first of all have to relate SK to "post-idealism" and its chief representatives. Important names would be *I. H. Fichte*, whom SK verifiably studied and was impressed with; similarly, *Rosenkranz* and *Erdmann*, as representatives of a modified Hegelianism; and further, not least in significance were the philosophers from the Danish milieu, such as *Sibbern* and *P. M. Møller*, who were SK's teachers and personal friends.¹²⁶ The reason for this still not being the principal line of investigation for the present work, is not because the significance of the contemporary milieu to SK's philosophical development is not appreciated, but due to the rather obvious circumstance that none of those named had an originality enabling them to

shape the fundamental philosophical problems of the period in the way this had been done by the representatives of classical idealism. A reasonable situating of SK's philosophy within such a context must in any case include the classical version of idealism as the broader intellectual horizon. It is therefore both possible and fruitful to go rather directly into the original part of the tradition, quite independent of any demonstration of what SK "read and heard", in order to avoid becoming lost in the multiplicity of demonstrable relations of ideological and psychological sort.

If it is classical idealism which determines the intellectual horizon, it is post-idealism and the Danish mediation of idealism which are the more decisive for SK's concrete positions, e.g. with respect to the interpretation of the idea of the Absolute or the divine. In post-idealism, the idealist problem of self-knowledge takes on a "psychological-empirical" orientation, while the idea of the Absolute receives a corresponding twist in the direction of an "orthodox" Christian notion of God. Concrete "experience" in the interpretation of the human self and in the position of values was to correct Hegel's conceptual-analytical method. From an anthropological point of view, the "ethical individual" was placed at the center of concern and assigned the task of realizing the in-dwelling individual idea, which at its highest level implies the "mystical" unity with his or her divine ground. "In the personal self-consciousness and the free willing of the individual the divine selfhood reveals itself wholly, being its image".¹²⁷ In light of the development of this then-current aprioristic ontology, one may at least see the contours of SK's "existentialism" and the significance of the personal "standpoint".

Some aspects of the thought of *the younger Fichte* may illustrate this "personalism" present in German philosophy. Fichte believes he is going further along *the elder Fichte's* philosophical path, namely, the transition from the "formalism" of the earlier theory of knowledge, having deduced content from form, to the "living reality of life", or God, which manifests itself in and for consciousness, giving consciousness its content. This is the criterion used in criticizing Hegel, who continued on the course taken by the early Fichte and confused "form" with "essence, the matter itself".¹²⁸ Hegel's transition from logic to metaphysics is seen as a sheer postulate, an arbitrary *leap* of thought,¹²⁹ and is at the same time the basis for the greatest error in the Hegelian system, the pantheistic conception of God, the coinciding of man's and God's self-knowledge.¹³⁰ In opposition to this merely logically construed God, Fichte proposes an "experienced" God, the genuine knowledge of which can only build on the insights and perceptions of "experience".¹³¹ Such certainty springs from the individual consciousness, which with its experience of finitude contains "the certainty of something eternal", which must itself be a consciousness, "a primal consciousness" ("God as ego").¹³² The cognitive ego of the elder Fichte has here become a metaphysical ego, the power of divine creation.

As with Hegel, the world/history is here thought of as a manifestation of the Absolute – in this case, God's consciousness – with a dash of dualism. Creation is the "emanating" of fundamental traits of God, "the realization of the infinitely individualized thought of God".¹³³

Everything God creates is thus individual, just as God Himself is.¹³⁴ The metaphysical basis for “personalistic philosophy” may here be seen; the ethical task is to realize a God-given capacity toward absolute “self-transparency” and a “unity of the life of freedom with God”.¹³⁵ A type of “Christian philosophy”, the typical late idealist re-evaluation of Christianity as a “positive religion of revelation” may be seen here. The “principle of experience” holds here as well: the philosophical concept cannot be in direct conflict with the living religious consciousness, which is indeed the fundamental source of cognition itself.¹³⁶

The fundamental tendency in Fichte’s philosophical point of view may be summarized briefly as follows: in an epistemological sense, he abandons the idealist idea of constitution; that is, he gives up the notion that reality is formed in accordance with the structure of the subject. Epistemological theory is simplified radically into a sort of “depiction theory”; knowledge of the world is also a “revelation”, “the reflection of the world in us”.¹³⁷ In this “experience-focused” epistemological perspective, constitution is placed on a completely different ontological level. Instead of man, God is now defined as “all-constituting”.

The definition of God as “the all-constituting being”, is also employed by *Sibbern*. This demonstrates how in various ways the lines of thinking may run parallel. Together with *P.M. Møller*, *Sibbern* represents the immediate (and personal) technical philosophical milieu for SK’s thought, and together with SK they belong in a Danish tradition of ethical and psychological philosophy, which can be followed back to *Treschow* and *Steffens*.¹³⁸

Treschow introduced the study of “human nature” with the practical and ethical aim of showing how nature is developed and organized in its social context. Anthropology is at the same time moral philosophy and a study of pedagogy, among other things.¹³⁹ The point of view is in part “naturalistic”, in that spirit and moral consciousness are viewed as upper links in a biological hierarchy.¹⁴⁰ It is also in part “idealistic”, in that mind and body are not thought of as two substances but as different levels of organization of the same whole, which in turn leads to the practical result of the body appearing as an “instrument of the mind”.¹⁴¹ The other basis for ethics is the “metaphysical” idea of an “individual fundamental form” conceived of as an eternal goal. Individuality is “the pattern in accordance with which everyone must form himself; it is the idea which every person must always seek to draw nearer to”.¹⁴² These two basic views – the progression of the spirit from the corporeal sphere and the predetermination of the individual – constitute the main contents of *Treschow*’s personalistic philosophy: the imperative of self-activity, uniting the psychological (reflection) with moral freedom (the ideal) into an “Order in all the activities of the soul”.¹⁴³

Steffens’ particular contribution in this context is his *metaphysics of individuality*, which he first formulated in his Copenhagen lectures of 1803: “The egoistic, individualizing tendency [...] awakens with more and more intensity and strength, the more individual the developmental steps of Nature become”.¹⁴⁴

With his theory of human moods (psychological pathology), among other things, *Sibbern* further developed the idea of individuality and a sense of the empirical multiplicity of human life. But a foreordained harmony reigns between “the *a priori*” and the “empirical” because

of the all-constituting ground, “which constitutes both the thing and the idea of it, and which thus makes present within the perceiver the image of the thing as it is in itself and apart from the perception of it”.¹⁴⁵ Sibbern is thus no less an “idealist” than Hegel, for example. His main objection to Hegel is that Hegel is not idealist enough, that he only works toward “the genuinely original”, and neglects to complete the system by reconstructing existence in this light, and thereby fails to create a true speculative or “constitutive philosophy”.¹⁴⁶ This is the same sort of corrective broadening of Hegel presented by I. H. Fichte, that is, the necessity of *starting from* the highest standpoint.¹⁴⁷ In the same manner as Fichte, Sibbern requires that the *a priori* concept must be confirmed by experience – “be known to correspond to the empirically-given, so that knowledge becomes a real experience in the world of which the knower is part and parcel” – because it is always present as the “engendering” cause of conceptual knowledge.¹⁴⁸

Hegel is also attacked for his understanding of Christianity. The Absolute is understood “dualistically”, as “a region in which the infinite must first be thought in its fullness and mediated by itself”, thereby appearing as an objective actuality *for* man.¹⁴⁹ This satisfies the requirement that religious experience must allow one to recognize oneself in the philosophical concept of God. The philosophical confirmation of “the essential Christian knowledge” is concerned that the “empirical faith” be “the contents of life”, by which, philosophy must allow itself to be led in order to receive its own contents.¹⁵⁰ Sibbern’s philosophical program is “conservative” in a strict sense of the term, in that he wishes to include the manifold “experiential content” of human life in his philosophical system. Knowledge and feeling are given equal footing as modes of experience (“that which is collateral in existence”).¹⁵¹ Affective and intuitive insight, uniting perception and reflection, represents the highest sort of certainty, because it gives us the thing itself through a living connection to the thing.¹⁵² Religious faith is precisely such a pure “experiential synthesis”, forming human personality as an “incarnation” of absolute actuality.¹⁵³ It is realized by means of a continually higher degree of “self-activity” which “penetrates the mind in every direction”, so that “by its power everything is fused into unity and wholeness”.¹⁵⁴ When Sibbern speaks of how the individual “presents himself to himself and thus comprehends and posits him self”¹⁵⁵ the line of thought not only runs back to the elder Fichte, but also forward to SK’s idea of the “appropriation” of given life in its wholeness.

Møller’s philosophy of personality has a more unsystematic form, but distinguishes itself through its appreciation of the didactic aspect of philosophy, corresponding to his interest in language and the role of fiction in human life. The principle of personality – that truth is created through self-activity – receives a “practical-ethical” emphasis. This does not render impossible Møller’s fundamental view of existence as an *a priori* system. As a system of categories, ontology presupposes that “that which reasonable beings necessarily must think exists, necessarily exists, according to the manner in which it must be thought”; in this way it becomes possible “to present [as Hegel does] the necessary developmental steps of the human spirit”.¹⁵⁶ However, these concepts only take on real and concrete significance when they “are

used” in a “personally-lived experience” and in “the mother tongue”, just as that which is *a priori* it self becomes visible in the experiential process.

On this basis Møller (again, with Hegel) criticizes “the individual arbitrariness” in romantic irony, which vainly seeks to escape the historical necessity by which it is conditioned. This criticism of arbitrariness and ethical subjectivism is the main content of Møller’s theory of “affectation”. This describes how a person flees from the objective moral order into role-play and self-deception.¹⁵⁷ When Møller finally does turn against Hegel’s philosophy, it may be seen as an expression of the same fundamental point: a rejection of the arbitrary identification of the concepts of reflection with “the natural contents of life”. “It is only the unavoidable conditions of existence, not its entire factual contents, which may be developed *a priori* by science”.¹⁵⁸ Without this ontological dualism, “the finite personality” loses its meaning.¹⁵⁹

In the final run, the objective contents of life win out over the *a priori* concepts. These concepts cannot have any extensive critical function as far as the philosophical principle of knowledge holds the view that “tradition is the necessary content of thought”, the result being that the validity of philosophy is determined by its degree of correspondence with the “reigning” tradition.¹⁶⁰ In this way, the “traditional” validity of Christianity is also assured, in opposition to a religious subjectivism, which is a “mere discovery of individual thought”.¹⁶¹ The denial of Christianity leads furthermore to a nihilistic view of values, as the collective counterpart of individual affectation.¹⁶²

It is not too hard to see a relatively concrete point of departure for SK’s philosophical thought in Sibbern’s and Møller’s practical and psychological re-interpretation of the idealist idea of constitution and in their definition of the basic *a priori* situation as the condition of individual development and self-determination in light of “tradition and Christianity”.

German idealism, with its transmission and shaping of the philosophical tradition in its historical entirety, was thus a decisive precondition – in providing the horizon of concepts and problems – for SK’s thought. Regardless of whether one accentuates its “post-idealist” or its original form, an understanding of it will thus be indispensable for any adequate understanding of SK. This view has nothing to do with a disregard for SK’s originality, with regard to his “dependence” on idealism, but is part of a larger hermeneutical argument. This point of view is particularly important for an interpretation intending to delineate what is original in SK’s thought, as this can only emerge in light of the positions, which his thinking – in the hermeneutic sense – presupposes. This is not to say that SK’s philosophy does not also imply a change in this horizon, in that he develops fundamentally new views, for instance in terms of ontology, and neither is he to be seen as absolutely locked up inside an idealist sphere of understanding. However, an horizon of understanding does not change in and by itself as horizon; rather, this necessarily takes place by means of a transformation of particular concepts in the face of particular problems, and the point of departure for discussing these problems must be identified within the framework of the given horizon.

This two-sided or “dialectical” relation is exemplified in SK’s polemic against Hegel, giving evidence not only to a profound qualitative difference with respect to philosophical points of view, but also of a similarly profound objective correspondence at the same time. As *Struve* claims: “the point of entry to Kierkegaard’s own thinking is his direct polemics against Hegel or against Danish Hegelianism”.¹⁶³ A clash presupposes a certain unity with regard to the fundamental problem with which the two parties deal. With SK and Hegel, it is certainly not a question of the solution of parts of certain philosophical problems within an overall consensus, but of the total perspective itself. It is a question of the possibilities and limits of philosophy itself, that is, the possibility of a “system of existence” (9:101). SK’s primary target is Hegel’s idea that it is possible for philosophical reflection to reach the Absolute, as the rational ground of the existence which “presents itself” to consciousness. In this sense, SK represents a fundamental break with idealist tradition, indeed with “rationalist” metaphysics in general. In other words, we see a confrontation with a kind of thinking which understands reality as a relation between concepts, that is, as a logical system, as in the case of Leibniz, for example, who understood reality on the basis of a model from the natural sciences. On the other hand, in SK’s rejection of the identification of rationality and existence there is a certain common ground, in a logical and hermeneutic sense, with Hegel’s point of view, in the sense that the negation is formally oriented towards the philosophical problem, which the “rationalistic” concept of reality was to solve. The fundamental problem presupposed in the Hegelian systematic conception is, as mentioned, the question of the unity of existence. In a general sense, this question can be said to be an “eternal” philosophical question, the philosophical question *par excellence*, which has motivated philosophical reflection since the time of the Ionic philosophy of nature. However, the problem of unity is expressed in a particular way in idealism, shaped by its immediate situation in taking its point of departure in Kant’s “criticism” or transcendental philosophy, but also in a broader historical perspective by the breakaway – seen particularly in the philosophy of Descartes – from ontological essentialism. As to not end up giving a detailed survey of the history of philosophy, we must here satisfy ourselves with showing the general tendency of this new view, *i.e.*, the view that the unity of existence can be understood and developed on the basis of the idea of man as a knowing being or as rational self-consciousness. The extent and the unity of existence are constituted in rational self-knowledge. In brief, epistemology becomes the fundamental discipline in relation to ontology, the comprehensive theory of the coherence of existence; epistemology is thus elaborated as a *unitary theory of the complex of knowledge*.

This development reached a high point in Kant’s transcendental philosophy, which was at the same time also a critical reconstruction of the same tradition, inasmuch as rationalistic metaphysics, represented by such thinkers as Spinoza and Leibniz, had again been in the process of annulling the epistemological approach to the experiencing self-consciousness, through their stressing of a mathematical-deductive ontology not mediated by experience. In a fundamental way, Kant’s “Copernican revolution” made the question of the unity of existence into a problem of the unity-creating function of the knowing consciousness.

Post-Kantian idealism is also dominated by this problem, despite the fact that it “annuls” Kant’s “dualism” in adopting a fundamental “monistic” position. Here, in a fashion analogous to “rationalism’s” use of the concept of “pre-stabilized harmony”, the ontological unity of consciousness is again made into the *a priori* point of departure for philosophical reflection. The unity of existence is guaranteed by means of a “deduction” of the logical contents of the Absolute. Epistemology and ontology here coincide, as was the case, for example, in Fichte. Hegel modifies this “monistic” synthesis of consciousness and existence with what could be called, somewhat untraditionally, a rehabilitation of epistemology as an independent and, in the strict sense, a foundational discipline. Instead of Fichte and Schelling’s guarantee of the unity of consciousness and existence by means of a theory of “the intellectual view”, Hegel puts forth his “theory of method” on the genesis of philosophical consciousness. The basis for this theory of reality is a reconstruction of the historical development of the knowing consciousness, *i.e.*, its development as consciousness of the absolute ground of unity. The unity of existence is a “subjective-historical” process.

If SK’s philosophy is situated within this perspective, it could define his position more generally as a *break with the primacy of epistemology* in the understanding of reality, that is, as a break with the epistemological as fundamental basis for the constitution of the unity of existence. *What remains, in brief, is still the problem concerning the unity of existence, and also self-consciousness as basis for dealing with this problem.* The latter element is what vulgar philosophy is wont to call SK’s “subjectivism”. Instead of consciousness as a rational capacity, priority is here given to *consciousness as a volitional-ethical reality*, which is thus also *finite and individual*. In relation to Hegel and idealism, SK’s “existentialism” means that the reconstruction of rational self-consciousness does not annul its essential finitude and facticity, and that thus the idealist *sub specie aeternitatis* viewpoint is revealed as a postulate.

The general and “primeval-philosophical” problem of the unity of existence thus underlies SK’s existential analysis immediately, as an inheritance from idealism. In his presentation of the stages or fundamental possibilities of human life, there is clear structural similarity to the idealist reconstruction of the genesis of consciousness out of the indifferent totality of life into “absolute” consciousness or “Spirit”. The decisive difference is that “the indifference” (Schelling) for SK is not identified with the Absolute, but is seen as a given “actuality of life” or as “existence” in facticity. With the loss of the rational “pre-stabilized harmony”, the problem of “repetition” is thus transferred to the personal-ethical plane.

The tradition in research accustomed to reading SK from a point of view emphasizing his break with German idealism could here object that the present sketch for interpretation forces SK’s thought into a scheme which does not permit its uniqueness and originality to be expressed. It cannot be denied that there is a danger of distortion here, a risk that this interpretation will “construct” more than it “interprets”. However, as already mentioned, the risk must be taken precisely in order to get hold of what is essential in SK’s break with idealism. It is my contention that this goal atones for the fact that the following presentation of SK’s anthropology, viewed formally, has a “constructive” stamp, in that the traditional

idealist schema for the genesis of consciousness is used as a framework for interpretation. It is not here primarily a matter of a “choice” of “method”, but of a factual situation. If the interpretation is to be more than mere paraphrase, it is clear that the relation must be discussed using terms differing from those SK himself would use. It is here a matter of the classical hermeneutical program of understanding a subject “better” than he understands himself. This does not mean that a “critical and reconstructive” interpretation cannot also find confirmation precisely in the subject’s own words. In other words: the extent to which reconstruction does or does not shade over into pure fabrication cannot be decided ahead of time by a “methodological” discussion, but only on the basis of a concrete analysis faithful to the texts themselves.

B. Kant

What follows is an attempt to interpret Kant’s transcendental philosophy in light of the general problem of the relation between existence and consciousness. The aim is to establish an angle from which to approach the interpretation of original German idealism making it the clearest possible horizon – that is, in the “dialectical” sense – in which to situate SK’s anthropological thought.

The point of departure for interpreting Kant’s critical epistemology in this “ontological” direction is his fundamental intention to reorganize and reconstruct traditional metaphysics – the total understanding of existence through a system of concepts – on a “critical” foundation, that is, on the basis of a testing of the human epistemological capacity. The theory of existence presupposes a clarification of the structure of cognition, its ways of functioning, and its limits (cf., e.g., *K.d.r.V.* (B), xxxv).¹⁶⁴ This synthesis is also put forth within critical epistemology itself; in and with the concept of the constitutive role the subject has in experiencing reality.¹⁶⁵

The essence and basis of consciousness is the transcendental ego, which – within the framework of theoretical knowledge – is constituted by the system of categories, and which coordinates the data received by the senses into a logically coherent whole. By means of the “transcendental apperception” the perceptive and the logical functions are assigned to a *self-identical* subject. “For this unity of consciousness would be impossible if the mind in knowledge of the manifold could not become conscious of the ideality of function whereby it synthetically combines it in one knowledge” (*K.d.r.V.* (A), 108; cf. *Prolegomena*, 300). *Self-consciousness* or certainty of identity in this purely logical sense is the precondition for the fact that the perceptible world appears as empirical objectivity.

It is precisely this character of cognition and the relation to reality as *synthesis* – as the unity of a-logical and logical elements (the empirical use of the *a priori* synthesis) – which makes self-consciousness a necessary unifying function. *Synthesis and self-consciousness* are what mark the structure of the Kantian concept of reason, and thus also in his concept of the

world, to the extent that the world, both theoretically and practically, is constituted through the activity of reason.

It is this idea of constitution, which gives transcendental philosophy a possibility of raising itself to a “metaphysical” level in knowledge of reality. This happens with the development of the *a priori* elements into their systematic totality: which means “that the concepts of the reason aim at totality, *i.e.*, the collective unity of the entire possible experience, and thereby go beyond every given experience and become transcendent” (*Prolegomena*, 328; cf. *K.d.r.V.* (B), 869).

In brief, the unity of consciousness and existence is realized by means of the activity of rationality, and comes forth as “metaphysical” insight by means of “transcendental-philosophical” reflection upon the multiplicity of synthetic functions and their “collective unity”. Next, an attempt will be made to give depth to this rough outline of Kant’s model of reality by paying close attention to the relation between “theoretical” and “practical” rationality. In this way we may clarify Kant’s affinity to a “philosophy-of-identity” position.

Existence and the understanding of existence, respectively, have their fundamental form in the consciousness of the world as objective Nature. “Theoretical” knowledge is a rationalization of the consciousness of the world in general, relating itself to the world as a causally determined reality, or “mechanism of nature” (*K.d.r.V.* (B), xxix). As far as the realization of this by means of a series of synthetic functions – “the synthesis of the manifold so far as its constituents necessarily belong to one another” (*K.d.r.V.* (B), 202) – is concerned, one must at this point be satisfied with accepting the idea of the general and ontologically meaningful synthesis of “Sinnlichkeit” and “Verstand”. This is the synthesis of that which is given through the senses (Cf. *K.d.r.V.* (B), 68) and the categorical relations (cf. *K.d.r.V.* (B), 103f.), by virtue of the “subjective” concentration of the transcendental apperception: “We cannot think an object save through categories; we cannot know a thought-object save through intuition corresponding to these concepts” (*K.d.r.V.* (B), 165).

In light of the problem of reality, the structure of this conception may be defined as a juxtaposition of *facticity and spontaneity* (cf. *K.d.r.V.* (B), 132). This also defines the relation to reality as a “*delimited*” understanding of *existence*. This means that reason is essentially *finite*, because, in its dependence upon facticity, it cannot be productive (in the idealist sense), but only constitutive (co-determining). The particular relation of knowledge to “total” reality – which, as an ideal, is “given” in reason itself (cf. *K.d.r.V.* (A), VII) – manifests itself to the self-reflection of reason. The critique of reason must establish a decisive *limit* for knowledge. This happens negatively by means of the “limiting concept” of the “Ding an sich” (cf. *K.d.r.V.* (B), xxvi), the unknowable substratum of sensory affect, and positively through defining the idea of totality as having “regulative” functions (cf. *K.d.r.V.* (B), 670ff.).

The synthesis between consciousness and reality thus becomes an essentially regional and approximate arrangement within the sphere of empirical rationality (cf. *Prolegomena*, 56). On the other hand, this form of consciousness is only one element within the whole of rationality. It is subordinate to its “practical” dimension, which is a function of man as a “morally” acting

being. From the ontological and anthropological point of view, the basic function of theoretical reason is the constitution of the field of activity for the practical and moral consciousness (cf. *K.d.p.V.*, 78). This situation is what Kant – although (in comparison to Fichte) he lacks an explicit ontological aim – defines as the “primacy of practical reason [...] since all interest is ultimately practical and even that of speculative reason is conditional, and it is only practical employment of reason that it is complete” (*K.d.p.V.*, 219).

The priority given to the moral or “practical” dimension of human existence thus amounts to a defense of the “freedom of the will”. It is an expression of Kant’s critical reshaping of “rationalist” metaphysics.¹⁶⁶ The idea of the constitutive function of consciousness in the circumstances of empirical reality is precisely the decisive premise for this transformation.

The question now is how this empirical context is defined within the framework of moral self-realization. In any case, it is once again the case of a synthesis of reality and consciousness, but of a qualitatively different sort than in the instance of empirical reality, because consciousness has become better acquainted with itself as the constitutive basis for this aspect of the world. It realizes its essence as an *unconditioned* reality.

The transition is presented in summary form as early as in the preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason*: “But when all programs in the field of the super sensible has thus been denied to speculative reason, it is still open to us to enquire whether, in the practical knowledge of reason, data may not be found sufficient to determine reason’s transcendent concept of the unconditioned” (*K.d.r.V.* (B), xxi). The circumstances of empirical reality also imply a relation to the unconditioned as a necessary element in the structure of rationality, but, conditioned as it is by “the limits of sensibility” (*K.d.r.V.* (B), xxv), the relation cannot relate itself immediately to this intrinsic level. That can only happen indirectly, by means of the regulative functions, that is, the ideal of knowing reality in its entirety: “to find for the conditioned knowledge obtained through the understanding the unconditioned whereby its unity is brought to completion” (*K.d.r.V.* (B), 364). In its character of infinite striving, empirical knowledge demonstrates its practical character.¹⁶⁷ But it is “unconsciously” practical. Consciousness *about* its practical basis is really first attained by consciousness in moral self-reflection, when, by virtue of the immediate or non-empirically mediated relation to “das Unbedingte” (cf. *K.d.p.V.*, 4), which thereby loses its purely regulative significance – it liberates itself from the circumstances of empirical reality and becomes manifest to itself as an autonomous sphere in relation to the causal nexus of Nature.

Through moral self-reflection, consciousness of the subject’s self-identity is established on a higher level than in the transcendental apperception. This develops that aspect of rationality and reality, which from the outset is presupposed as a logical and static unity, because it now becomes active by itself. It realizes that the moral law is its own spontaneous product: “that freedom is the *ratio essendi* of the moral law, when the moral is the *ratio cognoscendi* of freedom” (*K.d.p.V.*, 5 A; cf. 84). “The Idealism of the transcendental logic reveals itself in its innermost kernel to be the Idealism of the ethical consciousness, and only thereby becomes the Idealism of consciousness as a whole”, *Kroner* says.¹⁶⁸ The absolutely good will (cf.

Grundlegung, 393) implies that the unconditioned, as the all-encompassing ground of reality, is manifest to the finite consciousness, and this means that subjectivity is radically free in relation to empirical reality (cf. *K.d.p.V.*, 51). *This is Kant's fundamental ontological and anthropological idea, that a comprehensive relation to reality can only be established, individually and socially, within the framework of moral self-realization.*

The problem of the unity of worldly existence thus becomes critical in the relation between moral reflection (as the participation of rational self-activity in the “primeval-ground” of reality) *and* the empirically constituted and sensorially “affected” subject. The form which the unity of consciousness and reality assumes for “transcendental” morality is not, indeed, “experiential reality”, but, when measured by this concept of reality, is in fact “unreal”, that is, pure ideality and demand. The solution to this is that human empirical reality becomes commensurable for a moral teleological evaluation in so far as the moral self-consciousness appears as ontologically primary: “In this view the rational being can now justly say of every unlawful action he performs, that he could very well have left it undone; although as appearance it is sufficiently determined in the past, and in this respect is absolutely necessary” (*K.d.p.V.*, 175; cf. 154f.). This transition from the sphere of reason – that is, from the sphere which Kant defines, in analogy with the theoretical constitution of Nature, as a “supersensible system of nature” (*K.d.p.V.*, 78) or as “the intelligible order of things” (*K.d.p.V.*, 86) ¹⁶⁹ – to the empirical field receives its principle systematic expression in the concept of the “causality” of “transcendental” freedom (cf. *K.d.p.V.*, 82, 169). And the “theoretical” problem or “Antinomie” which this conception of synthesis implies receives its “solution” in the theory of *the two-dimensionality of worldly existence* and in the concept of the “practical” regulative ideas. The difference between the status of these ideas within the practical and the theoretical spheres is not that they can now have a constitutive significance attributed to them – this is the case only for the “categories” – but only that, due to their regulative function, their “objective reality” (cf. *K.d.p.V.*, 239) becomes manifest as a logically necessary aspect.

However, the transition – that is, the unity of existence as a whole – cannot be empirically and theoretically demonstrated. The free moral will and its “causality” cannot be part of a theoretical understanding of an historical sequence of events, because the logic of theoretical reason is to reduce the sequence to an infinite series of conditions, without being able to fasten upon any one element as an absolute or unconditioned cause (cf., e.g., *K.d.r.V.* (B), 460, 528; *K.d.U.*, 387; and *K.d.p.V.*, 83). The modification of empirical reality by the unconditioned moral will can only be maintained as an *idea*, as a rationally necessary postulate of moral self-consciousness. The moral subject acts “as if his will were to be validly declared free both in itself and in theoretical philosophy” (*Grundlegung*, 448; cf. *K.d.p.V.*, 238). This is a consequence of the practical character of reason. The idea of empirical modification is a general condition for moral self-reflection, acknowledging a moral law, as imperative for the empirical will. This relation to reality is not capable of being experienced in accordance with Kant’s principal criterion for experience, namely that it must be “object-

related”, constituted by the synthesis of sensory material and categorical form. On the other hand, moral consciousness – the certainty about intelligible reality – emerges within the empirical subject by virtue of psychological functions – feeling, will, and reflection – even though it may certainly be said that Kant does not give fundamental and clear expression to this situation in the form of a concept of an “identity” of the empirical and the intelligible will.¹⁷⁰ This bears testimony to the fact that the anthropological-genetic problem area does not really receive treatment in Kant’s critique of reason.

The integration of moral reason and empirical determination manifests itself experientially in a general “conflict-consciousness”, that is, in the consciousness of the simultaneous proximity and heterogeneous character of these two dimensions, as, respectively “inclination”, “bliss”, etc., and “moral law”. The reality of the conflict is constituted in the transformation of intelligibility into a psychological manifestation, in the form of a specific moral feeling, “a feeling of respect for the moral law itself” (*K.d.p.V.*, 143), commensurable to “a pathologically affected will” (*K.d.p.V.*, 57). As feeling, it belongs to empirical reality, “since every feeling is sensible” (*K.d.p.V.*, 134), but its logical content “is produced by an intellectual cause” (*K.d.p.V.*, 130). Thus the practical and empirical effect of the intelligible will is for the “genuine” moral self-consciousness when it raises itself above its natural “self-conceit” an immediately evident fact (*K.d.p.V.*, 129). The primary form this effect takes is a consciousness of the modification of the empirical will by the intelligible will, that is, a moral experience of existence. In the ontological-anthropological sense it could be said – in conflict with Kant’s terminology – that, in analogy with the function of the theoretical categories, the idea of the intelligible causality of freedom has a *constitutive* significance in relation to concrete moral subjectivity.¹⁷¹ In both cases it is a matter of the *synthesis* of empirical facticity and intellectual formality, which is “transcendental” in the sense that it cannot be empirically demonstrated, but becomes evident in the self-reflection of consciousness, as a logical implication of its activity and reality.

What constitutes Kant’s “dualism” in comparison to the “monistic” trend in idealism, is that, despite the thesis about the “primacy” of practical reason, the constituting impact of the activity of moral reason is not systematically worked out in relation to the theoretical-empirical constitution of the world. The problem of unity is “solved” in the concept of the two-dimensionality of worldly existence. Consciousness cannot be truly “practical” in its “theoretical” activity, but can at best be “theoretical” in its “practical” activity, because it “regards” itself as “deciding factor [Bestimmungsgrund] (...) with regard to the reality of the objects” (*K.d.p.V.*, 77), that is, a reality which is already absolutely determined in the experiential synthesis.

Within the framework of the concept of a dimensionally divided reality, unity can only be “maintained” by means of a postulate. It becomes practically necessary to propose a theory (cf. *K.d.p.V.*, 220) of an *identity* or a pre-stabilized harmony among the dimensions of reality. This harmony is a precondition for the logical consistency of moral action. “Also, if the highest good according to practical rules is impossible, the practical moral law which

commands to promote it must be fantastic and build upon empty imaginary goals, and thereby in itself be false” (*K.d.p.V.*, 205). For metaphysical-moral self-reflection, the disparity between moral intentionality and empirical-causal reality is finally reduced to an “apparent contradiction” (*Grundlegung*, 456). The fact that, from an epistemological point of view, this *conception of identity* only has the status of regulative idea does not annul its ontological significance, because for Kant *the idea* represents precisely access to existence in its entirety.

Despite Kant’s criticism of traditional ontology’s identification of concept and reality, a criticism derived from the idea of transcendental subjectivity as the categorical ordering instance in relation to trans-subjective facticity, Kant’s solution to the main ontological problem, the problem of the unity of existence, tends in precisely the same direction. In the final analysis, within the area of morality, facticity can be traced back to an intelligible ur-ground. The essential difference is that this unity is localized outside the sphere of “object-related” cognition (cf. *K.d.p.V.*, 241ff.).

However, this *dualism between knowledge and idea* is modified in the *Critique of the Faculty of Judgment* [*Kritik der Urteilskraft*], which may in general be described as an attempt to loosen up the mechanistic epistemological model forming the basis for the analysis of the fundamental structure of the theoretical approach to the world. This work points out forms of understanding or *a priori* elements within the framework of sense experience which stand in conflict with the manner (by means of the synthesis of the categorical system and sense impression) in which experiential objectivity is constituted. In this way, the idea of identity of the “practical” postulates is elaborated somewhat paradoxically and amplified within the empirical-cognitive relation to reality itself.

This is done by means of an analysis of “judgment” as the general (theoretical and practical) mediating function, the “middle term” (*K.d.U.*, v), between empiricism/understanding and reason/ideality. The *a priori* necessity of judgment points toward a “foundation for the unity between that which lies above the senses and is the basis of nature and that which is entailed in practice in the concept of freedom” (*K.d.U.*, xx). The conception of the binding unity of reality here transcends the level of morality, deriving unity from the criterion of consistency; the unity appears in the form of experiential evidence, *i.e.*, in a specific combination of sense data and concepts.

In knowledge of the beautiful and in the aesthetic judgment, empirically constituted reality is experienced as purposive in virtue of the free “play of the imagination and understanding (provided that they agree with one another, as is absolutely essential for the acquisition of knowledge)” (*K.d.U.*, 29). From an epistemological point of view it cannot be maintained that this experience depends upon a “quality of the object” which is constituted by the categories, but only that it is a synthesis of this objectivity and the specific *a priori* functions of aesthetic judgment (cf. *K.d.U.*, 47, 246ff.). The experiential logic and the ontological uniqueness of the aesthetic reside in the compatibility of spontaneity *qua* imagination and regularity *qua* understanding (cf. *K.d.U.*, 146). Imagination is not subjected to the categories, and thus gives an essentially different form of access to empirical reality than that which is represented by

purely discursive cognition. This is not a decisive and conceptual mediation of practical moral freedom and the regularity of natural laws, but, ontologically viewed, is only an indication, from within the empirical-cognitive perspective, of an agreement between morality and worldly existence (cf. *K.d.U.*, ix).

As the ontology implicit in aesthetic experience, this concept of identity can be generally defined as follows: the cognitive functions which here develop into a “judgment of taste” are the same functions which constitute the empirical shape of the world in general. When they develop on another level, where the system of categories is not used for conceptual knowledge, but forms part of an unconscious harmonious interplay with the imagination (which, according to its essence is “productive and self-operating” (*K.d.U.*, 69)), then the function of understanding itself is transformed to “free regularity” (*K.d.U.*, 69). It can be said that understanding breaks out of the mechanistic framework of meaning and constitutes, in and for perception, reality with an intelligible regularity. It mediates access to a reality which, ontologically, is on a par with moral intelligibility, in the empirical field, even if the unity between the fields is not conceptually demonstrable, but can at most be defined as an analogy (cf. *K.d.U.*, 59, “Beauty as symbol of morality”).

In terms of epistemology, identity remains within the theoretical-empirical relation to the world or within mathematical natural science. It emerges through an analysis of the relation between understanding and reason, and the ability to judge as the reality of the relationship. This reflection implies the necessity of a reflexive-teleological form of understanding as an *a priori* element in the mechanical-mathematical model of explanation.

On a higher level, where the knowledge of understanding transcends particular empirical observations, this form of understanding proves necessary in order to develop the causal explanation and its individual laws into a logical whole – a system of experience – at all. This is because the mere sum of these regularities – owing to its constitutional context in the contingent subject affected by the senses, and who is the medium for transcendental subjectivity – never constitutes such a logically necessary coherence. “But there are so many modifications of the general transcendental concepts of nature, which are left undetermined by those laws that the pure understanding lays down *a priori* (since these affect only the basic possibility of nature, as the object of the senses), that there also must exist laws which, as empirical, may be arbitrary in terms of the insight of our understanding; however if they are to be called laws, (as is also demanded by the concept of nature) then they must be so considered on the basis of a principle (albeit unknown to us) of the unity of that which is manifold”. (*K.d.U.*, xxvi; cf. xxxii, 268).

However, Kant’s epistemological point of view only grants status of regulative anticipation to this concept of the purposive nature of the totality and of the possible “joining together of two quite different kinds of causality” (*K.d.U.*, 374). The argument does not provide basis for a theoretical-ontological elaboration of the identity, that is, the unity of morality and reality. The principal reason for this lack of conceptual reconciliation, producing a split of consciousness and its relation to the world into “knowledge” and “faith”, is rooted

in the fact that his epistemology has shunted the anthropological question. The critique of reason is not worked out as the *self-reflection* of rational consciousness, that is, as a particular encompassing form of consciousness and knowledge – and thus also as the highest form of the unity of reality and consciousness in relation to the functional partial perspectives of consciousness. The idea of knowledge is prescribed by the object-related cognition of natural science, and self-reflection is reduced to a subjective and regulative “capability” within that framework. However, an ontological and anthropological interpretation of epistemology shows that object-related experience – the constitution of empirical reality through the categories – is only produced by virtue of a reflexive-dialectical consciousness, that is, an all-encompassing rationality or “Reason”. In light of its further development in the idealist tradition, Kant’s transcendental philosophy appears as a philosophy of identity which is not transparent to itself, as a position which does not reflect upon its own reflection.

On the other hand, the denial of the constituting significance of reflection, and the acknowledgement of facticity as the basis for and the limit of rational self-consciousness, involves the idea of a fundamental *contingency* in the relation between consciousness and the world. This gives Kant’s philosophy a certain affinity to the “post-idealist” critique of identity-philosophy – in this case, to the thought of SK. But in the main – according to SK himself – there is nevertheless a fundamental difference here with respect to ontological positions. It is sufficient at this juncture to mention Climacus’ general description of Kant in the *Postscript*, where he says that Kant’s “deviation” was that he “brought reality into relation with thought” (10:32; cf. VI B 54, 16). Certainly this rejection in principle of Kant’s position is not the last word, because SK is not at all blind to the fact that the problem of reality must also be related to reflexive-cognitive consciousness.

At the same time, as mentioned earlier, this rejection of the Kantian axiom is an expression of a “methodical” divergence, a difference with respect to the manner in which the problem of reality is defined and tackled. The epistemological perspective gives way to an anthropological approach, the analysis of the human existential possibilities, in which rational discourse is reduced to an “element”. The fact that Kant also writes an essay on anthropology “with a pragmatic intention” does not change this difference in approach, because for Kant this is a matter of mere supplement, an empirical companion-piece, to the analysis of pure rationality. What are clarified are only the conditions for the application of this latter analysis to the empirical subject (cf. *Anthropologie, Vorrede* and *Grundlegung*, 388, 412).

On the other hand, when the anthropological approach is made primary, the situation is reversed. Rationality is no longer construed as a static and intelligible sphere, which can be grasped by means of the rationalization of an already-present scientific and moral consciousness and praxis. Rather, rationality must be understood as both a constituted and constituting factor within the framework of the human mode of existence, thus as *praxis* in the broadest sense of the term.

This fundamental difference of approach does not apply in the same sense to SK’s relation to *post-Kantian* philosophy, as far as what characterizes this development is that it is *the*

historical-genetic dimension of rationality, which is now the focus of attention. However, the agreement is counterbalanced by the identity-philosophy's ontological axiom, the identification of the ground of existence with rationality. The conflict among the various idealist positions is primarily engendered by diverging interpretations of this theory of unity.

C. Fichte

Fichte and Schelling must here be examined without any pretensions of thoroughness, from either an historical or a systematic point of view. They will only interest us here as way stations between Kant and Hegel, each as the founder of an explicit "identity-philosophical" position (the earlier philosophy), that is, as the historical basis of the Hegelian system and its concept of absolute mediation of worldly existence and consciousness in philosophical self-reflection. Thus, continuity will be emphasized, and the unique characteristics of Fichte and Schelling, respectively, will not receive full attention. Such an order of priority is congruent with the approach already delineated, focusing mainly on the philosophical tradition of idealism as intellectual horizon for SK's thought.

If, on the other hand, our intention were to emphasize idealism as an opposite pole to SK, a juxtaposition of Fichte and Schelling would allow greater notice to be taken of the internal differences within idealism. Interpreted as expressions of inner difficulties of the tradition, the positions would be relevant to an understanding of SK's criticism of "the System". Expressions of the trouble pertaining to "the System" may be found within the tradition of identity-philosophy itself, namely, for example: in Fichte's continuing revisions of his "*Science of knowledge [Wissenschaftslehre]*"; in his later distinction between the Absolute "Being" and "knowing"; in his interest in the ethical problem of "personality"; and, further, in Schelling's synthesis of epistemology and philosophy of religion (the irrational constitution of the world); and, of course, in Schelling's later explicit break with and polemic against Hegel, towards which SK, incidentally, had at one time great expectations (cf. III A 179).

From the point of the view of the history of philosophy, Fichte's and Schelling's new tendencies and their development beyond Kant may to some extent be understood against the background of a general revival of pre-Kantian rationalistic metaphysics (Spinoza, Leibniz, Wolf). This took place within the framework of a revision of Kant's critical epistemology, which was reshaped into a so-called "fundamental philosophy [Grundsatzphilosophie]" in analogy with Wolff's "fundamental science [Grundwissenschaft]" or "ontology", whose first element indeed takes form of a critical epistemology, *i.e.*, an analysis of "Being" and "Consciousness". The historical lines of connection pertaining to this transformation cannot be dealt with here, where only the ontologizing of Kant's critical epistemology will be pointed out as a general tendency. Consciousness is not defined only as a system of judgmental functions, as an organ for experiencing the world, but is at the same time understood more primarily as basis for the constitution of the phenomenon of the world. There is also a certain continuity with Kant in this. The tendency may be interpreted as a

radicalization of Kant's idea of transcendental constitution and its corresponding speculative-regulative concept of identity. Critical epistemology's rumination upon the conditions of possibility for a universally valid account of experience is converted into a question concerning the constitution of the world in consciousness generally. To the degree that the structure of existence is still related to consciousness, the profile of a critical epistemology is preserved, as with Fichte. This profile is more blotted out when consciousness is reduced to an element in the reconstruction of the world on the basis of a concept of an ur-ground transcending consciousness, as is the tendency in Schelling's philosophy of nature and, later, in his identity-system or "aesthetic" idealism.

The fundamental trait of Fichte's interpretation of critical epistemology may be expressed in a general way by saying that he develops Kant's idea of the primacy of practical-moral consciousness into a systematic principle. He combines its "practical" relation to (participation in) the unconditioned with the unifying function of theoretical consciousness, the transcendental apperception, so that consciousness appears from the ground up as a unity of practical and theoretical activity. Furthermore, the practical activity is set forth systematically as the basis for theoretical-cognitive activity. In his concept of regulative ideas, which is the dimension of "reason" within cognition of the world, Kant expresses the notion that theoretical consciousness is also practical or "active". Fichte starts from this situation, namely that consciousness is fundamentally reasonable or practical, and *the fact that this is the case* is expressed in his principle of consciousness as "pure activity", meaning that "the ego posits itself, and it is, thanks to this sheer act of positing through its own self" (*Foundation of the Complete Science of Knowledge* [*Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*], 16).

Consciousness in its totality is presupposed as a *fact*, and that which is established or fixed is one aspect of this fact, namely its basic aspect. "Something that in itself is not a fact of consciousness cannot become such, even by means of this abstracting reflection; but it becomes known through this that one must necessarily think of that action as the basis of all consciousness (*Grundlage* 11; cf. *System of the Science of Morality*, [*Das System der Sittenlehre*] and *First and Second Introduction to the Science of Knowledge* [*Erste und zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre*, 14). This thesis on the positing of the self by the self presupposes that the ego is already given, that it is consciousness, and is thus split in the subject-object relation. It expresses only the essence of the subject dimension, in abstraction from the objective correlative, and thus has "merely regulative validity" (*Grundlage*, 42). "Fichte's absolute ego, however, is nothing other than the infinite element of the ego which cannot be separated from the finite element", *Kroner* says.¹⁷² "The 'genesis' sought here does not concern Being per se as much as our consciousness, our knowledge of Being [...] The doctrine of science thus separates what is never separated in genuine knowing, in order to see them both together once more", writes *Cassirer*.¹⁷³ *Schulz* writes: "Without this transcendental ego, [...] empirical man would have no meaningful relationship [sinnhaften

Bezug] to the objects through which I relate these to myself and at once distinguish myself from them".¹⁷⁴

The thesis that the self posits or establishes itself tells us that the essence of consciousness is that it is *self-grounding* or self-identical, and the concept of a "Tathandlung" ("action") is the ontic expression of this logical structure. The absolute ego does not produce the subject-object split in the ontic sense, but it stands for the ontological significance of this given split, that is the *primacy of the subject* in the relation. "In the ego, I posit a separable non-ego over against the separable ego" (*Grundlage* 30). Consciousness is only possible by means of a reciprocal limiting of subject and object; however, as an expression of consciousness this situation is asymmetrical, for otherwise it would only be a relation between objects. *The absolute ego is the transcendence of consciousness in relation to its object, thus in relation to every content of consciousness.* "Thus the ego is dependent, in terms of its own existence; but it is absolutely independent in the determinations of this existence which it has" (*Grundlage* 197).

When Kant found it necessary to put forward a concept of "Ding an sich" as the basis for sensory influence it was because of the metaphysical pretension underlying his critical epistemology. He attempted to determine the area within the system of experience where access to the absolute ground of the world was optimally possible. In his version of critical epistemology, Fichte first of all withdraws this metaphysical pretension, in the sense that he limits himself to an analysis of the ontological structure of consciousness as a *factual* subject-object relation. "In the critical system, the thing (*das Ding*) is that which is posited in the ego; in the dogmatic system, it is that in which the ego itself is posited; the criticism is immanent because it posits everything in the ego; dogmatism is transcendent, because it goes beyond the ego" (*Grundlage*, 40). The priority of the ego or of subjective activity is only true in a transcendental sense, and it does not imply a "dogmatic idealism", maintaining that "any reality of the non-ego is merely a reality transposed out of the ego" (*Grundlage*, 93). With respect to the facticity of this subjectivity, Fichte therefore says that it is only thinkable in relation to "something present independently of all consciousness" (*Grundlage*, 197). This question is obviously definitive for the fundamental "philosophy-of-religion"-orientation in Fichte's philosophy later on; "No knowledge can establish and prove itself; all knowledge presupposes a yet higher knowledge as its basis, and this ascending process has no end" (*Destiny of Man [Die Bestimmung des Menschen]*, 89).

The immanent perspective for the analysis of consciousness turns into an anthropological project. The point of departure is the facticity of consciousness as subject-object, and the analysis is the systematic reconstruction of the constitutional history of that relationship as a theoretical and practical totality. "The theory of science ought to be a pragmatic history of the human spirit" (*Grundlage*, 141).

The fact that this anthropological reconstruction of the history of consciousness is worked out on two stages, a "theoretical" and a "practical" stage, is more a concession to a traditional (and Kantian) scheme of the discipline of philosophy than it is a substantial division. In

comparison to Kant, the critique of empirically cognitive consciousness does not get any further than the transcendental aesthetic or “deduction of representation”. This is because the approach to essence is not designed to exhibit the *a priori* empirical principles, but to exhibit the constitution of empirical reality in general, as the condition for, and an element of, moral self-realization.

The substantial aspect able to justify the distinction stems from the fact that there are two fundamental tendencies present in the working out of the subject-object relationship: *either* that “the ego posits itself, as determined by the non-ego” (*Grundlage*, 48); *or* that “the ego posits itself as that which determines the non-ego” (*Grundlage*, 165). In the first case, the subject-object relation actualizes itself as a cognitive relation to the world; in the second case, as an existential relation of action and influence. In so far as the cognitive relation – as the constituting of an empirical object – is the condition for practical activity, it is ontologically primary. However, this is true only to the degree that the practical is – in a significant sense of the term – moral, *i.e.*, based on self-reflection and consciousness of the ideal course of action. Viewed anthropologically, the two forms of the subject-object relation are equally original; the practical form is equally ontologically fundamental, as far as the constitution of consciousness in general is based upon action, the absolute “action [*Tathandlung*]”. Fichte can therefore say that “reason per se is only practical, and it becomes theoretical only in the application of its laws to a non-ego which imposes limits on it” (*Grundlage*, 47).

In every subject-object relation, spontaneity and activity are always the fundamental ontological elements. This conditions the working-out of consciousness as a passive-receptive mode of existence, and thus as a theoretical-empirical consciousness. The spontaneity of consciousness here limits itself by virtue of its own teleology. It is necessary to stick to the given objective correlative in a cognitive relation in order to come into a practical and active relation to it, that is, a relation, which is not merely immediately determined by feelings, but is also purposeful.

The basic element in the constitution of this form of consciousness is the transcendental imagination, which, by means of a dialectic of activity and passivity in general, actualizes the given or the potential duality of subject and object. “The productive imagination solves the problem of how a theoretical consciousness is at all possible: it is possible because and to the extent that, this consciousness contains within itself the contradiction of being simultaneously ego and non-ego”, *Kroner* writes.¹⁷⁵ In Fichte’s words: “The capacity of the imagination is this alternation of the ego in and with itself, since it simultaneously posits itself finitely and infinitely – an alternation which is as it were at loggerheads with itself and thereby reproduces itself, since the ego wishes to unite things that cannot be united. It attempts at one point to absorb the infinite into the form of the finite, and then, when it is repelled, attempts to posit it once more outside the finite, and at the very same instant attempts to absorb it again into the form of finitude” (*Grundlage*, 134). The ontological point here is that the original subject-object unity splits itself and thereby constitutes a primitive sense-perception or,

rather, a sensory field. Only understanding or linguistic naming can limit it to a particular sensory experience or object (cf. *Grundlage*, 152).

The individual successive elements in this constitution cannot be examined here. It is of interest here only to give a general outline of Fichte's concept of practical-theoretical subjectivity. The principal point, relevant to anthropology, is that subjectivity constitutes a functional whole, and thus a unity of consciousness and worldly existence. This unity, which is obvious on a fundamental level – that is, in the methodical structure of the reconstruction of consciousness – is clarified more concretely when one breaks through the external doubling of consciousness into practical and theoretical parts. A good illustration, in this respect, is the constitutional connection of sensory perception or the mental image with both the transcendental imagination and with that which could be defined as the primitive life-instinct, a phenomenon not treated within the framework of the analysis of theoretical consciousness, but which is reserved for the practical “superstructure”. The life-instinct is the spontaneous basis for consciousness, genetically reduced to its anthropologically primary level; it is consciousness or the ego in its pre-conscious form. Because it develops in relation to an external objective correlative, at a certain stage in its process of actualization, this instinctive spontaneity will express itself as “representational instinct”. Regarding this, Fichte writes: “Accordingly, this instinct is the first and highest expression of the instinct, whereby the ego properly becomes intelligence [...] The very obvious consequence of this is the subordination of theory to the practical element; it follows that all theoretical laws have their basis in practical laws, and since there assuredly is only one practical law, therefore in one and the same law; the complete system according to its essence follows this principle” (*Grundlage*, 211).

In this we observe a programmatic expression of that which fundamentally separates Fichte's concept of subjectivity from Kant's: that the practical consciousness is not only moral reflection and action in relation to a theoretically-constituted world, but is rather the fundamental constitutional dimension of consciousness in general. The radicalism in this *anthropological re-interpretation of critical epistemology* only becomes plain when the separation between theoretical and practical consciousness is interpreted as two aspects of one and the same process, the constitution of moral subjectivity.

In the introduction to the practical portion of the *Foundation of the Complete Science of Knowledge*, Fichte seems to claim that the analysis of theoretical consciousness is a precondition for the analysis of the practical in so far as it has exhibited “the determinability, including the reality of the non-ego” (*Grundlage*, 165); this must however, be understood as a technical expression needed for the interpretation. It obscures the fact that the point of departure for the subsequent analysis is not consciousness as “intelligence”, but as before the absolute ego or the spontaneous ground of consciousness, which is the condition of possibility for the existence of the intelligence. Theoretical consciousness is not a stage, the basis for a “higher” form of consciousness, but a function of practical consciousness, which is both “higher” and “lower”; that is, it covers both. The meaning of the idea of the primacy of

intelligence is the following: “If the ego is not intelligence, then no consciousness of its practical capability, indeed no self-consciousness at all, is possible” (*Grundlage*, 195). However, the ego still exists as practical from the very beginning, prior to any consciousness of this activity.

Hartmann claims: “The absolute ego must become theoretical, in order to become practical. It must first create for itself the world of objects, in order to come into existence by acting in relation to their resistance”.¹⁷⁶ However, he is really working with only half of the concept of the practical, in so far as it is identified with purposeful moral action. The function of the theoretical element is to make it possible for consciousness to be defined by the world as an object. Viewed ontologically, because it is the product of the subject’s own activity (which is the practical and spontaneous ground of consciousness), this form of consciousness is the *self-objectification* of the subject. It is precisely this, which makes it into a condition of possibility for the development of consciousness into practical-moral self-determination. “But the dependence of the ego, as intelligence, must be abolished, and this is conceivable only on the condition that the ego determines by means of itself that hitherto unknown non-ego to which is attributed the impact whereby the ego becomes merely intelligence. This would make the non-ego that is to be conceived something immediate, while the conceiving ego would be mediate, thanks to the determination that is decided by the absolute ego; the ego would be dependent only upon itself, *i.e.*, it would be thoroughly determined by its own self; it would be that which it posits itself as, and nothing else whatever” (*Grundlage*, 168).

The teleological structure of consciousness is the successive reproduction of the essence of the ground of consciousness, *the absolutely free development of the self* or self-identity. It is the effort striving “for total identity with itself” (*Grundlage*, 183), the synthesis of subject and object. As has been mentioned, the principal form of this reproduction is the ontic integration of the theoretical consciousness into the practical relation to the world. This takes place through the development of both dimensions.

The immanent character of the reproduction is a guarantee to the necessity and actuality of the integration. In that sense it is the case of a pre-stabilized harmony, a fundamental *identity*; the absolute ego is connected in terms of teleology to its negation, *i.e.*, the object in its facticity as non-ego. “But if the non-ego is able to posit anything at all in the ego, the condition of the possibility of such an alien influence must be previously established in the ego itself, in the absolute ego, prior to all genuine alien influence” (*Grundlage*, 189). However, this concept of identity is not primarily metaphysical – that is, an idea about existence as a realization of the Absolute in Hegel’s sense – rather, it is anthropological. It is the *a priori* explication of the necessary relation of consciousness to, and compatibility with, a reality transcending consciousness. The *Science of Knowledge* is the genetic-anthropological elucidation of the forms and the structure in this context.

The first and primitive form of identity or self-determination is the actualization of the ego into a “dynamic” objectivity or of the universal life-instinct through delimitation by means of an objectivity, which is “given beforehand”, the negation of the ego by “a contrary positing”

(cf. *Grundlage*, 170f.). “It is quite simply posited, as something [...] - as something fixed, firmly established. [...] However, a self-producing endeavor that is something firmly established, determined, specific, is called an instinct” (*Grundlage*, 204). Through the development of the instinct, the individual reaches a position in which he can experience the limitations by which the instinct is determined. This means, in the ontological sense, that the individual reflects upon himself, actualizing him self as a dawning consciousness or subjectivity. “The ego endeavors to fill out infinitude; at the same time, it has the law and the tendency to reflect upon itself. It cannot reflect upon itself without being limited: with regard to the instinct, it is limited by a relationship to the instinct” (*Grundlage*, 205).

This self-reflection determined by instinct is the primitive experience of subjective activity. This activity develops in accordance with its own inner teleology, by means of qualitatively different stages, from the passive and receptive self-consciousness of feeling (cf. *Grundlage*, 206), through a gradual definition of the content of feelings, reaching on this basis ideality or the mental image, which is the primitive consciousness of the subject-object split. “Through the limitations thanks to which only the direction outwards is abolished, but not the direction inwards, that original power is as it were divided: and the remaining power which returns into the ego itself is the ideal power” (*Grundlage*, 211).

The subjective dimension will always prove to be superior in the interchange between the subject-object poles. This is in the essence of consciousness. Furthermore, this necessarily leads “the feeling one” – by experiencing himself as the site for the emotional reaction (“action aims at action”) [Tätigkeit geht auf Tätigkeit]” – to become “posited as ego” (*Grundlage*, 215). In accordance with this pattern, primitive subjectivity will develop itself into practical-moral self-determination, or freedom, as the harmonious unity of “instinct” and “action” (cf. *Grundlage*, 242ff.).

However, this form of consciousness, with which the analysis of the genesis of consciousness in the *Science of Knowledge* ends up, is in terms of ontology essentially a possibility or a requirement; it is a possibility of the unity of subject and object, of consciousness and the world, and not immediately this unity itself. Fichte presupposes *the categorical imperative* – subjectivity as absolute self-determination – and ends up with it as well, because he has shown how this subjectivity is constituted anthropologically. The primacy of subjectivity does not mean that the object is derived on the ontic level from it, but only that the ontological significance of the object, *i.e.*, its character as reality, is given by the relation to subjectivity. Since subjectivity is fundamentally action, this significance is furthermore only possible when there is a fundamental and indissoluble *contingency between existence, as the expression of the primacy of subjectivity, and existence, as the present and potential contents of consciousness*. The unity is a functional anthropological relation, and not a logical, “speculative” identity, as with Hegel. While Hegel lets his analysis of the genesis of consciousness follow from an exposition of the Absolute as a logical system, moral philosophy is the natural counterpart to the description of consciousness as possibility for moral self-determination.

In *System of Science of Morality* among other places, Fichte further develops the paradigm of moral self-determination: *the constitution of personality as the unity of "instinct" and "action"*. The unity of consciousness and existence is here demonstrated as a historical and moral process. It takes the form of personal and concrete freedom when, as a result of self-reflection, theoretical self-objectification functionally subordinates itself to consciousness of the teleological activity of the subject (cf. *System*, 128). *The concept of instinct* takes on a broader significance in this further development of Fichte's notion of self-determination. Instinct becomes a major systematic category, the sum of the activity-functions of human life in general, from reaching development of the life of the senses (the "material" basis of self-determination) to self-determination itself as an "intelligible" instinct (cf. *System*, 144). "As we have seen, the ethical instinct is a mixed instinct. It takes from the natural instinct the material towards which it is directed; *i.e.*, the natural instinct which is synthetically united to it and blended into one with it has the same aim of action, at least in part. But it takes its form only from the pure instinct. It is absolute, like the pure instinct, and demands something in an absolute manner, without any goal lying outside its own self" (*Sittenlehre*, 149).

Fichte's moral philosophy is developed on the basis of the reconstruction in *Science of Knowledge* of the genesis of consciousness, and therefore may in principle not go beyond the confines of that system, specifically, the assumption of the *facticity* of the subject-object split. In this sense there is in Fichte thus no question of a genuine (speculative) philosophy of identity, but only of a conception of identity within the framework of an analysis of consciousness, which is *the personal-moral self-identity*. Hegel's description of Fichte's philosophy illustrates its distance from the speculative conception of identity: "In Fichte there always dominates the problem of how the ego is to cope with the non-ego. No true unity between the two sides is achieved here; the unity remains only something that ought to exist, because from the very outset the false presupposition is made that ego and non-ego are something absolute in their separation, in their finitude".¹⁷⁷

The decisive reversal in relation to Kant's critical epistemology can be generally expressed as follows: the *regulative* functions of consciousness are understood as *constitutive* at the moment when the fundamental philosophical problem is changed from being a question of the conditions for theoretical experience of reality to a question of the basis for the capacity to experience – and thus for worldly existence – at all. Absolute knowledge, *i.e.*, the idea of unity of subjective activity and objective effect, is understood by Fichte as the condition for consciousness in general. In accordance with its essence, consciousness is a dynamic-teleological totality. "The Idealists deepen this trait in Kant so that it becomes a radical metaphysical actualism [Aktualismus]. All Being is life, action, pure activity, creative power that flows forth from itself, freedom", *Heimsoeth* writes.¹⁷⁸ However, the metaphysical elaboration of this point of view must first and foremost be ascribed to Schelling and Hegel, not to Fichte, at least not to the major early works investigated here.

The intention of the present exposition of Fichte has been to emphasize the anthropological and genetic framework for his analysis of consciousness. This model for

philosophical reflection becomes decisive for the development of German idealism. *Philosophical knowledge* thus becomes conceptually defined as *self-reflection*.

With regard to Kierkegaard's "dialectical" relation (in both the implicit and the explicit sense) to idealist philosophy, the following may be said: To the degree that idealist philosophy, in the persons of Schelling and Hegel, breaks with Fichte's perspective of immanent consciousness, and elaborates itself as a philosophy of the Absolute, it is Fichte's variant of idealism which is closest to SK's analysis of existence. "Among the Idealist philosophers, it is Fichte who stands thematically and methodologically closest to Kierkegaard in the concrete application of the dialectic of existence", *Fahrenbach* maintains.¹⁷⁹ If I have a tendency to stretch this area of agreement even further than *Fahrenbach*, it is connected to the fact that I cannot agree with *Fahrenbach's* claim that SK's analysis of existence (seen from the perspective of Fichte) "keeps to the level of the 'common consciousness' or to the 'standpoint of life'".¹⁸⁰ This objection remains in place, even though it cannot be denied that SK's analysis does have a didactic and ethical character that Fichte's philosophy first takes on in his more "popular" works, such as *Die Bestimmung des Menschen (The Destiny of Man)* and *Anweisungen zum seligen Leben (Directives for the Blessed Life)*. As indicated earlier, the methodical structure of the analysis of existence involves integration of an abstract and genetic reconstruction of the forms of consciousness with epic and concrete interpretations of existence. However, in comparison to Fichte's analysis of consciousness, the former aspect in SK's structure is both less explicit and also more systematically limited.

D. Schelling

In order to have a reasonably complete sketch of the outlines of the intellectual ferment which led to Hegel's version of idealism, a short sidelong glance should at least be given to Schelling's conception of human existence, with particular attention to the way in which it differs from Fichte's.

Thus, in comparison to Fichte's demonstration of the self-constitution of consciousness as constitutive of existence in general, Schelling's "speculative" philosophy of nature (proto-physics) will be seen to represent a unique philosophical approach to the question of existence. Schelling's philosophy, therefore, represents a shift in the understanding of existence at large, and thus also in the understanding of human existence. In his intention to correct Fichte's concept of Nature as a function of ethical self-determination, Schelling breaks with the Kantian schema of critical epistemology within which Fichte's *Science of Knowledge* had formally operated by rehabilitating the idea of Nature as a teleological reality not dependent on knowledge. However, Schelling does this while still remaining within one dimension of Kant's critical epistemology, namely the concept of a teleological mode of interpretation.¹⁸¹ The so-called intellectual view understands the essence of consciousness as absolute self-activity (as with Fichte), but consciousness at the same time here giving access

to the Absolute “I” as a reality transcending consciousness, namely by means of a “de-potentialisation” of consciousness as a “potency” of the Absolute. “Schelling believes that it is possible through contemplation to go beyond thinking and to arrive at the point towards which all thinking strives: for him, contemplation is what for Spinoza the third and highest validity of knowledge, the precise knowledge of God”, *Kroner* writes.¹⁸²

On this level of knowledge – *sub specie aeternitatis* – empirically established knowledge of Nature is transformed into a system of *a priori* necessary relations. “It is not we who know nature: it exists a priori, *i.e.*, every individual thing in it is determined in advance by the totality or by the very idea of nature. But if nature exists a priori, then it must also be possible to know it as something that exists a priori, and this is the really the meaning of our assertion” (*Introduction to an Outline of the System of the Philosophy of Nature [Einleitung zu dem Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie]*, 279). Nature as an *a priori* Idea is the Absolute defined as Nature. Consequently, it can be maintained, as the first principle of the philosophy of Nature, that it “absolutely possesses reality (...) has its reality from its own self – it is its own product – a totality organized out of its own self and self-organizing” (*First Outline of the System of the Philosophy of Nature [Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie]*, 17).

The relevant consequence of this ontologizing of critical epistemology and of the knowledge of Nature for anthropology is that consciousness – by virtue of the comprehensive perspective of identity-philosophy (the synthesis of a philosophy of Nature and transcendental philosophy) – emerges as a stage within a cosmological process. It is only for finite and reflective reason that consciousness is an irrevocable point of departure. This is a methodological restriction which transcendental philosophy overcomes.¹⁸³ In that sense, one may say that transcendental philosophy is reduced to an element in the philosophy of Nature and is supplemented by a theory of art as the objective reproduction, by consciousness, of the absolute identity of Nature and consciousness.¹⁸⁴ It is only as anthropology – as a theory on the constitution of consciousness in the subject-object split – that consciousness could be understood as a product of the dialectic between spontaneity of form and sensory “Anstoss” [resistance]. Anthropology has here fundamentally the same methodological status as the philosophy of Spirit has in Hegel’s ontological system found in his *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften (Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences)*.

With reference to the development of a consistent position for an identity-philosophy, it can be said that with Schelling the so-called “idealism of consciousness” – created by Kant’s “Copernican” revolution - is broken through,¹⁸⁵ and the decisive basis for Hegel’s later clash with this “philosophy of reflection” established. According to this outlook, the mere fact that consciousness is understood as an *element of the Absolute*, as the product of the logical self-realization of the Absolute in the subject-object relationship, produces a certain conceptual unity of consciousness and existence. As Hegel writes: “But it was necessary, for the true progress of philosophy, that the interest of thought should be drawn to a contemplation on the formal side, the ego, consciousness as such, *i.e.*, the abstract relationship of subjective

knowledge of an object, that the knowledge of infinite form, *i.e.*, of the concept, should be introduced in this way. However, in order to achieve such knowledge, it was necessary to strip off that finite determination in which the form exists as ego, as consciousness”.¹⁸⁶

This conceptual unity, however, *i.e.*, the deduction of Nature and consciousness from the Absolute as a logical system, is not attained by Schelling, because he gives methodological priority to “intuition” [“die Anschauung”]. This intuition can only grasp the Absolute as pure indifference, and this necessitates a two-fold point of departure, namely, in the two forms in which the Absolute manifests itself: Nature and consciousness. The philosophy of Nature cannot provide an adequate account of the genesis of consciousness, because, as a rationalization of empirical natural science, it is limited by its program – “to explain everything on the basis of the forces of nature” (*Einleitung*, 273) – and thus necessarily reduces the essential self-activity of consciousness to an action of Nature. It can only assume an identical source for these two forms of activity and reality (cf. *Einleitung*, 271). In this sense there is a general connection between the philosophy of Nature and transcendental philosophy. They are accounts of the Absolute as unconscious and as conscious activity, respectively. But they cannot be concretely synthesized, because the separation, by being grounded in the Absolute itself, is an absolute separation, “which can never give way to a unity” (*System des transzendentalen Idealismus* [*The System of transcendental Idealism*], 3).

By virtue of this relative ontological dualism (established by critical epistemology), Schelling’s transcendental philosophy appears as a recapitulation of Fichte’s analysis of consciousness. On the basis of the given subject-object split and the principle of the ontological primacy of the subject, it constitutes an anthropological reconstruction of the genesis and the stages of consciousness. The difference, first and foremost, is that transcendental philosophy functions as a complement to the philosophy of Nature, and that it is rounded out with an “aesthetic-speculative” presentation of *the idea of identity*, which is in clear contrast to Fichte’s concept of “personal-ethical” identity.

As with Fichte, the differentiation and the forms of the subject-object relationship are analyzed under the rubrics of theoretical and practical consciousness, that is, in accordance with the two principal levels of the actualization of the original essence of the ego as “self-consciousness” (cf. *System*, 23). The terminal point of theoretical consciousness is the constituting of the world as the field of empirical understanding. Anthropologically, this means relative freedom or self-determination in reflection upon that which is given to the senses. “It (intelligence) appears to itself as limited by productive contemplation. But the contemplation as action has gone down into consciousness, and only the product remains. To know itself to be limited by productive contemplation means therefore to know itself as limited by the objective world” (*System*, 193). Empirical consciousness is swallowed up by its objective correlate and does not know itself to be an activity that produces objectivity, *i.e.*, the empirical world.

It is this possibility of knowledge of the self, which is realized by practical consciousness, and in this sense also denotes the first real “beginning of consciousness” (*System*, 200). Here

it becomes that which it, according to its essence, is: *consciousness of itself through self-objectification*. “As long as the ego is only productive, it is never objective as ego, precisely because the contemplative always aims at something other than itself [...] Only in the act of willing is this also raised to a higher potency, for this makes the ego the totality that it is, *i.e.*, both subject and object at the same time, or something that produces itself as object (*System*, 202). As a volitional reality, practical consciousness is the unconscious reproduction of the ego as original spontaneity, that is, a reproduction on a higher level than the theoretical-cognitive sphere, where spontaneity is completed in a receptive and passive form of consciousness. This does not “annul” the constitution of empirical reality in the form of a reflexive insight into the transcendental ego as the ontological ground of this reality; it lifts *itself*, as the ideal or as moral intention, over and above this objective reality by making this the field of its activity. “For precisely in that intelligence contemplates itself as productive, the merely ideal ego separates itself from that ego which is both ideal and real at the same time, *i.e.*, now wholly objective and completely independent of that which is merely ideal. [...] This is why the world appears to it as truly objective, *i.e.*, already existing without any contribution on the part of the intelligence” (*System*, 204f.).

It must therefore be incorrect, as *Schulz* states, that: “The intelligence is now able to grasp that it produces out of itself that first world – the world of objects – just as much as it produces this second world – the moral world – the production of which takes place consciously”.¹⁸⁷ The correct view is that practical self-determination is a prerequisite for transcendental philosophy’s recourse to the absolute ego in the intellectual intuition. But for moral consciousness as such, it is the case that the difference between subject and object continues, that it “can attain freedom only through being affected in a certain way from outside” (*System*, 216).

The unity of being and consciousness – in Schelling’s sense of a total unity – thus cannot be realized within the framework of moral self-realization. This concept of moral freedom as the formative authority in relation to a resistant “material” reality (cf. *System*, 226) is on a par with Fichte’s concept of “the ethical instinct as a mixed instinct”. The decisive separation between the anthropological positions of Fichte and Schelling is not visible in this element of the genetic reconstruction of consciousness. In both cases, the spontaneity of the primeval-ground develops through a dialectics between spontaneity of form and empirical receptivity. The absolute unity of consciousness with existence furthermore expresses itself only as an *infinite striving*.

As has been mentioned, what is unique about Schelling’s understanding of existence is the neutralization of transcendental philosophy implied in the primacy given to the philosophy of Nature, that is, the view that Nature is an all-encompassing locus of being in relation to a dialectics of consciousness or of existence. “Nature attains the highest goal, that of becoming wholly an object to itself, only through the highest and ultimate reflection, which is nothing other than the human person, or (in more general terms) what we call reason, and only through reason does nature return totally into itself” (*System*, 9). The function of

transcendental philosophy is to show how nature as *the Absolute becomes an object for itself*, and thus actualizes itself as consciousness. At the same time, transcendental philosophy will clarify how the process of consciousness, with its immanent pretension of exhibiting the identity of Nature and consciousness – *i.e.*, as the Absolute’s being-for-itself – ends in a *self-negation*. Consciousness is constituted in the subject-object split and cannot come beyond it. “It is, however, not possible to demonstrate this identity itself in the free action, since it abolishes itself precisely for the sake of free action (*i.e.*, so that that which is objective can become objective)” (*System*, 274).

Schelling thus goes beyond Fichte’s infinite dialectic of consciousness by means of a *negation of consciousness* as a self-reflective practical activity. This negation becomes philosophically effective with the demonstration of the existence of a unique form of consciousness, which realizes this negation concretely and anthropologically, namely the activity of the artistic genius. The artistic genius is characterized by the immediate unity of natural determination and self-determination. Here, as in the philosophy of Nature, it is Kant’s regulative concept of identity from *The Critique of the Faculty of Judgment* that is ontologized. The unity of the unconscious and of consciousness manifests itself objectively and concretely in art. “Only the work of art reflects for me that which is not reflected through anything else, that absolute identity which has already been separated even in the ego; thus, what the philosopher allows to be separated already in the first act of consciousness, and what is otherwise inaccessible to any view, is radiated back upon us by the miracle of art from what it produces” (*System*, 294).

With the rounding out of Schelling’s philosophy in his *Presentation of my System of Philosophy* [*Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie*], this annulment of the dialectic of consciousness is taken yet another step further, when the distinction between art and philosophy seems to fall away. “The system lays claim to, and preserves the closed quality, the calm, the absoluteness, hitherto conceded only to the work of art”, *Kroner* writes.¹⁸⁸ Fichte’s anthropological re-interpretation of critical epistemology – that is, the concept of the subject as productive basis for consciousness as a practical-theoretical whole – is converted by Schelling into a philosophy of the Absolute, demonstrating the Absolute as the “static-rational” basis for being, both for Nature and for consciousness. “Nothing is finite, when considered in itself” (*Darstellung*, § 14). In the later (unpublished) revisions of his *Science of Knowledge* Fichte makes an analogous retrogression to the Absolute as “Being” in relation to “knowledge” as its “appearance”.¹⁸⁹ However, it is undoubtedly Schelling’s philosophy that is the decisive beginning for Hegel’s development of idealism, because, for Hegel, it was only Schelling’s philosophy that could be reckoned as a system of identity.

Thus Hegel writes of Fichte in his *Difference between Fichte’s and Schelling’s Philosophical Systems* [*Differenz der Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie*]: “The principle of identity does not become a principle of the system; as soon as the system begins to form, the identity is abandoned. [...] The subject = object thus becomes something subjective here, and it does not succeed in abolishing the subjectivity and positing

itself as something objective”.¹⁹⁰ By deducing the world of things from the ego, Fichte exchanges the “external” captivity of the subject with a new captivity, un-freedom in the “interior”, in the subject’s contingent states of mind.¹⁹¹ On the other hand, with reference to Schelling it is said that: “The principle of identity is an absolute principle in Schelling’s entire system; philosophy and system are coterminous; the identity is not lost in parts, still less in the result”.¹⁹² The basis has been laid in principle for the presentation of the Absolute as a logical system, in which Schelling’s “intuition” is replaced by controlled access to this superior dimension of being, namely by way of *the critique of self-experience* as a new epistemological theory.

E. Hegel

The purpose of the foregoing sketches of the systems of Fichte and Schelling has been to show how what we may call an anthropological question arises with the breaking away from Kant’s framework for the analysis of consciousness. It has also been shown that this reconstruction of the genesis of consciousness figures as an essential element when the framework of the analysis of consciousness is exploded by means of a regression to the Absolute as a reality transcending consciousness. This is evident also in Hegel, when carrying Schelling’s beginnings further.

The juxtaposition, by the present work, of SK and idealism, has a methodological and hermeneutical character, and for this purpose a brief outline of Hegel’s philosophical position is sufficient. This outline will be based on the view already taken, namely that the movement from critical epistemology to an ontological system includes an anthropological problem field.

In comparison to the “transcendental” deductions of consciousness carried out by Fichte and Schelling, a novelty in Hegel’s analysis of consciousness is the attempt to incorporate systematically the historical-real dimension, as is the case in Hegel’s first major work, *Phänomenologie des Geistes (Phenomenology of the Spirit)*. The tradition is carried further due to his genetic approach to the problem; the analysis of the history of consciousness. However, with Hegel it is not only a matter of the transcendental and *a priori* genesis of consciousness – the ontogenesis – but also matter of phyllo-genesis, a real, collective history. The *a priori* structure of consciousness only becomes visible in and with its *a posteriori* contents, and for Hegel these contents are given in shared human history and not, as with Kant, first and foremost through natural-scientific knowledge. Consciousness is the phyllo-genetic realization of the ontogenesis. Consciousness “creates” itself through the historical and concrete experience of its essential possibilities. It is the logic of his “phenomenological” method, Hartmann maintains, to adhere to consciousness in relation to the appearance of these possibilities. “He keeps strictly to what the subject ‘experiences’, what is given to it, and how it portrays itself to itself in this circumstance. Thus he de facto derives nothing either from the subject or from the object. He simply describes the epiphenomenons he finds already existing from stage to stage”.¹⁹³

Hints to such an understanding of consciousness as “historical product” may also be found in Fichte and Schelling, e.g., in Schelling’s theological dissertation, where history is defined as the self-development of Reason,¹⁹⁴ and in Fichte’s philosophy of history, the *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* (*Fundamental Characteristics of the Present Age*), which, in similar fashion, defines history as a rational system of epochs.¹⁹⁵ However, these hints are not integrated into the systematic reconstruction of the history of consciousness, which of course (for Fichte and Schelling) already has an unshakable and non-empirical point of departure in the intellectual intuition of the essence and *telos* of consciousness.

And it is precisely this concept of intellectual intuition, which Hegel attacks in *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (cf. 12, 15, 20, 23, 26, 31). He maintains that experience of the Absolute is the result of philosophical analysis and not its point of departure. In a certain sense this is a “regression” to Kant, to a model of philosophical reflection, which gives critical epistemology or the analysis of consciousness the status of guide to the concept of the Absolute. In a manner similar to Kant’s critique of theoretical reason, which indirectly showed that moral reason is the sphere for adequate access to the Absolute as unifying basis of worldly existence, Hegel’s anthropological demonstration of the forms or stages of consciousness leads to “absolute knowledge”, that is, an access to the Absolute as a logical system. The identity of subject and object, of consciousness and existence, is not immediately obvious; it cannot be so, in so far as philosophical reconstruction of the history of consciousness is a “recollection” of its factual history (cf. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 27, 33). It is only demonstrable by means of experiences which consciousness, the finite subject, has in relation to the totality of its objects, that is, its total life situation.

The fundamental idea, the basic ontological vision, is the same as in Schelling, namely that consciousness is the manifestation of the Absolute. The difference consists in the fact that here the Absolute does not emerge as the “irrational” ground of being, but as a system of logical categories. It constitutes the *a priori* dimension, not only in consciousness, but also in the world and consciousness. “Its concepts are just as much essential forms of that which exists, the functions which shape reality, the general and necessary essential property of things and of all that is objective, as they are a priori conditions of knowledge”, writes *Heimsoeth*.¹⁹⁶

However, this abstraction from the concrete contents of consciousness has the status of a definite “propaedeutics”, through which it is demonstrated how consciousness itself develops such a possibility of self-negation. It is precisely this, which is dealt with in *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. “Since its perfection consists in knowing totally what it is, its substance, this knowledge is an act of going into itself, in which it abandons its existence and hands over its form to memory” (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 563, 590).

Philosophy cannot itself start in an abstraction such as in intellectual intuition, but must follow “the path of natural consciousness, which presses on to true knowledge [...] the path of the soul which passes through the sequence of its forms like stages marked out for it in advance by nature, in order that this may purify it to become spirit, in that by means of the

total experience of itself it may attain knowledge of what it is in itself” (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 67, 72). The method of the analysis of consciousness is not constructive and deductive, but “the pure act of on-looking” (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 72, 77), the observation of the self-experience of factual consciousness, “the pure apprehension of what in and for itself appears to us” (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 73, 79).

Even by means of this passive method of observation, consciousness still reveals itself and the history it constitutes to be a dynamic teleological process. That is, it reveals itself in the same way as it did in intellectual intuition. For Hegel this insight is not an “axiom” but a “vision”, a schema for the reconstruction of practical experience. The factual and general point of beginning for the progression of consciousness is “the immediacy of substantial life” (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 11, 13). The totality of its stages – of which Hegel (or his philosophy) already has a “regulative” concept (as “the true”) at the outset – can consequently be defined as “a living substance [...] the movement of self-positing or the mediation of becoming other with one’s own self” (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 20, 23). “Absolute reason is absolute life, eternal presence of knowing, active self-organization”, writes Heimsoeth.¹⁹⁷

The unity of world and consciousness shows itself again (as with Schelling and Fichte) as a dialectical development through antithetical forms. This is the antithesis arising due to the substantial unity of life continually splitting itself into object and apprehension (Wissen). “Consciousness knows something, this object is the essence or the essential property; but it is the essential property for consciousness also, so that the ambiguity of this truth comes into view here” (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 73, 78). By means of this ambivalence, meaning the “reflection” of consciousness upon its own knowledge or spontaneous activity as the real object – “the relative objectivity of this essential property” (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 79) – consciousness is driven beyond itself and its given condition to a new level of knowledge. “This new object contains the nothingness of the first: it is the experience that it had of the first object” (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 73, 79).

This process, by establishing the duality of knowledge and existence through the activity of consciousness itself, simultaneously constitutes the experience by consciousness of a fundamental harmony with itself: “the moving equality with its own self” (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 21, 25). This implies that consciousness gradually becomes aware of itself as the basis of worldly existence, *i.e.*, that it realizes its essence as absolute self-consciousness. “Only the intellectual is real; it is the essence or the essential property – that which is relating and determined, the otherness and autonomous – and that which remains in itself in this determinacy or ecstasy; – or it exists *per se*” (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 24, 28). This total transparency of consciousness, its unity with the Absolute as the ontological ground, is what is brought to its culmination in “das absolute Wissen”. It is the philosophical completion of the immanent and necessary developmental course of consciousness, and basically the “progressive” transition from experience to “self”-experience.

The concept of consciousness as a dialectical-historical life process here finally takes on its deepest meaning; the life process manifests itself as a sheer process of concepts. Thus consciousness annuls itself when it becomes transparent to its “inner” basis. “The elements of its movement no longer appear as determined forms of the consciousness, but rather (since the distinction this makes has returned into the self) as determined concepts and as the organic movement of these concepts, based on the concepts themselves” (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 562, 589). Consciousness does not actually “constitute” the world through its categories in the Kantian sense, but consciousness is itself a “product” (*Erscheinung*), the presentation of absolute being as a conceptual system, “the aspect of its reality” (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 562, 589). It is created by the Absolute’s “expropriation, in which the spirit portrays the process of its becoming spirit in form of a free contingent event, looking on its being as space” (*Phä. d. G.*, 563, 590). Thus, as with Schelling, it is viewed in the double form of *nature* and of *history*.

It is only with this – the exposition of the Absolute as a conceptual system – that there is a basis on which to work out a genuine anthropology, a reconstruction of consciousness in an *a priori* deductive form. Furthermore, based on the concept of the Absolute as a logical self-movement, in this ontogenetic perspective that consciousness necessarily appears as a dialectical reality of life, that is, as it appeared in its historical-real progression. But the structure of this anthropological dynamic will manifest itself more clearly if its empirical and contingent contents here constitute only an illustration of the *a priori* reconstruction. “This is why philosophy must understand the Spirit as a necessary development of the eternal Idea and make the contents of the particular parts of the science of the Spirit un-fold purely from the concept of the same” (*Philosophie des Geistes [Philosophy of Spirit]*, 14).

The general view of consciousness in the ontogenetic perspective is, as Schelling maintained, that it grows forth as a stage of objective Nature, being Nature’s self-negation by virtue of the breaking-out of the Idea from its unreal “element of externality” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 18). “For us, the Spirit presupposes nature, of which it is the truth and thereby the absolute first element of nature. Nature has disappeared in this truth, and the Spirit has emerged as the idea having attained its autonomy, with the concept both as its object and as its subject” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 17). This formula anticipates the notion of the total progression of consciousness toward Absolute consciousness or Spirit (where “consciousness” cannot really be spoken of, in so far as the term denotes the Spirit as finite).

The total developmental structure must here be neglected, with attention given only to individual elements particularly suited to demonstrate the *anthropological dialectic* within the basic progression of consciousness from “Nature” to “consciousness”, as the “finite” expression of its dynamic character. According to the interpretive perspective adopted here, *this anthropological dynamic represents the general line of connection between SK’s analysis of existence and Hegel’s philosophy of Spirit, and thus also the reconstructions of consciousness carried out by Fichte and Schelling.*

Nature's self-negation and its growth forward into consciousness take place by means of the inner antithesis between "form" and "essence", between "externality" and "inwardness" (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 24). It leads in the direction of the "ideality, *i.e.*, the abolition of the otherness of the idea" (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 18), the "for-it-self" or "subjectivity" (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 38, 41), which is the general essence of consciousness.

More concretely, Hegel shows how, by means of sensory receptivity, the brutish organism develops a form of primitive subjectivity, denoting a naturally-determined break with Nature's unique form of existence, its "state of mutual separation [Aussereinander]" and "externality" (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 19). In so far as man, as conscious being, is also a natural reality, the developmental stage preceding and conditioning consciousness – namely, "the mind's immediate unity of corporeality and perception (cf. *Philosophie des Geistes*, 41) – will reproduce this breaking away from Nature's form of existence within the brutish organism. This will take place by means of the self-development of sensory receptivity (*Empfindung*) (cf. *Philosophie des Geistes*, 95). Sensory receptivity is the first step in the subject-object split which constitutes consciousness, in the form of simple "determination only against another determination" (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 18).

Through experience of its object, consciousness develops successively into spiritual reality, *consciousness of itself as freedom*, because it identifies with its own object, it "makes the Other standing over against it something which itself has posited" (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 31). "However, the freedom of the spirit is not merely something outside the Other, but an independence of the Other that is achieved in the Other. This is not the result of flight from the Other, but of overcoming the Other so that it becomes reality. (...) This power over all contents which is present in it, constitutes the basis for the freedom of the spirit" (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 26f.). The essence of consciousness is an image of the logical ur-ground, the Absolute as *self-determination*. As derivative or finite, it can still express this essence only as a relative determination, by the *subordination of facticity* to the ideality of consciousness, *i.e.*, in linguistic determination.

Against this background-sketch of the genetic structure of consciousness the present study will in order to illuminate the character of consciousness as a life process pin down a number of points in the concept of "subjective spirit", points showing *the connection between naturally-determined life-development and the progression in the forms of consciousness*.

The general developmental structure of consciousness is that it intensifies the mental life's transcendence and its relative *control of bodily existence*. This implies that the body has been emancipated, reduced to "a sign, the representation of the soul". Consciousness is the fact that "the soul (transcends itself) through the negation of its bodily existence to the pure ideal identity with itself, becomes consciousness, becomes ego, and exists autonomously vis-à-vis that which is its Other" (*Phi. d. G.*, 41). The individual is torn loose from the substantial unity (or symbiosis) with the context of natural influences when "the ego reflects upon itself from out of its relationship to something Other" (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 41). Consciousness is thus constituted by means of a relative *self-reflection*, and to this extent it is *self-*

consciousness. The difference is defined as “stages” in the progression of consciousness, thus as the “transition” from consciousness to self-consciousness based on *the function of self-reflection*.

From this perspective, the concept “concupiscence [Begierde]” must be understood as an expression for a necessary element in the constitution of consciousness and self-consciousness. The empirical relationship of consciousness with the world by means of “the understanding”, presupposes self-consciousness as an abstract unity, that which Kant calls transcendental apperception: “I know about the object as my own (it is my idea), and I know about myself in it” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 213). But consciousness is not conscious of this situation; to express it anthropologically, consciousness relates itself to its objective correlative as a naive reproduction of it. “The immediate self-consciousness does not yet possess the ego = ego, but only the ego as its object, and is therefore free only for us, not for itself” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 213). The purely empirical consciousness is swallowed up by the empirical external appearances with which it is confronted. Furthermore, it has “the form of an existent, of something immediate, something that is as yet filled with externality, despite or rather precisely because of its as yet undifferentiated inwardness” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 214).

Genuine self-consciousness is first constituted by means of the annulment of the antithesis between subjective possibility and objective actuality. This takes place when even the passive and receptive situation is experienced as a reality, which really “is [...] posited subjectively by the ego” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 214). Consciousness, in its passive form, is integrated into self-consciousness as a mode of its self-activity.

The first stage of this process is what is defined as “concupiscence” or “the concupiscent self-consciousness”. This involves consciousness establishing itself as an autonomous being (Seienden) in relation to empirical objectivity when it “without being determined by thought, is directed towards an external object, in which it attempts to find its satisfaction” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 215). This expression of life is an *experience of freedom*, because it implies a “certainty” that “the immediate external object has no genuine reality, but is nothing in relation to the subject, something possessing a merely apparent autonomy” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 216). This corresponds also to the goal of the development of self-consciousness, which is to come to full and actual certainty about this situation – in accord with the essence of spirit as *absolute freedom* – that it “grasps itself as that which posits its own Being, as itself its own Other” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 31).

It is not necessary here to investigate in more detail the individual elements of instinctual consciousness and the progress of such consciousness toward “universal self-consciousness”. My present intention has been only to point out the fact that the Hegelian concept of consciousness is connected to the idea of human reality as a biological process, and to describe in general how this connection is formed.

I will in conclusion briefly show how this same dialectic is also operative at a higher stage in the process of consciousness. What is in question is the step at which there is an annulment

of the contingency in the subject-object split within consciousness, that is, an annulment of the dependent character of the object in general (cf. *Philosophie des Geistes*, 231, 236), so that consciousness appears as a fundamentally spiritual or rational reality, where it “is concerned only with its own specifications” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 236), just as the primitive constituting of consciousness took place by means of an objectification of the mental capacity. The development of consciousness thus implies an increasing degree of self-determination, in which a previous stage is integrated as an instrument for a higher activity. In this way it becomes the concrete manifestation of the Absolute as self-activity.

The significant self-determination or “reason-existing-in-itself” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 42) is constituted by the further development of the two principal forms of general consciousness: the essentially receptive pole (consciousness), and the active pole (self-consciousness). The first aspect consummates itself in the development of its “theoretical” capacity or its “intelligence”. Its essence consists in annulling the passive character of the relation to the object, because the object here “contains the form of something recalled, something subjective, universal, necessary and rational. [...] Thus the object no longer possesses, as at the standpoint of consciousness, the specification of something negative to the ego” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 237). The other aspect is developed in the form of a necessary “modification” of the essential subjectivity of intelligence. The domination of the world by means of abstract and logical definitions manifests itself as one-sided or insufficient in relation to reason’s immanent ideal of a unity between the subjective and the objective (cf. *Philosophie des Geistes*, 42, 236). Consciousness must thus manifest itself as will or as acting reason (cf. *Philosophie des Geistes*, § 468).

It is in this perspective that the phenomenon Hegel calls “instincts and arbitrariness” must be understood. The phenomenon is a primitive level within the genuinely practical-moral sphere. In contrast to intelligence, practical consciousness assumes the subject as an autonomous and active authority: “it begins with such an individual thing, which it knows to be its own” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 42), or to define it more closely, “goals and interests [...] and then proceeds to make these into something objective” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 237; cf. 289). By this form of consciousness, the individual enters into a qualitatively new relation – in comparison with the sphere of cognition – to the world, because the world essentially becomes *part of the subject’s own actuality*.

At this point it could be asked how consciousness – which in theoretical reflection recognizes the empirical world as its own product – can in turn be confronted by the world as the correlative for its self-understanding, as its necessary opposition in a “foreign” reality. The answer, first of all, is that theoretical knowledge only produces its object implicitly; it does not constitute absolute knowledge. Secondly, the transition between theoretical and practical knowledge (as with Fichte and Schelling) is primarily a “transcendental” event, which, from a psychological point of view, is a continual *interplay between dimensions that are equally original*.

Practical consciousness has its origin not in theoretical reflection but in “immediacy” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 289). Its development into “purpose” and “interests” can only take place by means of a gradual theoretical *and* practical emancipation from unity with the natural organism. At this point *instinct* – in the beginning, the amorphous instinctual development – serves as a mediation of the passive feeling of life and “the idea” of harmonious life or happiness. The instinct enables the basic emancipation from the passive and symbiotic unity with the objective totality of life, which is the genetically primary form of life for the individual. The instinct is itself constituted by a transcending of the general reality of needs, “the entirely subjective and superficial feeling of that which is pleasant and that which is unpleasant” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 292).

The activity arises on the basis of the necessary inner antithesis within this emotional state, “on the one hand as an objectively valid act of self-determination, as something determined in itself, but on the other hand and at the same time as something immediately determined from outside, as subordinate to the alien determination of affections” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 293). The antithesis may be said to consist in a basically accidental agreement between the “inner” and the “outer” spheres, insofar as the satisfaction of needs may fail to occur. Consequently, the individual manifests himself as instinct or as will. “For this reason, the individual cannot stop at the comparing of his immanent determination with something external and merely at the discovering of the agreement between these two sides: he must go on and posit objectivity as an element of his self-determination, and thus himself generate that agreement, his satisfaction. This is how intelligence, in its act of willing, develops to become an instinct” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 295).

This volitional self-determination is not a “higher” or less primitive form of life-expression than that which has been defined – within the framework of the constitution of self-consciousness – as “concupiscence”. This is the sort of misunderstanding which appears when one interprets the forms of consciousness as “developmental psychology”. The volitional self-determination is the same phenomenon seen in a broader perspective, insofar as the methodological starting-point for the analysis of “the Spirit” is the synthesis of consciousness and self-consciousness. The power of instinct, or the immediate development of life – in its necessary integration with the *simultaneous* conquest of the subject-object split by the cognitive capacity – is here seen (by the philosopher) as “intelligent”. By virtue of this integration, it takes on the totalistic character which is the essence of “Spirit”, such that it “embraces a sequence of satisfactions – and thereby something total and general” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 296).

The “intelligent” instinct of the preservation of life is thus the primitive form of *self-objectification*, which constitutes the essence of consciousness, or its “spiritual” form. *The unity of consciousness and the world is constituted by means of a dialectical succession of such self-objectifications*, until it becomes totally *transparent to itself* in certainty of itself as a logical-conceptual totality and in recognition of the fact that it is grounded in “the process of the subjective activity of the idea” (*Philosophie des Geistes*, 394).

Our simplified presentation of Hegel's analysis of consciousness concludes here, as does this sketch-survey of idealist philosophy. The aim of the survey has been to show the contours of the philosophical horizon and the universe of problems and concepts, which, in a *general* sense, form the ground for SK's thought, and specifically his anthropology. Special pains have been taken to show how *the ontologizing of transcendental philosophy creates a breakthrough for an anthropological approach*, which specifically provides a solution to transcendental philosophy's immanent *problem of identity*. More specifically, this means that the reconstruction of consciousness develops as a dialectical relationship between "Nature" and "consciousness", that is, between naturally determined self-development *and* self-determination. Viewed under the rubric of conditions and forms governing the unity of existence (the totality of life), the principal approach of the present survey has been to focus on the simple question of the relation between "world" and "consciousness". In other words: how can consciousness, as the proper name for human existence, get on properly with the world as a reality transcending consciousness, when a consistent relation is here the condition for its own unity? The fundamental and, in a general sense, shared answer to this question in idealist philosophy is that these two dimensions rest upon one overall identity, the Absolute as subject-object. Differences in the concept of identity depend on differences in points of embarkation for the reconstruction of this unity. For this reason the responses to the anthropological problem vary as well.

With Kant, anthropology never really breaks through in a proper sense, inasmuch as his analysis of consciousness principally has to do with the *a priori* conditions for universally-valid statements within disparate – that is, conceptually unbridgeable – areas of the activity of reason. However, in the solution to this problem, critical epistemology also gains affinity to the anthropological problem. This is true, in a general way, of the concept of logical constitution, the idea of the primacy of the ideal or of the practical, and of regulative identity. Fichte represents the breakthrough for this approach because he transforms Kant's concept of reason into a concept of a transcendental ego, which is defined as the productive basis for the different forms of consciousness. Thus, the question of the unity of consciousness refers unambiguously to personal-moral self-identity, that is, as the concrete reproduction of original spontaneity. It was Schelling who first gave the concept of the identity of consciousness and the world speculative elaboration, guaranteeing identity by means of a concept of the absolute subject-object indifference. Hegel elaborates this concept of identity into a concept of the Absolute as a logical system, by documenting an experiential access to it via an anthropological and historical analysis of consciousness.

In what sense and to what extent this excursus on identity-philosophy may be fruitful for any critical understanding of SK's anthropology, can only be shown by carrying through the actual investigation. There can be no question of presenting a casuistic comparison here. The modes of presentation and the explicit approaches are too divergent for that. Agreement will essentially be expressed indirectly, in so far as SK's anthropology might take on an internal coherence as the result of interpreting it in light of the theories of existence dealt with above.

To anticipate, on a general plane it is possible to see the following principal areas of agreement between SK's analysis of existence and the idealist analysis of consciousness: in its methodological tendency SK's analysis may be said to constitute a genetic and reconstructive presentation of the forms of consciousness, in accordance with the schema of increasing self-objectification; furthermore, SK's analysis is consequently fundamentally oriented in relation to the concept of self-determination (Spirit, self), and thus also brings into focus the dialectic between life-development, instinct, and natural will, on the one hand, and consciousness, reflection, and moral will, on the other.

It must of course be emphasized that this agreement develops within a total anthropological conception, which is *anti-idealist* in the sense that it breaks with the fundamental assumption of identity-philosophy, *i.e.*, the concept of a pre-stabilized harmony between subject and object, between consciousness and existence. The explication of the break, however, assumes an affinity in approach to this philosophy, that is, to the problem of identity. Thus, the concept of identity is reinterpreted within the framework of other ontological assumptions. The identity or unity of existence becomes problematic in a manner completely different than in idealism, because idealism's idea of the identity of consciousness and the Absolute is not compatible with the idea of *the divine as fundamentally personal*. In SK, identity can only be realized as *individual identity*, in the simultaneously inescapable and free relation to the Absolute as personality: "in relating oneself to oneself and in willing to be oneself, the self grounds itself transparently in the power which established it" (15:74).

This corresponds to the "dualistic" perspective in late idealism and in Danish personalistic philosophy. However, as has been shown, the idea of *a priori* forms still plays a central role here. These eternal structures reflect themselves both in Nature and in consciousness. What is new, in comparison to Hegel, is SK's view on contingency – that is, that the *a priori* forms are defined (in Kantian fashion) as "conditions of possibility", and thus the actual "transition" from possibility to actuality becomes a major philosophical problem (e.g., Schelling's "the falling away [Abfall]"). Viewed formally, the major problem becomes that of determining the extent of this principle of contingency in relation to the *a priori* predetermination.

This *transformation of the concept of identity* is, in my view, the essential aspect of SK's relation to the idealist tradition; it is the substantial point in the more obvious historical-hermeneutical (formal) connection. Concerning first of all philosophical language, it is the same dialectic that *Litt* points at when writing: "It was not only because of his own believing philosophy that Kierkegaard sees his opponent to be Hegelian Idealism: it is in fact only in his attack on Hegel that his philosophy attained its peculiar pathos and its specific guiding path".¹⁹⁸

That this reinterpretation of the concept of identity is not a matter of simple "return" to Kant might be seen in the fact that Kant's critique of reason also originates in identity-philosophical assumptions, and, in addition, Kant does not really make room for the genuine anthropological problem. SK's formal agreement with Kant on the division between "existence" and "essence" (cf. VIII 2 B 81: 1; X 1 A 66; X 2 A 328) covers only the

“critical”, and not the “metaphysical” Kant. The “metaphysical” Kant assumes an identity between rationality and the world, even though the form that its certainty assumes is only that of a postulate or *a priori*-regulative ideality. However, when this metaphysical pretension is excluded, it can certainly be said that there is in SK (in his theory of the understanding) a general affinity to Kant’s delimitation of the sphere of theoretical objectivity and further to his concept of moral self-reflection as an area of access to the Absolute.

2. Kierkegaard's Fundamental Anthropological Conception: "Existence" as Transformation of the Idealist Concept of Spirit

Against the background of this interpretation of idealist philosophy as identity-philosophical anthropology, I will now attempt to delineate the fundamental features of SK's philosophical position. In so doing, I will here set forth a unifying anticipation of the views to later be developed more fully in the subsequent and more specialized analyses. It is only on the basis of such a holistic view that both SK's unity with idealist philosophy and his divergences from it can be determined in a precise manner.

To repeat and clarify the general line of reasoning behind the present interpretation: SK develops his ideas on human existential reality in explicit and implicit relation to idealist philosophy, and it follows from this that there must exist some sort of agreement with regard to ways of thinking about man and his world. A general consensus is required in order to make any negation possible at all. A negation within the framework of a given position means a *transformation*. And the general description found in the present work stands under this rubric. This does not mean that I consider SK's thought to be quite simply a new "answer" to a "question" asked before (*philosophia perennis*), as that which could superficially be labeled as an "answer" is of course intimately connected with *a new approach to the question*. Such an approach could all the same be viewed as a form of continuity with the tradition, because it is possible to see it as a negation of particular "answers" or points of view within that tradition.

A. Immanent Difference and Synthesis

What unites SK's thought with idealist tradition is, above all, the general view of *man as a potential-actual synthesis of heterogeneous elements*. The antagonism forming the basis of this synthesis is expressed on a general level by means of a multiplicity of oppositional pairs, all according to the perspective under which human existential reality is viewed, e.g., "time" and "eternity" (cf. 6:170; 9:80); "finitude" and "infinite" (cf. 3:231; 15:87); "necessity" and "freedom" (cf. 15:73); "body" and "mind" (cf. 6:173, 137); "possibility" and "actuality" (cf. 10:21); "reality" and "ideality" (cf. IV B 1, p. 146). What characterizes these concepts is that they are traditional (insofar as they are drawn from the established philosophical vocabulary in a rather unmediated fashion) and, in keeping with this, they are also relatively indefinite (both as individual concepts and in their mutual relations). In other words: the use of these fundamental anthropological concepts is imprecise and unsystematic at its starting point, and they can thus be said to have only indicative significance in relation to the totality of meaning of which they are a part. Their significance may thus be ascertained more precisely only through an analysis of this context.

The immediate common meaning of these concepts is clear, however. They express the fundamentally "problematic" character of human life, elucidating the fact that man exists

within a framework of fundamental difference or a series of such differences, and that this opposition immediately forces the “problem of priority” upon him. This problem is, first of all, a structural phenomenon arising on the basis of being conscious of this existential difference, and is not an existential question of personal identity. The latter question presupposes awareness of the former situation, that is, the fact that *priority is already established in the existential structure*. For example, it is in the essence of consciousness that “ideality” has priority in relation to “reality”, since the former – as the essence of linguistic interaction – mediates the latter entirely, making “reality” present to the knowing subject by way of constitution. This situation can further be interpreted as a form of the primacy of “infinitude” in relation to “finitude”.

“Finitude” is the sum of all ways in which a person is factually determined, both with regard to universally human and particular characteristics, *i.e.*, a person’s total situation understood as “condition” or facticity. The aspect of “infinitude” is the same situation understood as change or as “transcendence”. The concept of transcendence must here be understood in a very broad sense, insofar as it includes changes of qualitatively different sorts. It is thus not here a question of two “sides” of human reality standing in an external relation to one another, as two functions, but of a breaking-up within the framework of factual determinations, *i.e.*, the breakthrough of “infinitude” into “finitude”.

Because his orientation is based on Hegel, *Holl* omits this main point of the concept of transcendence in his presentation of the relation between “freedom” and “necessity”. The two dimensions are understood either as identical or as external in relation to one another. SK, of course, must be characterized on the basis of the latter alternative; he is said to speak “at the same time of a necessary and a desultory development”.¹⁹⁹

For example, when it is said in *The Sickness Unto Death* that “imagination is above all the medium of that which infinitizes” (15:88), this movement of transcendence has a double relation to facticity. Imagination, making it possible, is on the one hand a factual-psychological characteristic, that is, an aspect of the general human constitution as “condition”. On the other hand, in its concrete development, imagination will necessarily relate itself to something given, to a definite element of consciousness, as a material point of departure. This is what imagination “broadens” and “infinitizes”. The negation presupposes the position, both as subject and as object. The relation between “finitude” and “infinitude” can thus be defined as a *differentiation within the framework of a given totality*. The Judge expresses this when he says, with regard to “temporality”, that “the infinite and the finite spirit in it are separated” (3:231).

Human reality is “composed” of dimensions in such a way that the one necessarily has primacy in relation to the other. The one is the “determining” factor, as is “the mind” in its relation to “the body” (cf. 6:218). It is this *difference, with the primacy of one factor*, which in general makes human life a dynamic reality. This structure is the general significance of the concept of “existence”. “But what is existence? It is the child which is begotten of the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal and therefore continually striving” (9:80).

The structure of human existence is such that it develops a “dynamics” as its general form of actuality.

The primary meaning of *the concept of existence* – the fact that it stands for a structural opposition – is obscured when existence is simply identified with “the factual that”.²⁰⁰ Strictly speaking, this is only one element in the structure determining the dynamic. Existence appears only as the self-annulment of facticity by virtue of the “ideal functions” which introduce an essential and lasting transcendence.

This “becoming” (9:70) is the most fundamental condition of human life; it is the circumstance leading to the problem of personal identity – “the synthesis” – arising at all. Sheer “existence” is no realization of the human essence, but is, as Climacus says, “a self-contradiction” (9:79). However, this contradiction points to “the self” as the only possible locus for its “annulment.”

However, this problem of unity is pushed into the background in the *Postscript*, because of the work’s clash with identity-philosophy’s specific concept of synthesis, the view that worldly existence is a “unity of thought and being” (9:105). On the basis of the position taken in the *Postscript*, the principal content of anthropology is only one element of “the self”, namely, consciousness of the antithesis within existence. This point of view is summarized in the Socratic thesis that “subjectivity, inwardness, is the truth” (9:170). This statement only indicates subjectivity as the “place” where identity or “the truth” is won, and nothing further is said about the form that subjectivity must assume to complete its task. The subjectivity, which is spoken of here, is “abstract” or “transcendental”, in the sense that – as consciousness *about* concrete existence as a task – this subjectivity is only a condition for the “real” and, in a significant sense, concrete subjectivity. This subjectivity is the consciousness of what has been defined in the present work as the structure of priority in the juxtaposition of ontologically heterogeneous dimensions, which constitutes the human situation. In other words, subjectivity has to do with a certainty that existence, in its sheer facticity, is self-dissolving, insofar as its inherent “passion of infinitude” negates every objective content in the recognition that “its content is precisely itself” (9:169).

In his presentation of “the forms of despair”, Anti-Climacus gives a structural description of this existential dualism. The various forms of despair are constituted either by the development of the given primacy or by the negation of that primacy, *i.e.*, a “regression” to the subordinate and “factual” element of the juxtaposition. The former are the forms of despair characterized by “infinitude” and “possibility”, and the latter are the forms characterized by “finitude” and “necessity”. In the absence of a “synthetic” locus of authority, existence dissolves itself in extreme existential situations. The first condition for stopping this process of dissolution is the consciousness that the antithesis is a fundamental existential condition, that is, the recognition that “subjectivity is the truth.”

The question of the form which subjectivity must assume in order to come beyond mere consciousness of the existential dualism has already been dealt with in the earlier writings, first and foremost in the presentation of the ethical stage in *Either/Or*, vol. II, and in *The*

Concept of Anxiety. These works develop the concept of “taking over the self” or of “choosing oneself”; and they develop the idea of “spirit” as the synthetic factor in the body/mind relation, as well as the thesis on “the moment” as that which constitutes human historicity, *i.e.*, as that which may be defined as the logic of “self-determination” in general.

Still, the pithiest presentation of this fundamental stance is given by Anti-Climacus in the Introduction to *The Sickness Unto Death*. Here the structural foundation for “the dialectic of inwardness” is sketched out, because this dialectic is identical with that which is later defined as “the infinite abstraction from everything external [...] the first form of the infinite self” (15:111). “The self is a relation which relates to itself, or it is that in the relation which causes the relation to relate to itself; the self is not the relation, but it is *that* the relation relates to itself” (15:73). The logical structure of this concept is: a relation is composed of two relations, of which one is a given relation; the other is a relation *to* the given possibility, namely, the possibility which arises from the first relation. The first relation stands for what has been characterized in the present work as the underlying ontological difference of human life, its character as a juxtaposition of heterogeneous dimensions, which can only stand in relation to one another by being grounded in the same subjectivity. The possibility of a qualitatively new relation, which transcends and embraces this primary and purely factual relation, is based, as mentioned, in the priority-structure of this relation, that is, in the fact that the one dimension by necessity comes to be decisive for the other.

It is this factual dialectic which defines human life as “existence”. Its character of “becoming” means that it cannot establish itself as a concluded or self-identical whole, because its contents change with the stream of experience. As something given and necessary, the relation between the two poles is not an actual unity – that is, a positive and integrated unity – but is, as Anti-Climacus says, a “negative unity” (15:73). The definition of one dimension by the other takes the form of negation, and consequently, sheer unqualified existence is, as Climacus puts it rather pointedly, a “self-contradiction” (9:79).

The conquest of this self-contradictory and self-dissolving relation can only happen when the entire relation is subsumed under and determined by a new relation. In this lies the ontological and anthropological meaning of “the self”. “On the other hand, if the relation relates to it self then this relation is a positive third, and this is the Self” (15:73). Or, in the words of Haufniensis: “Man is a synthesis of the mental and the corporeal. But a synthesis is unthinkable when the two are not unified in a third. This third is the Spirit” (6:137).

If one asks how this relation to the relation is established, then a question has been asked which is so extensive that it can only be adequately answered by an analysis of SK’s anthropology in its entirety, and at this point I can only direct the reader to the remainder of the work at hand. However, one principal aspect will be brought forth already now.

If “the Spirit” or “the Self” indicates the form of existence, which unites the antithesis constituting existence, it is obvious that the fact that the antithesis *appears* to the subject – *i.e.*, to consciousness – at all, must be a condition for the existence of this “synthetic” relation. As already mentioned, this is the fundamental anthropological significance of

Climacus' thesis "truth is subjectivity" – *i.e.*, that the individual becomes conscious of himself in the fundamental duality of his existence, in its "self-contradictory" character. Consequently, Anti-Climacus may assert: "Consciousness in general – that is, self-consciousness – is decisive in the relation to the self. The more consciousness [occurs], the more self" (15:87). Without self-consciousness the existing antithesis could not become the object of a comprehensive relation, that is, the relation to the relation, or "the synthesis."

Still, the idea of a relation between existential duplicity and consciousness implies in the strict sense a *dialectical concept*, casting light on the notion that the possibility for the secondary relation springs from the facticity of the primary relation. That is, the antithesis is not only *represented* by means of consciousness, but is itself *constituted* by consciousness. *Altogether, it is the character of human existence as consciousness that produces the antithesis to which "the Self" relates as "synthesis"*.

This emerges clearly in Climacus' analysis of the concept of "consciousness" in the fragment *De omnibus dubitandum est* (IV B 1), where the principal point is that consciousness is constituted through a differentiation of the immediate totality of life into the poles of "reality" and "ideality", that is, as "the relation" between these poles (IV B 1, p. 147). In compressed form, this may be expressed as follows: the character of "the Self" as a relation of consciousness is established and anticipated in that reality, that "relation", to which it relates itself. On the basis of this "principle of immanence" it makes good sense to say "that the relation relates to itself", as Anti-Climacus does.

Just as it is consciousness, which creates the fundamental antithesis of human life, so is it consciousness, which must conquer this same antithesis through an immanent development, by means of which the individual becomes conscious of him self as "existing", and identifies himself with this antithesis-determined reality. *This self-identification – "to will to be oneself" – represents the fundamental solution to the problem of difference*; that is, it is a solution on the ontological and structural plane. It is the nerve in the Judge's presentation of the ethical stage, whose logic is namely that the individual "acknowledges his identity with himself" (3:200). This self-identification is also the existential paradigm underlying the problem dealt with in *Repetition*, namely, "that the freedom in the relation of the individual to the surrounding world [...] can take itself back (repeat itself)" (IV B 117, p. 282). It is also indirectly present in Climacus' observations on the philosophy of history in *Philosophical Fragments*. Thus, in the logic of "the self" there is a "principle of identity" implied, which can adequately be put on the formula: "This transformation is thus not in essence but in being [...] the transformation of coming-into-being is the transition from possibility to actuality" (6:68).

In this principal aspect of SK's fundamental anthropological conception – that is, the circumstance that the developmental structure of human life can be defined as *self-development through differentiation and identification* – there is undoubtedly both a formal and a factual agreement with the idealist concept of spirit. In idealism, also, the comprehensive logical structure is marked by an insistence upon difference within the

framework of a conscious self-identity. Thus, Hegel, for example, writes: “Therefore the Spirit takes only from its own Being and relates only to its own determinations [...] Only when this identity is further developed to a genuine distinction and has made itself the identity of itself and of its distinction, so that the spirit emerges as a determined totality distinguished in itself, has that certainty been shown to be true”.²⁰¹ “Identity in difference” represents a structural correspondence between the concept of spirit by Hegel and by SK. Against this background it will be possible to delineate more clearly what is unique in SK’s anthropological position, *i.e.*, that which characterizes it as a negation of the idealist systematic conception.

In general, this split may be formulated in relation to the already-discussed principle of identity in the following simple way: in idealist tradition, identity is the “absolute” ontological principle. In *Hegel* it means the logical unity of finite philosophical consciousness and the absolute ground of existence. As “absolute knowledge”, the finite consciousness or “Spirit” can transfigure itself as “a realization of the Idea”, in the logically-necessary sense. For SK, on the other hand, the principle of identity has – in a fundamental sense – limited status. It is not an ontological *principle par excellence*, but represents the structure and the existential paradigm of the finite spirit. Human existence consummates itself on an immanent basis by means of the self-identification of the individual, the conscious holding-together of the antitheses of existence. This synthesis does not, however, represent the unity of the individual with being in general or with the Absolute. It is only a condition of possibility for such a relation, which thus takes on a completely different character from what is the case in idealist philosophy. *Absolute self-consciousness is transformed into an absolute relation to the Absolute as a personally transcendent reality.*

B. Synthesis, Ontological Dualism and Will

A general formulation of this re-interpretation of the idea of identity is found in the continuation of the passage in *The Sickness Unto Death* which defines the *telos* of human life as a relation of identity. The act of identity, “the relation to the relation”, is here related to another, more comprehensive relation. “If the relation, which relates to itself, has been established by another, then the relation is indeed the third, but this relation – the third – is, however, also a relation, which relates to that which has established the whole relation. Such a derived, established relation is the human self, a relation which relates to itself, and, in relating to itself, it relates also to an Other” (15:73).

That human consciousness relates itself immediately to the Absolute is a typical idealist conception, because the Absolute, by means of a differentiation of absolute identity, constitutes the ontological basis of self-consciousness. This idea is generally represented in Anti-Climacus’ definition – in his statement that “[it] relates to that which established the entire relation” – but in an essentially modified form. That is, in a consistent idealist outlook one could not say that self-consciousness in an ontological sense “relates to an Other”,

because idealism's fundamental premise is that consciousness is the Absolute's own consciousness of itself. From an idealist point of view, the argument that the Absolute is "something other" than self-consciousness can only be understood as an ontic consequence of consciousness' lack of transparency to itself, as "pseudo-consciousness" in a significant sense, or as it is called by *Hegel*, "finitude of the standpoint of reflection." "For the progression towards the infinite is only as the abstract negation of the finite, as the non-finite, which however – since it does not have the finite in itself as its own self – remains something Other in relation to it and thereby itself something finite, which in turn progresses to something endless, and so on into infinity".²⁰²

Starting from the basic premises of identity-philosophy, SK's position must be said to represent a "philosophy of reflection", dissolving itself in "bad infinity", which in the final analysis, according to Hegel, also means "lack of religion".²⁰³ For SK, however, this is precisely the point where one may speak of a religious and theological point of departure, *i.e.*, the Christian faith in God. *SK's use of the principle of identity in his anthropology can furthermore be seen as a transformation of that principle in terms of a theology of creation or a "Christian-philosophy"* (cf. Sibbern). For SK, the fact that one's primary task in existence is to identify oneself with oneself in one's givenness, may in the final analysis be explained by the idea that givenness – like the possibility of "taking over" that givenness – proceeds from God's creative act, with the consequence that a completion of this task must imply that "the self [is grounded] transparently in the power which established it" (15:74). Within this framework, the idea of identity is only to be reckoned as an analogy to the speculative principle of identity, that is, the view that by means of self-reflection (the form of cognition that SK, along with Hegel himself, calls "recollection") the human person can achieve his or her essential development and personal identity. This is an analogy that SK knows well to put to good use for hermeneutic and didactic reasons – that is, in order for his anthropology to appear as a real alternative to idealist ontology.

Thus, SK's concept of "repetition", which in the final analysis refers to the Christian theological basis for his anthropology, is worked out as a conscious counterpart both to the Greek-Platonic "recollection" and to the modern idea of identity, "the mediation" (cf. 5:130, 115; 6:116, 119). This implies an understanding of the fact that one is here confronted with the same fundamental problem, namely, the question of the basic identity of human life, which transcends the essential contingency of the contents of consciousness. This also means that there will be a structural isomorphism among the respective "solutions" or substantive points of view. In any case, identity must be established through a form of self-identification, that is, the development of a state of existence given beforehand. A compressed expression of this correspondence is found in a pair of journal entries from 1840, which have not yet clearly separated out that anthropology which is based on a theology of creation.

SK puts forth the view that "the finite spirit is as it is, a unity of necessity and freedom [...] it does not have to bring forth something new by means of development, but by means of development it must acquire what it has". SK also puts this in connection with Plato's idea

“that all knowing is recollection” and to the view of the contemporary identity-philosophy “that all philosophizing is self-reflection upon that which is already given in consciousness” (III A 5). An alternative formulation of the same basic idea may be found in a second entry, where it is maintained that “the individual’s true life is its apotheosis, which does not consist of an empty *I*, devoid of content, sneaking away, as it were, from this finitude in order to be volatilized and evaporated on its heavenly journey, but rather, exists when the divine inhabits and finds itself in finitude” (III A 1). This statement, also, constitutes an analogy to a speculative interpretation of historical existence or “finitude”, that is, to a position explaining historical existence by means of “the abstract, the metaphysical”, by means of “the System” or “the Idea” (III A 1). SK writes that what is suspect in this understanding of existence is that it claims to understand the meaning of historical life, “the eternal bonds of existence”, by abstracting from its concrete contents, that is, by reducing it to its “categorical” substratum. In his argument, SK takes the same tack taken by *Sibbern* and *Møller* in their criticisms of Hegel.

Regardless of whether this description covers or does not cover Hegel’s position (it is Hegel’s logic which is here examined, while his “phenomenology” – the ascent of consciousness from “the phenomenon” to “the metaphysical” – is ignored), it may still be said that it is SK’s creation-theological or “Christian-philosophical” basis which here comes to the fore, even if in a somewhat unclear way. Historically, we may understand this against the background of SK at this time working, within the framework of a Christian theological orientation, to clarify his philosophical standpoint in relation to reigning philosophical ideas of the period. The essential point of the two statements cited is that the unity of existence can only be won through a *realization of the individually-given possibilities*, on the assumption that this givenness is a divinely-instituted reality.

This is the same idea which, in more clarified form, finds expression in the anthropological structure sketched in *The Sickness Unto Death*, where it is maintained that the relation of the self is a relation to “that which has established the entire relation” (15:73). The same position recurs in a more emotional and edifying form in the discourse on “Acquiring One’s Soul in Patience”: “It is not a matter of conquering, of chasing and seizing something, but of becoming quieter and quieter, because that which must be acquired is there within oneself, and the distress is that one is outside of oneself; because that which must be acquired is *in* patience, not hidden in such a manner that someone who, as it were, patiently peeled away the leaves from patience could then find it all the way inside; but rather, it is patience itself into which the soul patiently spins itself, and thereby acquires both patience and itself” (4:155).

“Patience” here corresponds to what has earlier been defined as self-identification, and the expression indicates that the unity of existence is primarily to be won by means of an act of will, that is, an act which essentially moves outside contemplative self-knowledge. “Therefore a person must indeed know his soul in order to acquire it, but this knowledge is not an acquisition, as indeed in this knowledge he becomes assured that he is under a foreign

power and that he does not indeed own himself, or, more exactly, that he has not acquired himself” (4:74). This recognition or reflection has the essential but preliminary function of making plain the lack of self-identity in and antithetical nature of existence, *i.e.*, that the individual indeed “is under a foreign power.”

I have alluded to two circumstances which represent SK’s modifications of the idealist concept of spirit, a “premise” and that which may be defined as its “consequence”: that is, the creation-theological frame of orientation and the principle of will as having an anthropological primary-function in relation to reflexive insight. The latter is expressed in definitive form in *The Sickness Unto Death*, where it is stated: “The more consciousness, the more self; the more consciousness, the more will; the more will, the more self” (15:87).

SK’s fundamental break with idealist philosophy entails, one could say, that anthropology is freed from the traditional “rationalistic” connection to the problem of knowledge and epistemology, and this also characterizes SK’s “existential-philosophical” position as something new from the point of view of the history of philosophy, thus modifying philosophy by means of religion or Christianity. This means that the anthropological question concerning the conditions for personal identity and unity of life are not arranged to serve primarily as a set of principles for a universal rationality; or what Climacus, in his polemical simplification, calls “granting supremacy to thought” (10:44); or what he defines as “Kant’s deviation, which brought reality into relation with thought” (10:32).

Instead, the Archimedean point for “the problem of reality” is here the individual consciousness of one’s own particular reality, *i.e.*, as a reality not translucent to rational discourse. Therefore it may be said that “individuality is the true end-point in the development of Creation” (II A 474), and that “every individual life is incommensurable with the concept” (IV C 96). These formulations show clearly SK’s connection with the “*metaphysics of individuality*” in Danish personalistic philosophy. Climacus gives a pithy formulation of this ontology: “All knowledge of actuality is possibility; the only actuality about which the existing individual is more than knowing is his own actuality, that he exists; and this actuality is his own absolute interest” (10:22). This, consequently, is “the only actuality which does not become a possibility by being known and which cannot be known merely by being thought” (10:26).

It is this “irrational” principle of ontology which determines that the first condition for a person’s attaining unity of life and “reality”, in the strict sense, is that she realizes herself as ethical individuality. “The individual’s own ethical actuality is the only actuality” (10:31) – that is, “to make existence into infinite interest” (10:25). The “existing individuality” is the *conditio sine qua non* in order for the question of what constitutes reality to arise as a problem for reflection or for philosophical consciousness at all, just as consciousness in general, its structure, is the expression of an existential “interest” (cf. IV B 1, p. 148). To abstract from this assumption by means of a reduction to the logical-categorical contents of consciousness – whether it takes place in Kant’s “critical”, or in Hegel’s “ontological”, sense – results in the postulate that thinking and existence coincide as now the only option for

solving the problem of identity in existence. Climacus writes: “As soon as the interest is annulled, doubt is not conquered, but neutralized, and all such knowledge is only a regression” (IV B 1, p. 148). Or: “And if Hegelian philosophy is free of all postulates, then it has gained this by means of one insane postulate: the beginning of sheer thought” (10:20 f.).

The problem of personal identity in existence can thus not be solved within the framework of a purely conceptual discourse, because it cannot adequately assimilate that which gives rise to the problem in the first place, individually-given reality.

It is this, which gives *the will* (“passion” and “interest”) its primacy as a locus of authority for mediation or for creating reality, because the will insists upon a particular situation, while the concept displaces it to the advantage of the universal. It can therefore be said that the will or passion, to the extent that they spring from the person’s fundamental ontological situation, is that which most deeply characterizes human life. The “truly human is passion” (5:109), and “every movement of infinity takes place by means of passion, and no reflection can bring about movement” (5:40), writes Johannes de Silentio. This recognition is concretely carried out and presented in SK’s description of the forms of existence. That which constitutes the aesthetic form of life is passion in the form of self-assertion on the basis of the given mental potential, e.g., reflection. The ethical form of life is sustained by passion in relation to the individual’s immanent *telos* with regard to independence within social integration. And the religious stance relates passionately to a transcendent power. In its ontological significance, passion is the general form of “activity” which is possible within the framework of the fundamental “passivity” which existence, as finite and factual, represents. It is the optimal point of unity for the ontological difference in human life. Climacus expresses this in a rather formulaic (and somewhat cryptic) manner in the following passage: “Only momentarily can the single existing individual be in the unity of infinitude and finitude, which is beyond existing. This moment is the moment of passion” (9:164). The subject sees himself in his “total situation”.

There is in this no general “vitalism” which attributes a unity-creating function to every spontaneous way of living. When there is mention of passion as an existential paradigm – that is, as a point of synthesis – it related to recognition of this existential situation. This is essentially different from the passion relating opaquely to this situation, the “aesthetic” passion, which ontologically is only an “expression” for the dynamic of existence. “Aesthetic pathos removes itself from existence, or, remaining in it, is in illusion; existential passion, on the other hand, immerses itself in existing and saturates all illusions with the consciousness of existence, becoming more and more concrete by actively reshaping existence” (10:120).

This passion, involving a consciousness of the fundamental conditions of existence – that is, consciousness of the foreordained and essentially “composite” character of existence, thus able to be defined as “passion” in as much as it implies a certainty that “no individual is capable of making himself over” (10:121) – this passion is a fundamental condition for personal identity (that is, as the unity of life), within the framework of the comprehensive historical contingency to which the individual is subject. “An abstract continuity is no

continuity, and the fact that an existing individual exists essentially prevents continuity, while passion is a momentary continuity, which at once restrains and is the impulse for movement. For an existing individual, the aim of the movement is decision and repetition. The eternal is the movement's continuity, but an abstract eternity is outside of movement, and a concrete eternity in the existing individual is the maximum of passion" (10:19). Passion in this ethical sense directs the individual beyond his facticity and back to it. It "restrains", for only within this limitation can it act as a "transformation" of the concrete reality of the individual. Climacus' concept of "the pathetic" (cf. 10:82 ff.) expresses this "self-critical" aspect in self-identification.

The principle of *the primacy of the will* in the anthropological synthesis must be seen as a consequence of SK's point of departure in a Christian theology of creation. On the basis of this the primacy of the will becomes an overall theme in his clash with idealist philosophy, worked out in various ways in response to the specific points of "the System". Underlying his polemic against Hegelian logic is the point, as Haufniensis puts it, "that the concept of movement itself is a transcendence which cannot find a place in logic" (6:112). What is criticized here is an abstraction away from one fundamental circumstance; namely, that the dynamic that thought undoubtedly possesses is rooted, in the final analysis, in the "existing" subjectivity. Logical discourse can only presuppose this existing subjectivity, but cannot incorporate it as a logical element. Thought is fundamentally impotent vis-à-vis factual existence; "factual being is indifferent to all the differences of essential determinations, and everything that exists participates in being, without narrow jealousy, and participates equally much" (6:42). To the extent that the problem of the unity of life relates essentially to this "assumption", reflection can only function as a subordinate fact within an act of the will, which, in contrast to the concept, insists upon the particular, the individual uniqueness, as its *telos*. "The point of the singular is precisely its negative self-relating to the universal" (6:168).

It is this volitional self-identification, which makes philosophical reflection – the attempt to saturate the factual with thought – possible at all. This is also the reason that the philosophical pretension of having "an absolute beginning" shows itself to be an illusion (cf. 9:98), because it starts from a "decision" and can only end in one as well (cf. 9:97). According to SK, the impotence of pure reflection has already been demonstrated by Socrates through his negation of the traditional self-understanding on the basis of a confrontation with "the Absolute" or "the ideal Infinite". "Reality became by means of the Absolute nothing, but the Absolute was again nothing" (1:256). In this way reflection's essence as principle of existence or reality is also indirectly demonstrated – that is, its negative, self-dissolving, and thus preliminary character.

The ontological primacy of the will, which is the very essence of SK's transformation of the idealist-Hegelian category of Spirit, is expressed compactly in the following passage from *The Sickness Unto Death*: "It is in fact not the case, as philosophers explain, that necessity is the unity of possibility and reality. No, reality is the unity of possibility and necessity"

(15:94). In the former case, “necessity” (that is, the relation between concepts) is the locus of an authority that creates unity. In the latter case the unity-creating locus of authority is the individual’s factual determinations, “what might be called one’s limits” (15:94). In this relation, the will is the “power to obey, to submit to that which is necessary in oneself” (15:94), by holding the possibilities of imagination or of reflection within the confines of the factual unity of life.

As early as in *The Concept of Irony* this anthropological conception is expressed in a provisional way, in the concept of “irony as a restrained moment”. This represents *the self-reflection, which is essentially limited by the will*, that is, the will to bind one’s personal identity to the essential finitude which reflection lays bare. When reflection is thus combined with the will, which wills self-identification, it appears as “restrained irony”. It provides the individual with the advantage of infinitude or self-transcendence, “which rescues the mind from having its life in finitude” (1:329). “Irony as a restrained moment thus reveals itself in its truth precisely in the fact that it teaches how to realize reality, by placing due emphasis upon reality” (1:330).

Reflection is thus a necessary but subordinate element in the volitional synthesis; this is due to the fact that it is a relation of consciousness in the first place. According to Climacus, the paradigm is “to saturate one’s existence with consciousness, to be simultaneously far beyond it, as it were, and yet present within it, but still in becoming” (10:15). Reflection also forms part of “the moment of passion” (9:164).

The ideal of absolute mediation, of the annulment of “immediacy” in the self-evident concept, here reveals itself to be an illusion. It introduces an illusory mediation by abstracting away from the problem – “existence” – and its fundamental antithesis. For the connection to existence to be preserved, the problem can only be solved by means of a new or higher form of immediacy, namely, “faith”, which essentially transcends the sphere of thought, insofar as it “comes after the understanding” (10:141; cf. 10:49; 5:109; 8:272). As SK writes in an autobiographical entry, “Faith is immediacy after reflection” (VIII 1 A 650).

As already mentioned, this main anthropological position is connected to SK’s fundamental Christian-theological assumption that man relates to the ultimate ground of his worldly existence as to an essentially “other” or “foreign” reality. According to Anti-Climacus, the aim is “to stand as an individual directly before God” (15:136). If one wishes to label SK’s ontological position, one could well speak of “an ontological dualism” here,²⁰⁴ as an expression of the systematic “degradation” of the idealist idea of identity, and to the extent that idealism represents a “monistic” position. “The view which sees the duplicity (dualism) of life is higher and deeper than that which seeks unity or ‘makes studies toward a unity,’” one journal entry tells us (IV A 192). As shown, such a universal description will not cover SK, insofar as the idea of identity is also preserved within his conceptual framework, namely in the concept of self-identification as fundamental anthropological paradigm. In this there is also a modification of the “ontological dualism”; self-identification “mediates” with the divine ground of existence, in the sense that it is the condition of possibility for “faith”,

which is the adequate relation to this ground. “Faith is and means that the self, in being itself and in willing to be itself, transparently grounds itself in God”, writes Anti-Climacus (15:136).

This conception assumes that the relation to the ground of existence is intact in the person’s factual existence, by attributing to this existence a divine act of creation. Man exists in given unity with the divine, but this unity is, however, not the same as identity. And precisely in this fact lies a possibility that the relation on the concrete level may not be intact, but is a “disproportion”, constituting a condition of “despair”. “Where does despair comes from, then? From the relation, in which the synthesis relates to itself, because God, who made man a relation, lets man slip from His hand, as it were; that is, because the relation relates to itself” (15:75). What is intact and divinely legitimized is the “synthetic” structure itself in man’s existence – the fact that it is constituted as an antithetical relation among heterogeneous elements within one and the same subjectivity. This *basal synthesis* in turn conditions a *higher synthesis*, the self-relation whose *telos* it is to unite the antitheses in stable unity. This implies that, thirdly, as a part of the creational institution there is also *the concrete historical content*, which emerges from the interchange between the two basal dimensions, namely, those of mental-physical interaction.

The principle of identity – that is, the immanent demand for self-identification – is justified by a superior principle of unity, which comes from a theology of creation. This principle implies a decisive modification of the idealist principle of identity. It gives meaning to SK’s specific concept of human freedom. Freedom means, negatively, that un-freedom is the “despair” which is constituted when a person concretely denies unity with the divine ground of existence – that is, he tears himself loose from the condition of possibility for freedom as self-identity through the synthesis of the self-relation. Nevertheless, the possibility of freedom is itself active in this denial of being created. Un-freedom is only an ontic reality that is ontologically grounded in a unity with the divine creative act. It is “like a falling-off in comparison to being able to be” (15:75). This dialectic means that the creation-theological unity is simultaneously the ground and the goal of human existence.

Holl attempts to provide a formula for this dialectic by speaking of “a monism” à la Fichte, which becomes modified by a comprehensive “ontological dualism”.²⁰⁵ However, such a stiff schema denies the unity of SK’s thought, by defining SK’s “finite” position as a retreat from the necessary consequence of the “monistic” tendency, “that the ego posits itself”.²⁰⁶ There is nothing, however, which indicates that SK’s principle of identity is not oriented from the very beginning in relation to the Christian belief in creation and incarnation; this is all the more true in light of the fact that idealist philosophy must also be understood from an intellectual-historical perspective – in the manner it in fact understood itself – as an interpretive conversion of the conceptions of faith into an area for rational discourse.²⁰⁷

SK’s “dualism” is defined as follows: “while consciousness does become more concrete with Kierkegaard, it is not in the sense that consciousness converts the entire substance for itself, but precisely in the sense that it becomes without substance by setting itself in a

position absolutely over against substance”.²⁰⁸ Holl overlooks the fact that a person’s acknowledgement of his “nothingness” before God does not exclude an integrative relation to worldly existence; for SK, such an integrative relation appears in precisely this manner – that is, through the free development of “the self” or the volitionally free relation to the self - and this gives the self its only possible stable position. “Nothingness” before God is only an expression of the “necessity” of the God-relation – its character as ultimate source of creation. That this situation should mean a “loss” of freedom and make “the entire self a positive synthesis of necessity”²⁰⁹ is a misunderstanding due to Holl’s failure to make the distinction between freedom as process (synthesis) and freedom as a “necessary” relation to the ground of freedom. The God-relation does not destroy the relation to the self, as; on the contrary, the two relations mutually condition one another. When Holl characterizes this as the destruction of freedom, it is only an expression of his preference for the idealist concept of freedom, *i.e.*, that self-reflection is to be understood as the superior ontological factor.

C. Subjectivity: Self-Acceptance or Self-Creation

I will conclude my general presentation of SK’s anthropology by commenting on a disputed point of view within Kierkegaard research, namely, the question of the idealist character of SK’s thinking, a point basic to this study. It is maintained that SK, in spite of his polemic against idealist-Hegelian philosophy, remains conditioned in a decisive way by some of its basic ontological presuppositions, especially the idea of human subjectivity as self-creation. Thus, it has been said, SK’s relationship to the Christian belief in creation becomes problematic. In fact, some claim to detect in the structure of his thinking a neglect of the whole dogma.

The main representatives of this line of interpretation are, as already mentioned (cf. Introduction 1 B), *Anz* and *Løgstrup*, even though the premises on which their criticisms are based are very different: In the first case we find basically a defense of the traditional idea of an “objective order of creation”, in the second case, we see a concept of ethical primacy given to “the spontaneous expressions of life” as a fundamental starting point.

Anz’ interpretation is based on a specific intellectual-historical perspective, undoubtedly inspired by Heidegger’s²¹⁰ definition of modern philosophy, starting with Descartes, as a “philosophy of subjectivity”²¹¹ Within this macroscopic perspective whose critical point of reference is the Christian-Platonic “objectivity” of ethical standards,²¹² the philosophy of SK is merely regarded “as a corrective transformation of Idealism”.²¹³ This transformative correction is then on one particular point seen as a change for the worse to the extent that it disturbs Idealism’s “balance” between subjectivity and objectivity. Especially Hegel had, in his criticism of Romantic philosophy’s view of life, tried to stem the nihilistic consequences of this general “subjectivism”.²¹⁴ SK’s critical attitude toward Idealism does not keep him from remaining fundamentally a child of the Enlightenment and thus one who, according to *Anz*, continues to think from within the “horizon of sovereign reason”.²¹⁵

Anz is of course right in maintaining that the philosophical position of SK can only be grasped adequately by relating it to the philosophical tradition and its general conceptual framework. As such, his pointing out of SK's dependence on the conceptual system of Idealism is convincing enough. What is decisive, however, is not a question of merely terminological similarity or conformity, but rather the "object" conceptualized by this conceptual system and the basic intention behind this "corrective transformation".

I focus here solely on Anz' main points of view with regard to the structure of anthropology. He contends categorically that "in the dialectic of existence, the tendency of rational self-consciousness towards absoluteness and sovereignty has attained its extreme point",²¹⁶ and this to such a degree that human freedom has become "absolute reality",²¹⁷ "the basis of its own self".²¹⁸ In other words, freedom is thought of as "a metaphysical power [...], which formally [...] corresponds to the power Hegel attributed to the world-spirit".²¹⁹ Thus, according to Anz SK's thinking is the consummation of the modern philosophy of subjectivity. I may concur with this conclusion so long as one also takes seriously the fact that SK, in analyzing the structure of subjectivity, actually intends to actualize the true presuppositions of subjectivity through the Christian dogma of Creation.

It remains to scrutinize in some detail what is wrong with Anz' interpretation, namely, which aspects of SK's thinking he has either neglected or considered less essential to or not constitutive of his thought. My consideration here of Anz' view is based on my own shortly to be developed interpretation of SK and thus functions as a kind of (hypothetical) anticipation of some of the basic contentions of my own interpretation.

It seems that Anz' main error is to be located in his interpretation of the *concept of the infinite*. His interpretation reflects an understanding of SK's thinking as fundamentally an offshoot from the Enlightenment notion of the autonomy of reason. With good reason Anz maintains that SK develops his concept of existence "through a critical grasp of the 'Idealistic' experience of infinitude".²²⁰ Anz does not, however, perceive the "critical" point in this appropriation, namely, the criticism that constitutes SK's new starting point. According to SK, the dimension of the infinite means human existence's possibility of transcending itself; its function is in and by itself basically negative and not synthesizing, *i.e.*, identity-giving. Rather than fulfilling a synthesizing function, for SK infinity brings to realization that dualism within existence, which then makes possible identity as a synthetic process. This very point also marks SK's decisive break with Idealism, namely, his view that man's infinity or self-reflection is not capable of solving the basic existential *aporia*, *i.e.*, the problem of identity which it itself exposes. Anz overlooks this, for SK, negative and preliminary character of infinity, when he, without hesitation, identifies infinity with SK's notion of freedom: "thus infinity is an autonomous power, the self-possession of freedom, which can take responsibility for its conduct and can understand itself in this conduct".²²¹

A contributory reason for this misunderstanding seems to be the fact that in this connection Anz focuses primarily on Climacus' analysis of the concept of subjectivity in the *Postscript*. For systematic reasons this concept is here incomplete; it encompasses only

“reflective” subjectivity, *i.e.*, consciousness of the fundamental contradiction within existence. In terms of the progressive logic of stages, this form of consciousness has a preliminary function within the process of self-identification. In *The Concept of Anxiety* and *The Sickness unto Death* it is made quite clear that human freedom or self-identity is not attainable by way of simple potentiation of infinitude. This is exactly the ontological point contained in and made by the category of “the leap” and the concept of “despair”. This disproportion in the self-relation is here the self-righteous attempt of consciousness to bridge the existential dualism by which it is constituted. What Anz maintains as the basic anthropological idea of SK, “the absolute subjectivity” which “ultimately (means) the annihilation of the contrary element”,²²² in “a self-reflection pushed to the uttermost limit”,²²³ this mode of existence is in reality what Anti-Climacus calls “Infinitude’s Despair”, *i.e.*, the human subject’s negation of its finite-concrete reality” (cf. 15:88f). The misinterpretation made by Anz here on what he takes to be SK’s basic anthropological idea seems to indicate a more general lack of congeniality with SK’s thought as a whole.

In fact, with regard to structure Anz identifies SK’s concept of spirit with that of Idealism: “only that now the non-ego is limited to the natural presuppositions of empirical subjectivity”.²²⁴ In both cases the general ontological principle is the unity of reflection and reality, “thinking and being.”²²⁵ Anz concludes: “Here, though in a greatly transformed manner, the unity of consciousness (thinking) and existence (being) is realized, a unity not attained in the abstract Cartesian consciousness”.²²⁶

Anz is, of course, aware of the central significance of the concepts of “will” and “decision” in SK’s anthropology, but he still implies that, on the level of ontology, the voluntaristic-emotive sphere is an “expression” only of a superior dimension of “reflection”[Denken]. In fact, the real question is whether it might not be Anz rather than SK who is conditioned or even determined by Hegelian modes of thinking.

In opposition to the view taken by Anz I have maintained that the idea of the primacy of the will in the anthropological synthesis is, in the last analysis, an expression of SK’s Christian “dogmatic” of creation. If one fails to detect this presupposition, its axiomatic status is in turn occupied by the idea of an autonomous reason, and the sad consequence is evident: “Now there is no more possibility of understanding ourselves as a creature in the totality of creation”.²²⁷ Against this view I wish to contend: The will as a form of ethical self-identification does not emerge from the infinity of reflection; quite the contrary, it is and imposes a basic restriction on the necessary function of reflection in that it recalls and refers the human person back to the reality of the dependence of his finite or “bestowed” place in Creation. To SK freedom is not man’s autonomous “power” (cf. 6:194), that is, its power to transform itself, which Anz defines as “authorship of one’s own self”.²²⁸ Rather, for SK freedom means man’s voluntary adaptation to his pre-given reality. Freedom is a self-relation but not a self-creation, and this is all the more so in that the very possibility of the self-relation is divinely instituted. “The difference between good and evil exists only for or in

freedom, and this difference never exists *in the abstract* but only *in the concrete*". (6:196. Cf. 3:198)

The fact that this "theology of creation" is not identical with, or perhaps not even compatible with Anz' view, defining creation as "an order based on the continuing essence of the world",²²⁹ is a different matter. A concept of order is manifest in SK's anthropology. It cannot, however, be converted into a *noetically* established cosmological order or a "theology of order."

Symptomatic of the one-sidedness of Anz' SK-interpretation is the inability to grasp the positive and constitutive role attributed by SK to human corporeality. It is thus wrong to say that SK pictures the human situation as "alienation from all of nature"²³⁰ with the implication that "anything in the human person that is material nature, or based in material nature, can never constitute our essence as human persons",²³¹ and with the result that reality is reduced to "immanence of consciousness."²³² Such characterizations come close to caricature which, in turn, easily arouses suspicions about the validity of the basic premise of Anz' conclusions, namely, his identification of SK's concept of spirit with the human dimension of infinitude.

SK's harsh remarks about man's corporeal nature, especially during the Church-fight period, have basically a maieutic character, and thus should not, without qualification, be taken to bear directly on the structural level of anthropology. They could, on the contrary, be accorded a proper meaning only when the question of the overall structural point of view is taken into consideration, that is, the presupposition that the synthesis of the self implies a relation to God as its ultimate ground. When this ultimate relation is lacking or defective, the human situation is to be defined as "the disproportion of a relation of a synthesis which relates to itself" (11:146), and this "disproportion" will affect all elements in the synthetic totality, including the corporeal-aesthetic functions and expressions. The presently employed mode of explanation will be relevant and correct, even though not all of SK's "misanthropic" remarks may be integrated into such a systematic idea.

The basic presupposition of Løgstrup's critical interpretation of SK's anthropology, an interpretation meant to provide an "alternative to Kierkegaard",²³³ is Løgstrup's view that the positions of transcendental philosophy and any "theology of creation" are irreconcilable. According to Løgstrup the concept of reality in transcendental philosophy is based one-sidedly on a theory of human knowledge, and thereby implies "a creation in all weakness", that does not bring about the "creation of anything else than itself".²³⁴ Thus it comes into conflict with a specific Christian view of reality, wherein "life in itself, regardless of the forms it is given by man in his culture, is something determinate because it is created life."²³⁵ As with Anz, so now when Løgstrup on the basis of a postulate weaves SK together with Idealism (with the two, it is said, sharing the bias of "the theory of knowledge in transcendental philosophy",²³⁶ it becomes obvious that the same conflict must, in its essential features, occur within SK's thinking.

In contrast to Anz – whose proposed interpretation Løgstrup moreover recommends for being "a precise and richly perspected criticism of Kierkegaard"²³⁷ – Løgstrup is, however,

aware of the fact that SK breaks with the idealist concept of an absolute or sovereign subjectivity. “This means that, while for Hegel man is a spirit sovereign to himself and the world in knowledge, action and artistic creation, for Kierkegaard man seems to have neither eternal nor any temporal possibilities of being sovereign.”²³⁸

The core of Løgstrup’s interpretative argumentation seems to combine these two points of view. The structure of SK’s thinking, Løgstrup would say, emerges from the fact that the autonomous subjectivity is negated within the confines of its own horizon, *i.e.*, the philosophy of Idealism. In this way his description of SK’s concept of subjectivity might seem to be a demonstration of the plain truth due to its logical simplicity. A subject that is dethroned from within such a “totalitarian” framework will necessarily turn out to be a permanent and negative striving. Accordingly, SK’s basic anthropological-ethical idea turns out to be the notion that “man’s imperative is to die to the world.”²³⁹ And behind this we seem to discern SK’s personal history when it is said, “eternity can only become everything for the one to whom this life is given for the purpose of suffering”.²⁴⁰

For Løgstrup SK’s “correction” of Idealism does not amount to anything more than a pure negation of the idealist idea of a rational appropriation (*Vermittlung*) of reality. “Knowledge” is only replaced by “action”.²⁴¹ The result is the bastard figure of reflective action, *i.e.*, a powerless and narcissistic contemplation of oneself.²⁴²

This interpretation is incorrect as a general description. Løgstrup attempts to describe and characterize the whole of SK’s anthropology, while in fact he is only focusing on a part of this whole, *viz.*, the description of the pathetic form of Pathetic religion constituting one specific dimension of the total relation of the self to itself, its basic relation to the divine origin as a condition for the transparency of the self, thereby being a form of self-reflection. When Løgstrup here finds a parallel to the Greek-Platonic eudemonistic way of thinking,²⁴³ it is quite in accordance with SK’s point of view, which construes pathetic religiosity as an analogy to the Platonic “anamnesis”, being an attempt to “bring existence back to the eternity behind it” (10:248). Through the negation of finitude an abstract “consciousness of eternity” emerges (10:244). It is an arbitrary form of interpretation to identify this particular stage of pathetic-reflective religiosity with SK’s general position with regard to ontology and the interpretation of Christianity. When Løgstrup reduces the wider perspective to a particular analysis, he necessarily also distorts that wider perspective’s categorical content.

The crucial point in the analysis of human or immanent religiosity is not at all what Løgstrup maintains it to be, namely, that “victory over sin (means) to take up an attitude of indifference towards the indifferent.”²⁴⁴ Rather this crucial point is the experience, within the self’s development, of the futility of any attempt to anchor the self in absolute reality by way of an immanent movement of reflection, *i.e.*, the intensification of man’s aptitude for infinity. Climacus calls this failure “Nothingness” (10:164) or consciousness of “total guilt” (10:200). When the relation to “the absolute telos” thus constitutes the consciousness of guilt, this relation cannot by itself function as a mediation in the sense that “the absolute end becomes concrete in the relative ends” (10:93), nor can it develop a comprehensive rational continuity.

Climacus here polemicises, on a philosophical basis, against the systematic principle in identity-philosophy, and any attempt to “deduce” from this discussion what Climacus or SK conceives to be man’s basic ethical-religious task (the “ontic” ideal of life) is bound to present a highly one-sided picture.

When Climacus talks of “making the relationship to the absolute telos absolute, and the relationship to the relative ends relative” (10:99), this involves first of all a refutation of the principle of ontological self-sufficiency of the subject, *i.e.*, that the subject is the ground of its own existence.

The rational synthesis within man’s “relative reality cannot therefore create the human individual’s identity with himself. Such a pretension would itself simply amount to that which Løgstrup maintains SK is guilty of. Løgstrup himself has lost sight of the definite horizon of investigation within which pathetic religiosity is analyzed, *viz.*, “the ‘Fragments’ problem’ as an introductory problem not to Christianity, but to becoming a Christian” (10:77). The subject at hand is the true God-relation as mediated by man’s relation to the historical reality of the incarnation (cf. 10:60 and 6:7), when we take into consideration the conditions of possibility for this in the human sphere. The latter is the *raison d’être* for the pathetic religiosity, in so far as it, by its inner development, demonstrates the collapse of the immanent foundation of the self through an experience of the “nothingness” of guilt. In this respect guilt is “deduced” from the postulate that “the eternal happiness of the individual is decided in time through the relationship to something historical” (10:80). And the condition for this totality of guilt is that man already, on the basis of the structure of his existence, understands himself as absolute subjectivity in relation to a contingent reality, such as shown in the description of the logic of ethical existence. Through a sort of “psychologistic” interpretation Løgstrup distorts the basic problem when he portrays the position of total guilt as a “special problem”, valid only for individuals with a certain kind of psychological making. The basic premise for this interpretation is the anthropological thesis “that taking charge of one’s existence is only a problem when one’s existence appears undesired, else not”.²⁴⁵

As shown, the introduction to *The Sickness unto Death* in particular points out that the relation to oneself in one’s totality is the basic structure of what is human and thereby also the condition of a true relation to that divine ground of existence “which has established the entire relation” (15:73). In other words, the issue is here a kind of creation-dogma both giving legitimacy to man’s factual and historical life and presupposing as its ultimate telos “the perfection in oneself” (6:124). This means that historical factuality by itself is reduplicated in man’s consciousness of this factuality as his own reality, and this in virtue of reflection and the ethical will. Through this historical genesis man participates immediately in another reality that is the ground of both concrete contingency and the ethical structure within it.

The basic role of the will or decision in this respect is evident. “Voluntarism” could well be used as a formula designating the break with idealism’s concept of spirit. That should not, however, be taken to imply a kind of “ontology of will” understood such that SK would

“ascribe solely to the individual’s choice, decision and freedom the ability to make life definitive” with the resulting notion of an “empty self”.²⁴⁶ This gross simplification of the complex concept of historical existence represents “the principal error” of Løgstrup’s Kierkegaard-interpretation.

Løgstrup’s distortion of SK’s anthropological structure has similarities with the one Anz is guilty of. This seems to be the case, in spite of his implicit skepticism towards Anz’ main thesis about SK’s tacit dependence on the concept of absolute subjectivity. Both Løgstrup and Anz erroneously understand “spirit” and the “self” primarily as a potentiation of the dimension of infinity. This is quite evident in Løgstrup’s rather obscure, but still revealing, discussion of the idea of “the abstract and negative self”.²⁴⁷ Implicitly this form of self is identified with the self as such, *i.e.*, the basic norm immanent in human existence, although Anti-Climacus makes it quite clear that the negative self is only “the first form of the infinite self” (15:111), which is transcendence brought about by self-reflection thus making possible the will’s act of self-identification. The negative self, constituted by self-reflection, is thus far from identical with “man reflecting on the power that established him”.²⁴⁸

A significant expression of this misunderstanding or confusion is Løgstrup’s postulate of “the two syntheses”, *i.e.*, SK’s “strict and definitive distinction between the synthesis of the soul and the body and the synthesis of the infinite and the finite”.²⁴⁹ With this Løgstrup ascribes to SK an ontological dualism contrary to his whole way of thinking. Such an interpretation is already falsified in Anti-Climacus’ definition of the self: “The human self is such a derived, established relation that relates to itself and in relating to itself it relates to another” (15:73).

Read in its context this definition seems to imply the following: Firstly, the understanding that the relation includes an ethical-volitional determining of the relation between body and soul (cf. 6:137). Secondly, it is maintained that the synthesis is identical – at least partly – with “the conscious synthesis of infinitude and finitude” (15:87). And thirdly, it is implied that the relation to the ground of existence or “the relationship to God” (15: 87) is established through this complex relation to oneself, not through any abstraction from one’s psychological and physical factuality. An abstraction would, however, obviously be the result if, as Løgstrup does, one were to maintain that it is in “relation to infinitude” that the synthesis is established.²⁵⁰

Given SK’s premises this definition would seem to be a *contradiction in adjecto* to the extent that the synthesis would be “diastatic” or self-destructive. When man seeks his identity in one pole of his being and thereby neglects some of his other essential possibilities by regarding them as the accidental shell of his true self, his existence is not determined by his conscious ideals but by inner contradiction, *i.e.*, by the part of reality whereon the light of consciousness does not shine.

Sløk expresses the arbitrariness of Løgstrup’s interpretation in a telling way in his critique of Løgstrup’s treatise on Kierkegaard and Heidegger. Sløk maintains that the treatise only focuses on “an isolated aspect of the whole complex of problems [...] by sticking solely to the

sentence that the requirement is that one should become nothing, or that this requirement is without any real content as it is determined solely by the infinity of it".²⁵¹

The fact that it is possible to find support in SK's texts for seeing his thinking as a variant of idealistic-transcendental philosophy, as is the case in the critical approaches of Anz and Løgstrup, rests mainly on what I have called the hermeneutical-historical character of SK's thinking, that it represents a transformation of idealistic anthropology with its fundamental ideas of human autonomy or self-activity. The misinterpretation stems partly from the fact that this anthropological principle is mainly understood on the basis of its general historical background (especially by Anz), leading to a neglecting of the theology of creation as critical axiom for the reinterpretation of the self-activity. Self-activity cannot be defined as either "sovereign self-creation" (Anz) or "negative-infinite projection of the self" (Løgstrup) when taking into consideration that this activity of the self is by SK seen as an institution of creation and a pre-given condition for a personal relationship to God.

Taylor's "repudiation" of SK to the advantage of Hegel in *Journeys to Selfhood* may be seen as the latest relatively substantial example of this "method of reckoning" within Kierkegaard research. Despite my sympathy for his strategy of interpretation, *i.e.*, the comparison of the positions of Hegel and SK in view of their shared basic questions, I disagree deeply with Taylor's central conclusions on the anthropology of SK.

Taylor demonstrates quite convincingly the similarity between the descriptions of the self's structure as given by Hegel and SK when pointing out that for both thinkers the self is "a self-relating activity" through which "opposites are brought together".²⁵² When he, in a last resort, and despite his awareness of the fact that the idea of life-unity (synthesis) is decisive for SK's concept of man's existence, finds the result to be "the irreconcilable oppositions of concrete existence",²⁵³ this obviously amounts to an "evaluation" of SK's concept of human synthesis as, at most, only a half-truth. The whole truth, which absorbs SK's position as a "moment" within itself, Taylor consequently finds in Hegel.²⁵⁴ The essence of his assessment is that the synthesis in SK's case is "external" in the sense that contradictions of existence are merely held together, according to Taylor, as a kind of *coincidentia oppositorum*.²⁵⁵

Taylor's interpretation does not hold good as a description of SK's anthropological structure. It is a rather conspicuous fact that he has to seek crucial support for his "diastatic" understanding of the synthesis in the ethical-political polemics and the autobiographical material of the "church fights".²⁵⁶ For present purposes it is here only possible to indicate what, in my opinion, is the decisive error Taylor makes, by way of comparing two descriptions Taylor makes, of Hegel's and SK's positions respectively.

In regard to Hegel's concept of spirit, Taylor maintains that the identity of self is established as the subject "reconciles itself with otherness by re-appropriating difference as its own self-objectification", and, further, that the crucial level of this process is "community with other selves".²⁵⁷ For SK, on the other hand, spirit means, "the subject's movements from undifferentiated identification with its environment, through increasing differentiation from

otherness, to complete individuation in which the self becomes a concrete individual.”²⁵⁸ What is here described as Hegel’s particular position, however, can as well be ascribed to SK, and vice versa. Up to a point this is evident from Taylor’s own analysis: identity established through “opposition to otherness” (SK) is not essentially different from its constitution through an “internal relation with otherness” (Hegel).²⁵⁹ As Taylor himself points out, the starting point of Hegel’s philosophy of spirit is “the subject’s differentiation from its social milieu”, and the telos of the process is “concrete individuality”.²⁶⁰ Of SK it is said that he does not “deny that there are social dimensions of selfhood”.²⁶¹

Taylor’s perception of SK as a “hero of individualism” makes it difficult for him to detect the structure of self-objectification in SK, even when it is formally expressed as in e.g. *The Sickness unto Death* with its definition of the self as “a relation to a relation”. This definition should not be conceived as an alternative to Hegel’s conception of spirit, and seeing SK’s concept of the bare relation as a negative concept positioning itself against Hegel would be wrong. What is referred to is the interaction of the soul and the body on a level where self-transcendence is only potential. This stage of becoming a self corresponds to what Hegel calls an “external unity”. Consequently, Taylor causes confusion about where the true dissimilarities between Hegel and SK lie when he interprets the idea of externality as a criticism of SK’s concept of synthesis.²⁶²

What *is* the “categorical” difference between SK and Hegel’s concepts of spirit is not, as Taylor’s analysis also indirectly demonstrates, that SK, as opposed to Hegel, fails to attribute any constitutional necessity to inter-subjectivity. Basic to my interpretation is the view that one can only grasp their difference adequately in light of SK’s more general transformation of different philosophical ideas, or more specifically, the general skepticism about Hegel’s identification between rationality and reality, or, in anthropological terms, the role of the contingent and logic respectively in the subject’s self-constitution. *Both* SK and Hegel aim at a reconstruction of the subject’s experience of itself as subject. SK does not, however, reach the level of Hegel’s absolute subject. On the other hand, with SK becomes “the primary concern, the explication of the finitude of subjectivity” (Schulz).²⁶³ When SK articulates his idea of contingency by denying that the concept of movement belongs to the sphere of logic, he does not mean to imply, as Taylor maintains, “that there is no logic in movement”.²⁶⁴ This misleading conclusion indicates the extent to which Taylor has made SK into an exponent of irrationalism as “fundamental point of view.”

3. Anthropological Knowledge

SK's break with idealistic philosophy could be described as a rejection of the ontological primacy of reflection found here. The problem of the unity of existence can in the final run only be solved on the personal-ethical plane. On the other hand, this reduction of the importance of philosophical analysis is itself the result of reflection. Reflection demonstrates its own essential limits by making it clear that "enquiring aesthetically and intellectually after reality is mistaken." (10:28). Thus reflection in a wider sense is a necessary element in ethical self-realization (cf. chapter V, 1 A).

When Climacus in the *Postscript* claims that "truth (is) an approximation" (9:158), he is speaking of discursive knowledge as a method of attaining absolute knowledge, *i.e.*, as perception of the inner bonds of total reality. Being it self based on conceptual deduction, this skepticism does not apply to conceptual knowledge as such and is not suited to justify a characterization of SK's philosophical position either as skepticism or irrationalism. SK can indeed put forward as a condition for true philosophical insight that man "may be led to an understanding of himself, which, however, is also an absolute condition for all other understanding" (10:17), but this "self-understanding" involves in principle also the full development of the competence of rationality.

Less obvious than this basic confidence in man's rationality is, however, the more specific form discursive knowledge receives within SK's thinking. By form I am mainly thinking of three main aspects: First to mention are certain universal epistemological presuppositions, *i.e.*, SK's basic understanding of philosophical concepts in his time. Secondly, it is decisive to be aware of formal construction of his anthropological analysis, what one could call the anthropological scheme, *i.e.*, the way in which the existential analysis is organized. And thirdly, some methodological elements in the description of anthropological structures seem to be constitutive.

It is not, however, justified to speak of a "philosophical methodology" present thus implying a working out of the philosophical analyses on the model of the sciences. Such a way of thinking would obviously be quite foreign to SK. The formal aspects mentioned are not merely tools for the existential analysis but are themselves part of the object of inquiry. It is accordingly difficult and artificial to separate them out as a specific area within the philosophical totality. When I, despite this fact, still make such an effort, I do this in the belief that such an abstraction of the more formal elements of the anthropology, what we could call the anthropological way of thinking, helps us focus on it as a totality, as a logically unified position.

A. Skepticism, Abstraction and Concept

I have in previous chapters pointed out the general connection between SK's anthropological perspective and the emergence of the same perspective within idealistic philosophy. Although

SK criticizes and reinterprets the idealist concept of spirit, from a hermeneutical point of view it is only natural that this movement from “reason” to “existence” is still dependent on an idealist way of thinking, *i.e.*, the way in which human existence is made an object for philosophical analysis.

One main aspect of this congruence could be called their *method of genetic reduction*. Its general logic is to “analyze” human existence with regard to its different “dimensions” for in the next instance to reconstruct it by organizing it as *a hierarchical pattern of syntheses*.

Fichte introduced the method in his “science of knowledge”. According to him the subject-object-dichotomy is deduced from the transcendental ego, on the basis of which therefore the theoretical and practical modes of consciousness may be reconstructed as interactions between the components of the dichotomy. We find the same analytic-synthetic method used by *Schelling*, which may also be said to culminate in *Hegel’s* conception of the different “figures” or “moments” of consciousness. The general parallel between SK and this form of approach is found in his so-called doctrine of stages, which aims in the same manner, broadly speaking, at revealing the genetic structure of human personality.²⁶⁵ In this respect the various forms of existence are conceived as part of a successive process of self-determinations on the basis of a historically mediated unity of the soul and the body. The general structure: indifference - differentiation - synthesis - (self-) determination, is the same as the one underlying the idealist reconstruction of reality.

Malantschuk’s contention, that this “triadic” structure of the dialectics of existence is due to a Kantian influence by way of *Sibbern*,²⁶⁶ is opposed by the fact that what for Kant are disparate functions of reason (*Vermögen*) are only first in post-Kantian philosophy converted in a more dynamic-integral manner in line with the perspective and the scope of existential analysis. I have already demonstrated in a general way to what extent this conceptual correspondence allows for a basic divergence when it comes to the understanding of reality. In what way this common structure is realized in SK’s thinking will hopefully become evident in the following presentation of his anthropology. At this point I only want to draw attention to some of the expressions this affinity in reflexive schemas receives in cases where the status and conditions of philosophical reflection is more directly in focus.

The most important source to these more marginal considerations made by SK is, in my view, his doctoral thesis, *The Concept of Irony*, which, if interpreted as an integral part of the authorship as a whole, may be seen as an epistemological introduction to SK’s thinking. In addition, his relation or similarity to the idealist “reflexive schema” is apparent in many more or less occasional and unfinished, often polemic, notes, especially from the early period where SK obviously endeavors to come to grips with the philosophical discussions of his time and particularly with the concept of system, *i.e.*, the question of the possibility of philosophically grasping reality *in toto*.

SK’s reflections on the question of “Anfang” in philosophy and “doubt” as a basic epistemological category (cf. II C 37, III A 11, 48, 107, IV B 1, V A 70 and VI A 145), are, in line with *Sibbern’s* previous polemic, critical of the idea of an absolute or presuppositionless

beginning for philosophical discourse. Indirectly SK himself is thereby striving to find a starting point that is not arbitrary, but able to open up for a comprehensive understanding of human reality.

In general, SK obtains his understanding by means of an analysis of the basic situation of the philosophical subject. We find, for instance, an investigation into the possibilities and conditions of reflection carried out by asking, “how must the nature of existence be in order to make doubt a possibility?” (IV B 1, 144). The adequate starting point for philosophical discourse is consequently connected to finding a solution to this problem. It follows then that existential analysis or anthropology has to be a fundamental field of investigation (cf. III A 3) in so far as the basic situation of the philosophical subject is identical with that of man in general.

This question of this fundamental starting point is the driving force behind SK’s investigation of Socrates’ particular philosophical position in *The Concept of Irony*. Contrary to the Johannes Climacus’ non-historical analysis of the structure of consciousness in *De omnibus dubitandum est*, the approach here takes into consideration that the philosophical subject is conditioned not only by an ontological structure, but also by its concrete historical context. The question of the “beginning” of philosophy turns out to be a question of the historical origin of the question. “If it were the case that philosophers are presuppositionless, an account would still have to be made of language and its entire importance and relation to speculation, for here speculation does indeed have a medium which it has not provided itself” (III A 11). Thus philosophical thinking is a point of concentration for this dependence of ideality upon historical facticity.

The basic importance Socrates has for philosophy lies in the way he introduces the philosophical form of understanding (cf. 1:211, 226, 238, 274, 276) in establishing the starting point for the speculative idealism of Plato and the subsequent turn of philosophy (cf. 1:160 ff. and 226). This breakthrough is effected by “irony” as a specific form of knowledge, a breakthrough replacing aesthetic confidence with “the infinite negativity” (1:242), which constitutes “the first and most abstract form of subjectivity” (1:278). Through this negation of changing sensual appearance “the Idea appears” (1:226) as its counterpart. The essential contribution of Socrates is, however, not a positive idea but a principle of knowledge, a putting forward of the primitive rule (of logic) that abstraction from immediacy or conventionality is necessary to obtain a concept of general validity (1:281).

Although there may in the later authorship be found some modifications to SK’s understanding and evaluation of Socrates, and, in addition, a certain discrepancy between SK’s position in his dissertation and his mature position in the *Postscript* concerning the evaluation of Hegel’s thinking, the dissertation should not, however, be discredited as a source for determining SK’s philosophical standpoint. Changes in SK’s evaluation of Socrates refer to the general and basic epistemological significance of Socrates’ thinking, but first of all to its consequences for ethics. In the dissertation SK says, in agreement with Hegel, that Socrates lacks “earnestness” because of his negative attitude toward cultural facticity. He does not commit himself to the existing duties of society. “True earnestness is

only possible within a totality where the subject no longer decides arbitrarily to continue his experiment, but feels the task not as one which he himself has established but as one that has been established for him" (1:251). On the other hand, in so far as his irony or ignorance entails a real standpoint and not mere appearance, Socrates is not without every form of earnestness (cf. 1:282 ff.). His standpoint is, to be sure, a contradiction of "true earnestness", but, in the last resort, it is a contradiction only in the sense that he, as the world-historical representative of subjectivity, incarnates subjectivity in its most abstract form; as far self-reflection is presupposed for an ultimate integration of the individual into the totality we here speak of.

However, in the *Postscript* Climacus would seem radically to alter this view of Socrates by presenting him as the spokesman *par excellence* for the principle "that existing, the process of transformation to inwardness in and by existing, is the truth", and this is exactly the essence of ethical existence (9:170 ff, cf. 10:180f). That this view is also that of SK himself is indicated by the many panegyric references to Socrates in the *Papers* (cf. for instance X 4 A 333 and 468). In an entry in the *Journals* it is said explicitly that the interpretation of Socrates in the dissertation was untenable on account of the fact that it, under the influence of Hegel's view, emphasized the social character of ethical existence at the expense of its more fundamental subjective foundation (X 3 A 477).

In spite of such categorical statements I do not see a fundamental difference between the dissertation and the pseudonymous authorship with regard philosophical stance. In both cases SK acknowledges that in order to obtain personal identity man has to develop his subjectivity, thereby adopting a reflective and critical attitude towards cultural validity. The main purpose of *The Concept of Irony* is to demonstrate how and why irony, *i.e.*, the negativity of reflection, is still indispensable. The deeper motive for his "criticism" of Socrates' *docta ignorantia* may be found in the consideration that it is under present circumstances no longer possible to adopt Socrates' position as this would mean a refusal to acknowledge the historicity of man and the significance of the historical process of knowledge that originated with him. This view finds negative expression in SK's criticism of contemporary romantic irony and positively in the concept of "controlled" irony.

In my view, through his evaluation of Socrates as the starting point of reflective thought, SK sheds light on his own position as philosophical subject. Firstly, irony, that is the negation of a naive or factual self-understanding, is put forward as the paradigm for philosophical understanding. Secondly, the historical perspective of his establishment of reflective skepticism seems to imply that philosophical thinking is or should be linked to the philosophical tradition and, primarily, to Socrates as the original figure of this tradition. The epistemological point to be made is that philosophical reflection can no longer attain the position of absolute negativity in Socrates' sense as far as factual self-understanding is already partly mediated by philosophical reflection. This is the position of "controlled" irony, which, unlike Socrates, faces not only naive cultural consciousness but also the historical products of the reflective spirit.

The general situation of the modern era, however, does not make every individual a reflective or philosophical subject. Man's starting point is a naive consciousness also within the framework of a reflective culture. Reflection has the possibility, as shown by SK in his criticism of his age, to associate itself even with the opaqueness of naive consciousness, thereby converting reflection into habitual behavior (cf. 14:63 f). On that account the imperative of radical reflection still stands as a starting point of philosophical thinking. It

makes possible a critical identifying of the principles that constitute actual cultural validity and values (cf. 1:64, 328).

“Controlled” irony does not depend on speculative fantasy, as was the case for Plato, in order to produce the material of philosophical reflection (cf. 1:160 f); it receives this as a “gift” (1:288) from its factual historical situation. “In order to obtain fullness and truth, thinking or subjectivity has to let itself be born; it has to sink into the depths of substantial life” (1:286). By this methodological remark SK indirectly opposes what he identifies as *Fichte’s* model of philosophical analysis, which according to SK, endeavored to do the impossible trick of conjuring up knowledge from the process of reflection itself in the sense that “reflection always reflected on reflection” (1:285). This criticism of Fichte’s idealism is again undoubtedly inspired by Hegel’s reconstruction of the subject as an historical-teleological process based on the fundamental ontological principle that the ontogenetic process is reflected in the phyllo-genetic, and vice versa.

The acknowledgement of this principle is in fact the main content of the so-called “Hegelian” character of his dissertation. What, however, is essential in this acknowledgement is not the idea of logical or structural correspondence, although SK’s concept of stages still reflects this idea, but the more general idea of the historicity of human knowledge, which is not only compatible with, but can, given a superior status, serve as an argument against Hegel’s concept of philosophy as a system. The point of the criticism that is rightly or wrongly leveled against Fichte’s method is that the process of self-reflection as a negative reduction will not lead back to a basic ontological principle, viz., the absolute spontaneity of consciousness which in the next instance makes possible a reconstruction of reality in terms of logical necessity. This criticism could, in the final analysis, also be applied to Hegel’s perception of history as medium of “absolute knowledge”.

This limitation of the overall validity of “the system” is indirectly expressed by the fact that irony, that is to say, philosophical knowledge in general, is subordinated to personal development. The ideal form of philosophical knowledge is the individual consciousness’ reflections on his or her own finite reality. Thus the concept of “controlled” irony means an implicit correction of the idea of “scientific doubt”, which is also the cognitive basis for the system. The skepticism of irony does not focus on principles of logic, but reveals contradictions in the concrete existence of the individual, “the dialectics of life” (1:329). “Science has thus in our time been so tremendously successful that it can hardly be quite right; insight into the secrets not only of the human race but even of God are offered for sale at such a low price that things are starting to look rather ominous. One has in our time out of delight in the results, forgotten that a result represents no value unless it is acquired personally” (1:329). This criticism of the systematic principle of idealism is first elaborated in the *Postscript*, but already here we can see that the borderline between reflection and existence is decisive for SK’s understanding of reality (cf. 10:21, 32 and 9:94).

It is against this background we must see SK’s considerations on the meaning of the philosophical concept found in the introduction to his dissertation. At first glance they give

the impression of representing quite a Hegelian standpoint. The analysis of the concept of irony is carried out as an investigation into the history of the concept, and this investigation is done in such a way, so it would seem, as to presuppose that every concept is essentially mediated by the dialectical process of history (cf. 1:69 ff.). Contingent history is thus not the dim reflection of the idea – in the Platonic sense – but “the development of the idea itself” (1:71). This means that no single historical representation of the idea can be absolute, that is, can be considered the full expression of an idea. Not even the sum total of these representations may constitute such a conceptual totality because factual history is not illuminated by critical thought. Only philosophical understanding, combining phenomenological perception of history with an idealized concept of the idea “in itself” can establish a definite conceptual clarity. Only philosophical consciousness “transcends finitude, understands itself as the infinite *prius*, and, reflecting constantly more and more deeply on itself, recollects itself successively through time back into eternity” (1:70).

This empirically modified *a priori* is typical of the Danish personalistic philosophy of the time. *Sibbern* thus agrees with Fichte’s view that “this *prius*, from which everything springs” is “present in its totality in every rational individual”. On the other hand, he maintains that this possibility of cognition can only be reached by “a reflective pursuit of what is thus given, that is, the relations and interconnections in which this appears by itself”.²⁶⁷ In basically the same manner *Møller* evidently accepts “an *a priori* system of definitions of existence as a whole”, but he considers this system to be merely an hypothesis in relation to knowing’s other main source, namely, the “certainty given by experience”.²⁶⁸

According to the author of *The Concept of Irony* the concept’s universal validity is established by critical abstraction from the totality of particular expressions of the idea in history. The essence of this method is not the movement from history to the sphere of pure ideas in a Platonic sense, although the passage cited undoubtedly appears to hold just that. Rather, such an ascending movement is only preliminary, elucidating the final movement through history, inasmuch as the concept is “only intelligible, only real, in and with the phenomenon” (1:252). On account of this I consider another passage to be more in character with SK’s view, *viz.*, the assertion that the establishment of the universal presupposes “a total system of reality” (1:254). It is this holistic perspective on the historical representations of the concept which constitutes its universal validity, in opposition to e.g. arbitrary abstractions and definitions which, by the very use of language, themselves presuppose history, but still lack in reflection on their own presuppositions.

By this rather “speculative” view of the philosophical concept as a product of the dialectics of history SK seems to side with Hegel. If so, his dissertation would conflict strikingly with his later writings, and would accordingly be difficult to use as a source for his general epistemology except in relation to the study of its genesis. However, in view of the fact that the “controlled” irony appears to be a revision of the “scientific” concept of doubt, one is not here permitted to see any substantial correspondence with the idea of absolute knowledge. This “dubious” reference to “the eternal *prius*” is a residue of the wide-spread

idealist presupposition that essential possibility is basically *a priori*. Such an idea of essence is not only compatible with, but has a constitutive place in, the Christian idea of creation that is implied in SK's anthropology.

A second epistemological principle of great importance is the historical character assigned to any concept. This view is expressed negatively in the dissertation's criticism of Plato's idealism, a criticism demonstrating Plato's un-clarified middle position between Socratic skepticism and speculative positivism (cf. 1:101). Such a position leads to an ontological schism between empirical and ideal spheres due to the lack of a "higher standpoint" which could have mediated the extreme positions (cf. 1:165). This defect becomes evident when Plato has recourse to the mythical tradition, which within the context of reflection is turned into a source of symbolic representation of the idea (cf. 1:142 ff.). Thus the idea is expressed on a plane that is inadequate to its status as concept, viz., on the level of perception (cf. 1:147). It still retains, however, the abstract character of the Socratic concept (cf. 1:164) in so far as mythical concreteness is incompatible with the logic of reflection.

The fact that the criticism of Plato's doctrine of ideas plays a part also in SK's later writings creates the impression of a basic continuity when it comes to epistemology, even though the problem of epistemology is eventually overshadowed by the broader question of anthropology.

Haufniensis criticizes the Platonic idea of *metexis* in the development of the concept of time. Plato's concept of the transition from the sphere of ideas to contingent empirical reality is said to be inadequate because the transition is only postulated and not really explained either by being located in "the realm of the purely metaphysical" or by making a transition – from an empirical point of view – into a "silent atomistic abstraction" (6:171). This is basically the same defect to which attention was drawn in *The Concept of Irony*. In both cases the fundamental premise is "an altogether abstract concept of eternity" (6:177).

The general meaning of the term "eternity" is simply "universal validity" or "essence", and the fault of Platonism lies in its blindness to the historical character of this universality. Although the issue of *The Concept of Anxiety* is human self-constitution within the sphere of time, there is here implied a specific epistemology which states that an adequate philosophical understanding of human existence has to involve a retrospective experience or reconstruction – in the general Hegelian sense – of man's particular historical situation.

Climacus holds the same view when he maintains that Plato, while adopting the Socratic thesis of all knowledge as recollection as a method of speculation, ignored the fact – of which Socrates himself was aware – that the philosophical subject is always an "existing subject" (cf. 9:171). It is, however, primarily with regard to the question of "the eternal, essential truth" (9:171) that man as subject is forced into the really "paradoxical" situation, namely, into a situation which cannot be penetrated by philosophical reflection. On the other hand, it is precisely this same rational capacity that brings man to understand the paradoxical as the "limit" of human existence and thereby revealing it as a totality. These limits to understanding produced by contingent existence develop in the form of self-understanding.

Reflective man has to be familiar with his own historical situation as far as it determines the process of reflection (cf. 10:9 ff. and 57). The situation should not, however, be identified with a private sphere of personal experience. Historicity, as the determination of cognition by concrete history, implies, on the contrary, a situation of inter-subjectivity.

Anthropology means, when this term is applied to SK's thought, skeptical and conceptual self-understanding from the perspective of historical retrospection. With regard to logical structure the epistemology of historical understanding is not basically different from the model of self-knowledge in the philosophy of Hegel, especially the propaedeutic formulation self-knowledge receives in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. What in general constitutes SK's opposition to Hegel's view is a different evaluation of the relation between self-understanding and the historical forms of consciousness. For Hegel the totality of collective history is, as a consequence of the structure of teleological self-development in history, indispensable to self-knowledge in the full sense of this word. For SK, on the contrary, this history does not transcend the level of contingency and reflects only in fragmentary fashion the strivings of the human spirit. Consequently, it cannot be transformed retrospectively into a linear-dialectical development toward an encompassing philosophical consciousness or the self-consciousness of the Absolute. However, even as contingent the history past is inevitably part of actual consciousness, thus authentic self-knowledge requires a maximum awareness of this basic fact of human existence. In *The Concept of Irony* SK focuses on this specific aspect of Hegel's system and does not really consider Hegel's logic and system of culture.

In light of this focus should we understand the following passage: "One cannot in this regard appreciate enough the great advantage of Hegel's conception of history. He does not reject the past, but understands it" (1:290). This admitted debt to Hegel is in a way typical of the whole of SK's thinking, and not primarily an expression of an early "Hegelian" period later left behind.

If, however, we compare SK's descriptions of human existence with Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and its typical fusion of history and system, we see that the use of history as a source of human self-knowledge is for SK rather minimal and unsystematic. The main reason for this difference is, in addition to his rejection of Hegel's idea of rational history, the role SK ascribes to his own personal history and psychological peculiarity as a kind of alternative source of self-knowledge. In view of the irrationality of collective history, such a history is here "replaced" by an individual and existential history. In the final run this "philosophical" transformation is linked to SK's basic "theological" motive and strategy, namely, the emancipation of the understanding of Christianity from the "logic of mediation" in speculative philosophy. Thus, from a philosophical point of view, this transformation appears a hermeneutical "exaggeration".

Instead of showing how actual consciousness is determined by concrete historical experience, it seems that SK merely establishes the historicity of consciousness as a general fact, converting it into an ethical paradigm. That is what I earlier defined as the anthropological principle of identity, signifying man's fundamental task to identify himself

with his factual history. This “new anthropology” implies, correspondingly, that reflection is dethroned in favor of the will. Within the analysis of aesthetic consciousness, however, the reference to collective-historical forms of consciousness is of some importance due to the fact that aesthetic life basically actualizes general psychological potentialities. These may, in accordance with the principle that the phyllo-genetic process reflects its ontogenetic level, be demonstrated by the historical forms of perception and self-consciousness.

The type of “aesthetic” material most frequently used is what we could define as mythic-poetic ideas. The main examples of this usage by SK are the application of the biblical myth of the fall to the problem of human freedom in *The Concept of Anxiety*, the primitive form of the theory of stages in “Something about Life’s Four Stages, also Concerning Mythology” (I C 126), and, further, his reflections on the so-called “representative” ideas of the Middle Ages. The view that the history of the spirit reflects only in fragmentary fashion the ontogenetic process is clearly expressed in the definition of the last of these examples: “The Middle Ages is essentially the idea of representation, partly conscious, partly unconscious; the totality is represented by one single individual in such a way, however, that only one single aspect is defined as the totality and now is revealed in one single individual, who is therefore both more and less than an individual” (2:83, cf. I A 150).

I consider it a polemical simplification when *Anz* asserts that for SK history is in the last resort “an opaque anonymous power threatening us in our center, in our responsibility for our selves”, which, accordingly, leads to radical “isolation”, the position of individualism.²⁶⁹ *Anz* overlooks the fact that personal identity is not established through a negation of historical continuity; the element of emancipation is linked to integration as a process of self-criticism. It is especially the idea of “controlled” irony, which makes this clear. Its function is critically and reflectively to penetrate individual factuality, not to deny it, but to become “present in it” (1:330).

Equally misleading is *Løgstrup's* thesis that “out of sheer polemics against Hegel’s subordination of ethics to history Kierkegaard is led to neglect the historical character of human existence”.²⁷⁰ This thesis is misleading even if we take into consideration the specific *Løgstrupian* meaning of the term “historicity”, namely, the ethical character of immediate existence.

In both cases SK’s idea of ethical self-realization is reduced to its preliminary aspect of ontic isolation. Both interpretations neglect that the functional context of ethical self-realization, namely, the establishment of a conscious continuity with factual life. In so far as the concept of self is basic to SK’s thinking, the principle of historicity is – in both an epistemological and an anthropological perspective – the very *raison d’être* of that concept.

B. Concept and Empathy

It appears integral to SK’s method of philosophizing to develop anthropological concepts on the basis of personal experience, *i.e.*, through his personal involvement in psychological and

ethical-religious problems that spring in part from his own particular psychological constitution and fate. It is as if his writings as a whole are an expression of his struggles to attain “peace of mind”. This existential starting point does not, however, preclude the generalized validity of his thought, although it seems obvious that such a starting point has definite influence on the range and nature of the problems he takes up for consideration.

SK, who of course is highly aware of the personal interest behind his literary and philosophical work, nevertheless endeavors to make this personal involvement into a tool for objective analysis by combining, in a rather loose manner, observations about himself and his inner life with observations on others’ acts and reactions. On account of its element of objectivity and its historical connection with the tradition of Danish personalistic philosophy, this somewhat uncontrollable epistemological presupposition appears essential to his revision of the ontology of idealism in so far as this ontology is based on the reconstruction of the structure and genesis of rationality. The remaining psychological functions are here (for instance, in the psychology of Rosenkranz) subordinated to conceptual thinking [der Geist],²⁷¹ with the resultant uniting of life and logic in accordance with the Hegelian idea of the self-moving consent. Within this perspective the question of personal integrity, considered in light of individual variations of psychological structure, does not arise. This question first comes into focus when the starting point is the particular subject with its more or less grave aberrations. The analysis of structure is then from the outset determined by the aim of the individual therapy.

Even if we were not to mention SK’s obvious reflections on his personal life, this mode of cognition is itself evident in the general psychological character of existential analysis, *i.e.*, the fact that such a way of knowing focuses on the variations of psychological expression and types of attitude. The synthesis of the general and the particular thus constituted is established by means of the method of ideal-typical construction, through which aspects of the psychological totality are isolated and described according to their phenomenological and structural particularities. We could define this as a psychological schematism, which is, formally and methodologically considered, in agreement with the division of rationality into “moments” or “Glieder”, known from the idealist project of reconstruction,

One aspect of this schematism is the deductive reconstruction of variations of attitudes from the concept of man’s ontological predicament particularly witnessed in *The Sickness unto Death*. Here we also find a formulation of the method for this ideal-typical abstraction when the “forms of despair may be arrived at abstractly by reflecting upon the constituents of which the self as a synthesis is composed” (15:87). The same deductive logic is dominant in *The Concept of Anxiety*, although in this case the empirical aspect of psychology is elaborated rather more comprehensively, and this especially when the mental states described are of a pathological character (cf. Caput IV). However, here too the typologies are conferred superior status in so far as they constitute the framework for the interpretation of the concrete psychological phenomena. Haufniensis himself expresses this point of view with regard to the analysis of the phenomenon “Anxiety about evil”: “Because of the form of the investigation, I

can indicate the particular state only briefly, almost algebraically. This is not the place for a thorough investigation” (6:198 A.). A little later he also says: “For me the principal thing is to have my schema in order” (6:219).

One gets the impression from these utterances that SK adopts a method that bears the stamp of Hegelian conceptualism. Indeed we cannot explain away so constitutive an aspect of SK’s thinking. To try to do this would itself be destructive of SK’s thought because the legacy of idealism, *i.e.*, the idea of *a priori* cognition, conveys to his “personal” reflections on the fate of human existence a universal and, thus, philosophical form. However, the analysis of concepts is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for comprehensive anthropological knowledge. Haufniensis seems to express a kind of program of correction and expansion in this regard when he, in connection with the analysis of the concept (sic) of “earnestness”, maintains that “in relation to existential concepts it always indicates a greater discretion to abstain from definitions” (6:227). The context of this assertion shows, however, that the alleged “principle of experience” is as partial as the method of conceptualism used in *The Sickness unto Death*. The warning against definition is immediately balanced by a rejection of “the modern fluent and confluent thinking that has abolished definition” (Ibid.). Consequently, a definition of the concept of *earnestness* is given, even if also the “principle of experience” is applied by means of characterizing the definition as such as “a few remarks for orientation” (6:228). The ambiguity of description is basically a reflection of a material ambiguity, that is, the (more or less) systematic correlation of conceptual analysis and *psychological observation and induction*.

It is in view of this intricate combination of methods of cognition that we must understand SK’s casual utterances about the problems of empathy and the reproduction of private experience. We especially find such remarks in *Repetition* and in “Quidam’s Story of Suffering”. Both of these studies are characterized by a coordination of “inner” experience and reflective self-observation, attributed respectively, in the first instance, to two typical figures, namely, the naive and the sophisticated kind, or, in the second instance, brought together in one schizophrenic person, Quidam, whose self-reflections are only supplemented by the cynical comments of Frater Taciturnus. The cognitive value of empathy is described by Constantius as follows: “So I am by nature: with the first shudder of presentiment, my soul has simultaneously run through all the consequences which frequently take a long time to appear in reality” (5:128). This indicates the holistic logic involved in this empathy, *viz.*, in so far as it is controlled by reflection: the immediate empirical particularity is interpreted in view of a greater whole, “the idea” or “the totality” (Ibid.). What is hinted at could hardly be anything else than a level of conceptual and *a priori* understanding, even if the idea is grasped in virtue of an emotional congeniality in harmony with the fact that the phenomenon itself belongs to the sphere of private experience.

Haufniensis describes this *technique of idealization* when he says that “the psychological observation” must “be able at once to create both the totality and the invariable from out of what in the individual is always partially and variably present” (6:147). Frater Taciturnus

maintains: "In reality it is indeed a fact that passions, states of the soul, etc., exist only in some measure. This too pleases psychology, but it also has another delight, that of observing passion as taken to its extreme limits". Thus one can "shape individuality on the basis of one's own knowledge" (8:14). Insight and "poetry", the imaginary construction, here essentially belong together as a cognitive whole.

The following factors seem essential to this idea of the psychological understanding:

a) The understanding is *productive* in so far as it conceives the empirical occurrence to be a partial and contingent expression of a general psychological possibility. This point is hinted at by concepts like "consequence", "expansion toward totality" and "maximization". No clear meaning could be attributed to these concepts separately and apart from the fact that a sheer quantitative process is out of the question. To understand in this way, "according to the consequences", could perhaps be defined as a kind of experimental abstraction in the medium of imagination. One endeavors to imagine what could be the consequences, within a given psychological totality, of the domination of certain factors constitutive of the personality. This meaning would agree with Frater Taciturnus's rule of investigation, namely, that one in "aberration can study normality" (8:199).

So *Malantschuk's* assertion that "the concept of consequence" is to be considered as "the nerve of Kierkegaard's dialectics"²⁷² is not without some justification in so far as the systematic character of SK's thinking is thereby emphasized. However, the concept is still ascribed a burden of explanation it seems unable to bear. The principle is too general to form the basis of a definite philosophical standpoint, of what Malantschuk calls "a coherent view of the manifold forms of life and especially of human existence".²⁷³

b) The understanding is productive on the basis of the self-understanding of the philosophical subject; it is in this sense *self-productive*. For instance, the idea of "imitation" makes this clear when imitation is understood to mean "to incline and bend oneself to other people and imitate their attitudes" (6:147). The observation of others is transformed into an experiment with oneself for the sake of typification and justification: "His observation will have the quality of freshness and the interest of reality if he is prudent enough to control his observations. To this end he imitates in himself every mood, every psychic state that he discovers in another. Thereupon he sees whether he can delude the other by the imitation and carry him along into the subsequent development, which is his own creation by virtue of his idea. [...] If it is done correctly the individual will feel indescribable relief and satisfaction" (6:148. Cf. V B 47:13).

The cognitive process here described contains at least four constitutive elements: a) an empirical description; b) a reproduction or projection of the psychological peculiarity of the self-experience involved; c) a confrontation of the empirical picture with the idealized counterpart; and, d) a possible affirmation by means of the experience of an anticipated correspondence. The fact that this kind of "method" implies a degree of empathy which presupposes talent more than technique of observation is emphasized by C. Constantius when he describes his "objective" communication with the ethical "exception": "The battle is very

dialectical and infinitely nuanced; it presupposes as a condition an absolute promptitude in the dialectic of the universal and demands speed in imitating movements. In a word, it is just as difficult as it would be to kill a man and let him live” (5:190).

Since we know that what SK has primarily done here is to put his own life story into fictional form as a novel, it becomes obvious that the main content of his psychological descriptions derives from self-analysis only supplemented by the observation of others. On a theoretical level this priority given to self-analysis is in agreement with the principle that anthropological knowledge is basically self-knowledge, a principle formulated by Climacus as the method of cognition appropriate to “the subjective existing thinker”: “An existing individual is constantly in the process of becoming; the actual existing subjective thinker constantly reproduces his existential situation in his thoughts, and translates all his thinking into terms of process” (9:74. Cf. 10:200).

With Climacus this principle of reproduction or imitation on the level of self-reflection takes on a more general meaning. It means primarily reflection on the ontological conditions of subjectivity, “going back to the fundamentals” (10:200). On the other hand, this general theory of existential knowledge constitutes a framework within which the experimental and emotional investigation of particular psychological processes obtains a general validity. As previously mentioned, SK seems to find an ideological justification for his approach in the traditional epistemological slogan *unum noris omnes*, “if by *unum* is understood the observer himself, and one does not look questioningly for an *omnes* but earnestly holds fast to the one that actually is all” (6:168 A).

That this method of cognition belongs to SK’s own thinking, and not only to the fictitious pseudonymous authors, is a fact confirmed by utterances in the *Papers* and by his self-description in *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*. If this self-evaluation holds true, SK had, due to his particular psychic constitution, eminent abilities in the field: “I had to become and became an observer, was as such and as spirit by this life immensely enriched with experiences, gained to see quite closely the totality of desires, passions, moods, feelings, etc., practiced at going in and out of a human being and also at imitating” (18:129). But the last point, that of self-productivity, is the most important, inasmuch as it determines the meaning and cognitive value of the observation as a whole. On that account the “psychological method” of SK could be well summed up in, and defined by, the following general paradigm of existential self-activity: “to relate objectively to one’s own subjectivity” (XI 2 A 97).

c) The third element of the concept of empathy and psychological reproduction is what constitutes it as conceptual understanding, namely, the subordination of the particular to the universal. In the quotation given this transition is indicated by terms like “the idea”, “the total and the regular”, and, further, in quotations such as the following: “There are many men who well understand how to view the particular, but who at the same time are unable to keep the totality *in mente*

” (6:165). The critical point is that the perception of individual psychological phenomena is blind and unintelligent when it lacks anticipation of the greater whole to which it essentially belongs. Thus, conceptual schemes are necessary, although their exact status may seem rather uncertain. We find here an expression of the aforementioned psychological schematism, also implying a general reliance on the philosophical tradition and its categories, including the idealistic idea of the *a priori*.

SK’s interest in conceptual clarity and pregnancy is indicated, for instance, by his use of the term “category” in such phrases as “the category of the interesting” (2:15 and 5:75), “the category of repetition” (5:131), “the category of sin” (15:168), “the category of decision” (9:85), “the ethical category of choosing oneself” (9:224), etc. And the necessity of conceptual thinking within empathy as its living context is emphasized very strongly by Haufniensis when he points out that “to be able to use one’s category is *a condition sine qua non* if observation in a deeper sense is to have significance. When a phenomenon is to a certain extent present, most people become aware of it but are unable to explain it because they lack the category, and when they have it, they have a key that opens up whatever trace of the phenomenon there is, for phenomena under the category obey it as the spirits of the ring obey the ring” (6:209).

It seems obvious that what constitutes the “consequences” about which Constantius talks is just this application of the concept to the individual content of experience. The creative imagination or the experiment with oneself, on the other hand, produces the psychological content or object of the conceptual analysis. That does not mean, however, a simple subordination of a phenomenon to fixed concepts. Quite the contrary, it is just a one-sided conceptualism, *i.e.*, the explication of “the logical idea” through reflection, in a Hegelian sense, which SK endeavors to correct by his use of psychological “aberration” as a source of anthropological knowledge. Haufniensis indicates the preliminary and regulative character of the general concept when he puts forward as a rule of investigation in the area of human self-knowledge the position that “the category must be used with great flexibility in order to recognize that nuances belong under it” (6:218).

The circular hermeneutic structure of this form of cognition is evident. The method of anticipation is basic to the understanding of human life, as stated by SK in the following passage from *The Concept of Irony*: “The conclusive understanding has hovered above every investigation only as a possibility; every result has been the unity of the reciprocity by which it [the reciprocity] has been drawn toward that which it should explain, and, that which should be explained, drawn toward it. It is thus in a certain sense created during this consideration, although in another sense it has existed before it. But this certainly cannot be different, since the whole is ahead of its parts” (1:191. Cf. 1:129).

Bense then gives a highly misleading description of SK’s concept of “self-understanding” (*Selbst-beobachtungen*) and thereby of SK’s philosophy of existence as a whole when maintaining that “for ‘the existing’, the epistemological distinction between object and subject is meaningless”.²⁷⁴ Without this dichotomy no understanding is possible, not even

that in which object and subject are identical. It is not the case that “existence cannot be objectified”,²⁷⁵ since the thesis of truth’s essential subjectivity is the result of an “objective” reflection on the basic conditions of existence. Only indirectly is this thesis of relevance to the philosophical concept of truth, since its primary reference is the sphere of personal existence as determining the way to personal truth. Bense’s distinction between “problems” and “dilemmas”²⁷⁶ is also delusive and, at the same time, locks SK’s thinking up within the world of private experience. Judge Vilhelms’s irony about “thinkers [who] think on behalf of others” is in a way applicable to SK himself when one takes into consideration that he undoubtedly avoids “the great-hearted, heroic objectivity” that makes one forget to think on one’s own behalf (3:159).

This dialectics of the individual and the universal is to a certain extent blurred even by *Sløk* when he seems to subsume SK’s thinking as a whole under the category of “that which is purely concrete”,²⁷⁷ due to that thinking’s essential connection with the maieutic intention of “self-production”. To reach this level of concrete individuality conceptual thinking is indispensable in making concrete reality itself into an object (“object of thought”), especially in view of the necessity of effective communication of the possibilities of existence. In this sense “a problem of thought” is involved in existential thinking.²⁷⁸ Climacus’s criticism of abstract thinking does not reject abstraction as such but its exclusive resting in pure thought so that it abstracts to such a degree from “the concrete” (10:9) that this concrete reality slides away altogether from conceptual understanding. This, namely, *Sløk*’s opaque idea of the concrete, leads him to conclude that his own project, the description of the systematic structure of SK’s thought, is in the last resort “a misunderstanding”.²⁷⁹ It seems likely that this misunderstanding is due to the particular character of *Sløk*’s own philosophy of existentialism. In comparison to *Sløk*, SK is still firmly rooted in the tradition of rational idealism.

In this section on SK’s epistemology only certain selected aspects have been treated. Such a procedure is justified and appropriate in so far as SK himself does not focus on questions of epistemology in the traditional sense of the word. Quite the contrary, the general tendency of existential thinking is to reject the primacy of epistemology, *i.e.*, as a theory of deductive or inductive knowledge. This standpoint finds in the *Postscript* a sort of epigrammatic expression in the passage on “Kant’s misleading reflection which brings reality into connection with thought” (10:31). On the other hand, existential philosophy has in fact an epistemology of its own, *viz.*, an idea or theory of the communication of self-knowledge. But this existential hermeneutics is primarily an issue within existential analysis or anthropology and is dealt with most adequately from this latter point of view. Thus it should only secondarily be related to the question of anthropological knowledge. Existential communication is surely not severed from epistemology. On the basis of the dethronement of the latter, it creates a true dialectical relationship.

Chapter II CORPOREALITY

1. *The Concept of Corporeality*

SK's theory of stages or anthropology – as expressed both within “epic” interpretations of existence and within the analysis of fundamental anthropological concepts – describes the basic possibilities of existence in view of man's situation as a composition of body and soul, the immanent telos of which, as self or spirit, is that of self-determination. This idea of an anthropological synthesis is – as pointed out in my previous discussions – derived in a general sense from the “reconstructive” ontology of idealism. This implies that in order to be truly holistic an understanding of reality has to be based on or “reconstructed” from the knowledge of reality's basic ontic elements and their functional interdependence. Such an idea of critical knowledge (in the strict sense of the term) has been given rather forthright expression in the concept of irony, when irony is understood as setting up the negation of immediacy with the latter itself taken as the *conditio sine qua non* of self-knowledge. Irony is so understood in analogy to the development of the system of philosophy on the basis of doubt as a principle of cognition. The analysis of existence has – in virtue of its description of the forms and logic of self-understanding – an “isomorphic”²⁸⁰ relationship to the idealist reconstruction of the forms and functions of rational consciousness in its progression from the opaqueness of naïveté to absolute self-transparency.

In SK, however, what is decisive is not self-reflection as such, but the (ethical) will of self-identification. Self-reflection is not – in the manner of Hegel – the constitutive force of conceptual self-understanding itself. Accordingly, the crucial difference between aesthetic and ethical life is not the latter's superiority in terms of rational capacity and self-knowledge. On the contrary, a maximum of self-reflection is possible within the stage of aesthetic existence. This possibility is represented typologically by the aesthete A in *Either/Or*. Then again, aesthetic self-understanding – as created by self-reflection – amounts to a “rationalization” of what is the psychological basis of any possible self-understanding, namely, the primitive interaction between body and soul. It is evident that the ethical self presupposes the aesthetic awareness of reality as its necessary object. SK's analysis of aesthetic life is, therefore, an essential part of the anthropology of the theory of stages. Thus, in adopting the course of idealist methodology, he focuses especially on the primitive dialectics of consciousness and corporeal life at the “bottom” of man's existence. In the following section I will try to clarify the concept of corporeality involved in this systematic approach.

A. Corporeality, Sexuality and Self-Determination

Within the perspective of anthropology, which clarifies the conditions of volitional self-determination, corporeal vitality appears primarily as sensuous spontaneity. The element of -

the dominant factor within a theory of knowledge,²⁸¹ is here a secondary consideration insofar as the subject's relation to the "outer" world is seen as a function of the subject's relation to it self.

Sexuality appears to be an example par excellence of this spontaneity. This is obvious in *The Concept of Anxiety*, where SK explores the connection between the emergence of moral consciousness and sexual experience. The principal view indicated there is that the importance of sexuality as a revelation of corporeality is grounded in the specific moral character of self-determination.

From a psychological point of view this is seen as the empirically verifiable coincidence of sexual maturity and moral self-consciousness. But what is, exactly, the anthropological foundation of this coincidence? *The Concept of Anxiety* gives the following answer: The emergence of sexuality is part of man's realization of his essence in the act of self-determination, and this insofar as sexuality effects the necessary "emancipation" of corporeality from the symbiotic unity of childhood. Sexuality brings about that awareness of the cleavage between body and soul which self-determination then has to bridge. Man's becoming aware of himself as sexual being is a turning point in the evolution of his primitive awareness of himself as finite. This is true insofar as man thereby arrives at or attains the basic presupposition for understanding that immanent demand for total determination of the self proper to the "the spirit", *i.e.*, the subordination of psychic-physical facticity to the ideality of ethics (cf. 6:142).

The fact that this idea of self-determination emphasizes its moral dimension, reducing, accordingly, the role of self-reflection or rational knowledge in man, indicates SK's indebtedness to a Christian view of man. Spirit [Ånd] to SK means essentially moral-religious consciousness (still in formal agreement with the idea of spiritual development in Hegel). The revealing of corporeality through the emancipation of eros is seen as conditioned by the specific ethos of Christianity. Haufniensis maintains that "[i]n Christianity, the religious has suspended the erotic, not merely as sinful, through an *ethical* misunderstanding, but as indifferent, because in spirit there is no difference between man and woman. Here the erotic is not neutralized by irony but is suspended because the tendency of Christianity is to bring the spirit further" (6:161). The individual's anxiety over and even aversion to itself as a sexual being, which is the psychological mechanism that releases the emancipation of corporeality or sexual desire, is conditioned by the individual's existence within an ethical-cultural milieu. In this milieu the notion of the incompatibility of "generic difference" (4:338) with the highest form of spiritual life, that is, with the relationship to God, is maintained as universal truth. The very same point of view is expressed by the aesthetic A when saying: "Since the sensual generally is that which should be negated, it appears properly first, it is posited first, through the act which excludes it, in that it [the excluding act] posits the opposite positive principle. As principle, as power, as a self-contained system, sensuousness is first posited in Christianity; and to this extent it is true that Christianity brought sensuousness into the world" (2:60).

According to this view Christianity brings to light – for the first time in the history of mankind – that idea of self-determination, which is the ultimate constituent of man’s existence. From the Christian point of view it is evident “that the Greeks did not in the profoundest sense grasp the concept of spirit” (6:172), since the Greeks conceived corporeality basically as an harmonious expression of the life of the soul. The Greek ideal man was “the beautiful personality”, in which corporeality or pure sensuality was not yet emancipated, but only “momentarily present” (2:61). “When beauty must reign, a synthesis results from which spirit is excluded. That is the secret of all of Greek culture”(6:156). The capacity of the soul, that is, its ability for reflective self-understanding, is conceived as a sufficient condition for obtaining control over bodily expressions. This idea of humanness is symptomatic of that comprehensive view of reality which SK calls “recollection”. The basic ontological presupposition of this view of reality is that man, in virtue of his intellectuality, stands in an unbroken relationship to the infinite power or the ground of being. The Greek infinite is the primordial ground from which man’s soul unconsciously springs; it “lies behind as that past which can only be entered backwards” (6:177). And that which is rooted in infinity has the power of controlling corporeality. This explains why the Greeks did not really perceive man’s historicity; the succession of time and a perspective oriented toward the future are of no importance since the relationship to the ground of being is retrospectively mediated. The development of spirit toward historical consciousness is thus in fact conditioned by the Christian religion.

This way of thinking reflects the view rather commonly held within “Christian Philosophy” in SK’s time, namely, that Christianity was the “absolute religion”, – with the implication that theology is to be transformed into pure history of spirit (the development of the human self). In Hegel’s words: “the Christian principle is the autonomously existing inwardness [...] All that is special withdraws before the intellectual ground of inwardness, which raises up against the divine spirit”.²⁸²

From the point of view of anthropology, the place assigned to aesthetic life within the system of stages is a consequence of this interdependence of the consciousness of corporeality and of the spiritual life. The particular characteristic of aesthetic life is that it seeks to establish itself through an interaction of corporeal spontaneity, in this case sexual desire, and self-reflection or psychological knowledge of oneself. The analysis of the specific elements constituting the general synthesis of body and soul finds its material in this sphere of psychological necessity.

The main source of this basic aspect of SK’s anthropology is to be found in the first part of *Either/Or*, that is, in the self-descriptions of the aesthete A. The structure of pure sensuousness or the appearance of corporeality in sexuality is clarified through a kind of phenomenological reduction. This is the anthropological implication of the treatise on “The Immediate Stages of the Erotic or the Musical Erotic”. The constitutional relation to moral consciousness, which is the main concern in Haufniensis’ analysis of sexuality, is here ignored in favor of a perspective, which allows sexuality to be conceived as an expression

and differentiation of a more fundamental “sensual genius” (2:55). In this regard the “methodological” remark which follows is instructive: “Above all, however, one must avoid considering them as different degrees of consciousness, since even the last stage has not yet arrived at consciousness: I have always to do only with the immediate in its perfected immediacy” (2:72). This method of analysis is characteristic of what I have called psychological schematization, *i.e.*, the separation and isolation of aspects of the integrated whole of the soul. This is an approach, which lets these aspects stand out as quasi-autonomous types.

This understanding of sexuality as the emancipation of corporeality is missing in Judge Wilhelm’s idea of the moral self. Thus, he represents a more naive standpoint with regard to the conditions of personal identity than does the aesthete A. This is true in that in Judge Wilhelm’s understanding the problem of guilt is not grasped in its radicalness, that is, on the level of ontology. The erotic phenomenon appears as an “unambiguous” fact of life, functioning without any crisis as the natural substance of the moral institution of marriage. The soul’s control of the body is simply presupposed in the manner of a monistic ontology and with the claim that nature by itself evolves into spirit. “In spite of the fact that this love is essentially based upon the sensuous, it is noble, nevertheless, by reason of the consciousness of eternity which it embodies” (3:25). “Precisely in this necessity the individual feels himself free, is sensitive in this [necessity] to his whole individual energy, precisely in this he senses the possession of all that he is” (3:45). The element of general validity in this standpoint is, however, the implication that personal unity is attainable only through the integration of the natural-spontaneous process of life. This standpoint’s ideological particularity stems from its veiling of the fact that this natural spontaneity is itself fundamentally ambiguous. This means that the erotic phenomenon is in itself a heterogeneous unity of inclination and freedom, which have to be split in order to obtain harmonious co-existence.

Pure or sensuous immediacy corresponds to what *The Concept of Anxiety* – on the basis of the idea of self-determination – defines as “the extreme point of the difference of the synthesis” (6:159) or the “ultimate point of the sensuous” (6:142). A’s analysis of pure sensuality supports and supplements this categorical definition by exposing the genesis of sexuality as a constitutional factor within the framework of a more fundamental sensual life-process. It is seen as the differentiation of this basic potentiality.

Taylor blurs the real constitutional meaning of this process of differentiation when he thinks that it can be expressed in terms of infant psychology. If Don Juan merely represents the Freudian oral stage, he is a rather unnecessary and cryptic expression of the trivial and obvious fact that the child “wants the mother’s breast or the bottle”.²⁸³ The emancipation of corporeality is, however, an ideal construction intended to characterize childhood as a whole or as a way of being.

B. Phenomenological Reduction to Corporeality

A's description of the emancipation of corporeality in the erotic inclination is, according to its literary form, an aesthetic investigation exploring the conceptual content of some of Mozart's operas. A correspondence between idea and tone is asserted. From a biographical point of view this reflects SK's literary interest and ambitions. Likewise, within the framework of *Either/Or* part one, this correspondence is meant to represent the aesthete A's interests and view of life. A, on the other hand, not only represents the aesthetic view, but knows its constitutional logic as well. His method of investigation, therefore, seems to have a certain generalized validity. In other words, the combination of literary and musical elements typical of an opera seems to be a source of knowledge *sui generis* when it is considered in relation to the understanding of the dynamics of the corporeal-psychological synthesis, *i.e.*, with regard to the manner of aesthetic existence.

The investigation concentrates specifically on corporeality as one element of the synthesis, while the opposite element, the soul, *i.e.*, reflection and consciousness, is abstracted from. At least that is the claim. The problem of cognition involved here stems from the fact that language or reflection is incapable of grasping the phenomenon of corporeality in its immediacy. "Reflection kills immediacy", A says (2:68), and this insofar as its nature is to "mediate", to express the phenomenon through language and concept. However, cognition without language is impossible. Real knowledge of "the sensual genius" (2:55) or "the immediate in its immediacy" (2:68) is attainable only through language. The non-reflective access to the phenomenon, which A is talking about, is then in this case simply the dominant role of the sensual correlate.

While music can have an expressive function, reflective self-knowledge is necessary to carry out a phenomenological reduction of the interaction of soul and body to pure sensuousness or corporeality. "The sensuous as such comes to evidence only through reflection", says Judge Vilhelm (3:45), and A also, for his part, defines it as "the most abstract idea conceivable" (2:55). The analysis of the opera is thus dependent on anthropological insight or theory, as even the composer himself must be in the last resort. This "use" of material from the artistic medium of music is, however, not arbitrary. The medium of expression corresponds to the specific character of the phenomenon. For that reason, it seems relevant, in terms of anthropology, to look more closely into A's reasoning about the relation of music and the sensuous with the expectation of finding thoughts that might shed some light on the constitutional meaning of corporeality.

According to A music is an instrument for grasping and expressing the pure sensuous-corporeal life, abstracting thus from its necessary correlation to consciousness or reflection. "Music always expresses the immediate in its immediacy; language involves reflection and cannot therefore express the immediate" (2:68). If sensuousness is to be grasped independent of the control of consciousness, it will show itself as a pure natural force or a substratum of consciousness, which could have no inner possibility of self-expression insofar as its essence, as a non-conscious power, will be to have no power of mediation. The concrete mental-

corporeal unity, what A calls “the immediacy of the spirit” (2:78), on the other hand, is determined by consciousness. Thus it is able to preserve its identity by means of language. “It remains, however, essentially the same just because it is a qualification of the spirit” (2:78).

What, in music, constitutes this possibility of expression? The answer to this question might contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon itself. In the first place, in contrast to language, music is what A defines as an abstract medium (cf. 2:55), that is, a medium without or deficient in ideal content. This feature corresponds to the abstract character of the sensuous as the opposite of the spirit. In the second place, music is, nevertheless, that medium which shows the greatest likeness to language with regard to the general relation between idea and form. In both instances, namely, in music and in language, the idea is expressed through the self-negation of the medium as physical-sensuous reality. “The sensuous is reduced to a mere instrument, and is thus annulled” (2:65). This means that spatial continuity and “contemporaneity” is neglected, and thus the phenomenon is grasped within the dimension of time. Accordingly, music is different from language due to its lack of ideal content, but language and music are similar insofar as they both move in the element of time. According to A it is exactly this quality, which is characteristic of the sensuous itself.

This would indicate that sensuousness is somehow a basic factor in the historical structure of human life. The overall point of view involved here seems to be that experience of time is basically conditioned by sensual life, and this in accordance with the fact that sensual “resistance” belongs to consciousness as such.

The assertion that sensuality is “the absolute subject” of music seems to indicate that music gives access to sensuality in a twofold way: through tone as well as through the contingent ideal content. It is exactly the correspondence between these two aspects which A finds realized in an exemplary way in the music of Mozart. The fact that “the essential potency of music is realized completely in the music of Mozart” (2:71) means that one is here faced with “the absolute relationship between idea, form, subject and medium” (2:69). I assume that the basic condition of this harmony is the opera as musical form, insofar as opera’s epic element is essentially an interpretation, through acts and language, of the idea of music as pure tone. In such a case fantasy or dramatic imagination has to play an important role both in shaping the musical expression of the idea of sensuality and, as well, in the reception of the musical product. We realize again that music, as essentially expressing sensuous life, is not quite as abstract as might be maintained in an interpretation of music in terms of simple definitions.

The general cognitive importance of the imagination with regard to self-knowledge and to the knowledge of man is indicated by SK himself in a marginal note in a copy of *Either/Or*: “An actual love affair could not be used in the first part, for it always affects a man so profoundly that he enters into the ethical. What I could use was a variety of erotic moods. These I was able to link to Mozart’s *Don Juan*. Essentially they belong in the world of fantasy and find their satisfaction in music” (IV A 223). I propose to interpret this methodological remark as follows: The empathy of fantasy can reveal the peculiarity of

sensuality as fundamental in human life because fantasy is the basic condition of man's primitive self-transcendence. Fantasy is the objectification, through reflection, of the passive and receptive interplay of sensual expressions and consciousness. According to Anti-Climacus' categorical definition, fantasy is "the medium for the process of infinitizing" or "the rendition of the self". But how does this definition apply to the level of existence in question?

Fantasy is identical with reflection or a form of reflection insofar as it negates the unreflective identity of consciousness and factual perception, an identity, which occurs primarily on the level of emotional self-experience. Through a combination of perceptual ideas and moods the individual somehow experiences the totality of his existence. Thus C. Constantius describes how the predominant role of fantasy or reflective imagination in an immature personality makes it susceptible to moods, which reveal the potentially autonomous self (cf. 5:135 f.). Judge Vilhelm intends to show that the basic character of aesthetic life, as represented by A, is its being determined by moods (cf. 3:213). The concept of mood is also crucial in the treatment of the erotic stages insofar as it defines the general effects of music on the human mind (cf. 2:98 f. and 109 f.). Mood is, so to say, the anthropological essence of music. To mood as emotional factor there corresponds imagination as cognitive factor.

The understanding of sensuality is, accordingly, an act of reflective imagination and music is only its medium of expression. Fantasy abstracts from concrete reality and opens up the dimension of infinity, namely, the totality of existence. Within this dimension sensuous immediacy is apprehended or captured by way of the logical stringency of reflection.

When fantasy is considered the basic cognitive factor with regard to the idea of abstract sensuality, and music is considered the medium, which makes possible a concrete and congenial mediation of "what is experienced by imagination" (2:98), then the so-called absolute relationship between sensuality and music is obviously limited to the level of expression. Thus the necessity of the epic element is justified. Without this factor the musical expression would not be on a level with the original intuition of sensuality, an intuition gained by fantasy, mood and reflection. Rather, it would just reproduce the element of mood. The primacy of imagination also finds expression in the specific character of the epic material's being united with the musical tone. The figures in the operas are products of imagination, with imagination here taken not in its individual but in its collective form. They are "primitive conceptions which spring forth spontaneously (*med autochthonisk Oprindelighed*) out of the popular world consciousness" (2:84). In other words, they are legendary or mythical figures or ideas. Accordingly, we must take into consideration the specific status that mythology has in the thought of SK. In accordance with idealist thinking in general, for SK mythology is an important source of knowledge within anthropology. The basic premise of this cognitive value is obviously the "historical" principle of knowledge, a principle which claims that the phyllo-genetic process reproduces, fragmentarily and successively, the ontogenetic structure of man. SK adheres to this understanding especially in

The Concept of Irony, where he is still quite dependent on the Hegelian mode of thinking. Hegel says, “world history represents the stages of the development of the principle, whose content is the consciousness of freedom [...] however, what spirit is has in itself always been, the difference is only the development of this being in itself”. Myth is a projection of human self-consciousness and corresponds to a definite level of its development. Perhaps the most explicit formulation of this view is an entry in the diary from 1836, actually the first known sketch of the theory of stages. Here certain main forms of mythology are correlated to stages of the psychogenetic or ontogenetic process (cf. I C 126).

In my view, due to his interest in representing SK as a “psychologist” Nordentoft was destined to disregard this note’s anthropological intent. By postulating a categorical difference between this note’s perspective and the later theory of stages, he is able to exploit the note exclusively as a source of SK’s “psychology of development”.²⁸⁴ Actually, the typology of stages is already quite clearly expressed here, albeit in embryonic form, despite the fact that the stages indicated here are four in number and that the focus of the description is on the pre-reflexive level of the aesthetic mode of existence. Moreover, priority is given exactly to the psychogenetic aspect of the theory of stages (in this respect, Nordentoft’s characterization is not so bad after all). The ethical and the religious stages are not yet differentiated. They are at this stage, rather, both subsumed under the categories of “resignation” and “hope”. The three remaining stages all belong to the sphere of aesthetic life, where they each represent only different levels of reflection within this primitive stage. This one-sidedness is not arbitrary insofar as the aim of the description is to correlate the stages of existence with different forms of mythical perception, the latter, which, as expressions of the infinity of imagination, essentially belong to the sphere of aesthetic self-awareness. Accordingly, mythology can give no access to ontological structures of human existence lying beyond the aesthetic sphere. In this view, myth is an expression of the immaturity of the spirit or personality and is thus an inadequate medium for the expression of ethical consciousness. Its highest possibility in that direction, within the stage of imagination, is the symbolic conception of its own downfall. This can be illustrated by reference to the biblical myth of the fall, which SK so interprets later on in *The Concept of Anxiety*.

What SK, along with the romantic-idealist movement, conceives as collective mythological ideas are the products of a naïveté, which, in terms of individual psychology, corresponds to the child’s level of consciousness (cf. I A 319 and X A 256, in addition to the previously mentioned reference in I C 126). According to the common idealist understanding of historical development, on which SK is here obviously dependent, the initial stage of cultures and of nations is characterized by a mythological way of thinking. Through this way of thinking, namely, through these mythological ideas, the infinitude of existence, which is seen to stem from the possibility of self-consciousness, is given expression on the level of imagination. SK defines these ideas as “hypotheses” about self-consciousness through the “indicative” of description (cf. I A 300, 269, 285). According to Haufniensis “the myth allows something that is inward, to take place outwardly” (6:140). Thus the myth, in

accordance with modern theory of myth, is an unconscious objectification of basic human possibilities of existence. These basic possibilities turn reality through self-reflection in which the individual is constituted as the responsible subject of these possibilities.

One should not understand this to mean that man, in those periods of human history, which are characterized by mythological perception, is confined within the psychological possibilities of childhood. That would be an absurd point of view, for instance, with regard to the Greek understanding of life and culture. The point of this view of history is not that pre-modern man is placed beneath the level of self-reflection, but that this reflection, as the constitution of a “theoretical” view of life, becomes dependent on a more primitive level of consciousness, that is, in the case of mythology, on the imagination’s visual intensification of the immediate-finite experience of reality.

This combination of myth and reflection is exemplified by the modern romantic view of life, which by the loss of concrete or empirical reality through the abstractions of philosophical speculation, is thrown back upon mythical forms of understanding (cf. 1:289 ff.). According to I A 126 the mythology of romanticism is a reproduction of the stage of naïveté. To the extent, however, that myth is here reflected upon as myth, its touch with reality is lost. It is – like the mythological element in the philosophy of Plato – transformed into a deliberate “symbol” in line with the “conjunctive” metaphors of poetry (cf. 1:145, 291ff and I A 300) even though reflection is existentially dependent on these reminiscences of a primitive form of consciousness. Not until reflection understands these reminiscences genetically is it able to profit rationally from the implicit knowledge of the essence and possibilities of human life.

This is the stand that SK takes. He develops the anthropological implication of a myth or of a legendary figure in virtue of the myth’s relation to a definite stage in the ontogenesis of self-consciousness. The presupposition underlying this analysis is, thus, a concept of self-consciousness in its totality, a concept showing its teleological structure to be that of moral self-determination. This logic of anthropological knowledge is only indirectly and incompletely expressed in A’s treatise on the stages of the erotic insofar as it makes brief reference to the context, within the history of spirit, of the legend of Don Juan. This logic is, then, created on the basis of the spiritual presuppositions of a definite historical era, that is, on the basis of the premises of human self-understanding fundamental to this particular cultural situation.

The mythical idea expressing the principle of sensuousness is, according to the idealist logic of historical development, partly adopted by SK. It is created within a human self-understanding, which, in terms of category, is determined by the Christian concept of spirit or idea of humanity. A says that “Christianity is spirit” (2:60), thereby explaining how the concept of pure sensuousness emerged. Spirit is essentially moral self-determination, which means, in terms of principle, that the sensuous is being negated. “Since the sensuous generally is that which should be negated, it is properly revealed first, posited first through the act which excludes it, in that it posits the opposite positive principle” (Ibid.). The figure

of Don Juan symbolizes the “unconscious” (2:84). In contrast to the Greek idea of the inherent harmony of human existence Christianity implies a basic schism in the structure of man; the idea of having a mental-reflective control over the power of the body is shown to be an illusion. To SK this reversal or revolution in human self-understanding is not a question of ideology in the form of Christian theology. Rather, it implies the realization of universal possibilities rooted in the very essence of man.

The reason why moral self-determination is not explicated by A as the *telos* of spirit is obviously the fact that SK deliberately limits, in terms of method and didactics, his scope of interest and knowledge. He does not focus on features that are not essential to the aesthetic mode of life. On the other hand, the problem of self-determination is involved “regulatively” to such a degree that the definition of A as a pure representative aesthetic existence should not be taken too literally. A demonstrates the same ambiguity as do other of SK’s pseudonyms, insofar as these pseudonyms are poetic projections from a perspective which transcends their respective horizons of life. These horizons are shown to be, in the last resort, disintegrating forms of life.

If one seeks a more congenial description of the romantic-aesthetic form of life, that is, a description in which it seems to be “consolidated” or integrated, one can find a better example in *The Concept of Irony*, where SK makes a critical exposition of the romantic view of life. It is here also, that SK describes the aesthetic attraction of mythology on the level of self-experience of the imagination. In spite of his break with romanticism as an overall view of life, SK can be seen as positively connected to this way of thinking in and by his consideration of music and mythology, or art in general, as a genuine source of knowledge in the structures of human existence. The poetry and philosophy of romanticism are partly a reaction against rationalism’s aim to penetrate existence by the way of logic and a defense of the ontological primacy of individuality – with individuality seen as accessible only in a “self-perception” determined by will, feeling and imagination. The generally held view of romanticism is, that in it poetry or art in general is given a primary status – at the expense of conceptual analysis – with regard to attaining any encompassing understanding of reality. This would at least seem to be a practical tendency in romanticism. This stipulation of the absoluteness of art was inspired by Fichte’s pure “scientific” theory of the productive imagination and by its transference from the framework of a theory of knowledge to the individual man, where Fichte then identified it with artistic imagination. The real “theorist” of this philosophical romanticism is, however, in the first place, Schelling, because of his concept of art as the organ of the “objective” exposition of the basic unity of the conscious and the unconscious dimensions of the manifestation of absolute reality.²⁸⁵ Thus, what according to the romantic idea of art is the specific area of artistic cognition and exposition, namely, expressions of unconscious life and imagination, is given a theoretical foundation; art is the privileged way of access to absolute reality. Music and mythology belong to this area of ultimate knowledge, respectively, as sensual medium and symbols of the imaginations experience of the unconscious.²⁸⁶

SK does not share romanticism's idea of an ontological monism, but he does adhere to its notion of art as means of access, *sui generis*, to unconscious life. This fact is reflected especially in his early work with the concept of romanticism (cf. for instance, I C 88, I A 200, I C 126, II A 627, III A 92). In addition to the role played by music and mythology in A's treatise on the principle of sensuousness, SK's more explicit and theoretical definitions of art and beauty also shed light on his view of and approach toward sensuousness. The contexts of these definitions demonstrate as well his break with the romantic idea of art as the superior medium of self-understanding. On the one hand, the formal content of this idea is upheld when art is defined as "an anticipation of eternity" (10:19 note). This seems to mean that art still represents an understanding of existence as a whole. This holistic self-perception is made possible by the fact that art reproduces the stage of immediacy of human life, that is, the mental-corporeal harmony of unconsciousness (cf. 6:156, 3:25 and 8:209). On the other hand, however, this "consciousness of eternity" (3:25), which constitutes art, is primitive or preliminary in relation to that modus of eternity which is realized in moral consciousness. From a phyllo-genetic perspective it corresponds to the Greek understanding of life as expressed by the idea of *anamnesis*. According to Judge Vilhelm the "eternity" or total determination, which is manifested in the ethical form of life, is actually a higher form of beauty than the one grasped by imagination in art. This latter form of beauty is limited to "the intensive moment" and thus falls short of the imperative of historical continuity (cf. 3:127, 130, 251f).

The fact that SK distinguishes between art and poetry (cf. 2:127 and 10:219) does not mean that poetry as a medium of language is thought able to grasp historical continuity in the stricter sense. It merely indicates poetry's intimacy with this dimension insofar as its object is the dynamics of internal life (cf. 3:129f, 8:206f). In this regard poetry is on the same level as music, which also reproduces a moment of reality determined by time. However, in the case of poetry this temporal determination is not abstract; life is described in terms of its concrete and conscious modes. Nevertheless, this poetic or beautiful life lacks essential continuity. As determined by the negative infinity of reflection, it is divided up into isolated moments. What is peculiar to poetry, however, is the exposition of the succession of these moments in a way, which, nevertheless, emphasizes the moments at the expense of the succession.

In terms of anthropology it is important, first of all, to pay attention to the general fact that art represents the possibility of objectifying the dynamics of mental-corporeal interaction, which, in accord with an understanding of the overall structure of development, is the fundamental condition of spiritual existence or self-determination. And this kind of receptive interaction also constitutes the logic of pure sensuousness.

The constitution of the erotic urge means structurally speaking the emancipation of corporeality from consciousness. Consciousness is subdued by its opposite; the oppression, however, provokes awareness of the agent of oppression, namely, the hostile power of corporeality. Corporeality is revealed as an autonomous aspect of life in relation to the dimension of the soul (reflection, language and self-understanding). In his idea of pure

sensuousness, A not only refers to this point of emancipation but conceives this emancipation as the result of a psychogenetic process in which the original symbiotic unity of soul and body is differentiated. This wide concept of sexuality, corresponding to its specific status as a presupposition of self-determination, is expressed most clearly in the preliminary considerations he made 1837. In these considerations the idea of a “development of love” is connected with concepts like “the not actual I”, “life itself”, “the whole of the abundance and the territory in which life moves on the different levels of its developments” (cf. I C 125, p. 304).

What is important to notice here is the problem of method implied when A seeks to grasp and describe emancipated sensuousness or pure corporeality within the framework of a psychological stage where it is not yet present. It is still to appear at a subsequent stage of development. The logic of this method consists in a “phenomenological” abstraction from consciousness. This seems to be the essential meaning of the assertion that “even the last stage has not yet arrived at consciousness” (2:72, cf. I C 125 p. 307). That is, this has not yet occurred insofar as the consciousness in question is the awareness of sexuality as an essential part of one’s own existence.

The justification for this abstraction, in terms of anthropological method or existential analysis, could be given in the following way: Consciousness in the stricter sense, that is, as self-consciousness or awareness of one’s own basic conditions of existence (and thus also as the appropriation of moral responsibility), is possible only in relation to what has been defined as the emancipation of corporeality. In this perspective it becomes evident that this differentiation, the dualism as process, presupposes a development of consciousness or self-understanding. The emergence of pure sensuousness is simultaneously a process of consciousness to the extent that emancipation can only become real in virtue of the consciousness of it. The structure is dialectical.

The methodical significance of the phenomenological reduction is, accordingly, that this necessary connection with consciousness is being suspended. The fact that the total object of description is a “segment of the development of the individual life” (2:98) is neglected. This means that such sensuousness is not considered concretely as an element within the individual’s total psychological situation. However, in terms of logic and method the basic difficulty with this kind of exposition is the fact that this totality is presupposed. Sensuousness is shaped within potential or actual consciousness. This method of reduction seems defensible, from an epistemological point of view, only on the basis of the acknowledgement of the peculiar access (to the phenomenon) that is made possible by music when music is understood according to the specific theory of aesthetics in question, that is, when music is conceived as sensual objectification by imagination.

Accordingly, consciousness as “structural moment” is not eliminated, which from an anthropological perspective would be impossible. It is only consciousness as content or as culturally mediated self-understanding that is temporarily pushed into the background. The stages of the sensuous are products of the interaction between corporeal spontaneity and

perception insofar as consciousness constitutes the form of the amorphous expressions of the body. The need for the element of consciousness is expressed indirectly by the narrative context, which actually depicts sensuousness as socially imbedded or interacting human types.

In view of this interpretation it is not correct to say, as Nordentoft does, that “the treatise describes experimentally this natural urge such as it would develop, if there were no consciousness to set limits to the expansion”.²⁸⁷ Quite the contrary is the case, and Nordentoft himself seems to deny this very view when he claims to detect implications, in terms of psychological development, in A’s analysis. On the other hand, he carries this kind of interpretation too far when he tries to determine age level and modus of experience. This occurs, for instance, when he describes the psychological level of the Page as “the little child’s relation to its mother”.²⁸⁸ In this way the anthropological idea expressed by the methodical abstraction from concrete consciousness is in fact neglected. Instead of conceiving corporeality as a constitutional factor within self-determination, Nordentoft focuses on relations on the level of empirical observation. In accordance with this view he reduces A’s abstraction from so-called “different stages of consciousness” to the absurd by maintaining that “according to the language of Kierkegaard the child has, in fact, no proper consciousness.”²⁸⁹ The characterization of the analysis as “a fictitious abstraction”²⁹⁰ is in my view correct only with regard to the relation between the psychological-empirical process and the fictional form of description.

The Page and Papageno are “ideal” or “typical” personifications of the main forms of the sensual expression of life within the pre-sexual stage, where consciousness and corporeality are gradually differentiated but still not separated in the stronger sense of that word. It is from this perspective we may understand A’s remark that these stages “have no autonomous existence” (2:72). These forms of sensuousness have not reached the level of determination, that is, the exclusive absorption in a definite object, which characterizes the erotic—the stage symbolized by the figure of Don Juan. Due to this indefiniteness or state of possibility, A prefers to call them “one-sided intimations” of, rather than “anticipations” of, what according to my interpretation is emancipated corporeality (2:81). The meaning here seems to be that the concept of anticipation might give the false impression that one is dealing with quantitative differences, namely, with differences in the intensity of the life-instinct. However, the basic difference here is really one of quality in that the genesis or coming into being of the life-instinct does not express its complete essence, but only its aspects of it. The essence of the sensuous comes forth or is revealed fully only when corporeality does not only express itself behind consciousness as the life of consciousness or sensual consciousness, but when it presents itself to consciousness in its totality and autonomy.

2. The Unity of Corporeality and Consciousness

Given the constitutional meaning of corporeality as the necessary correlate of self-consciousness, A's art-analytical project takes on the character of an anthropological analysis. And it is this analysis that, in turn, shows the genesis of this constitutional element. Due to the fact that the development of corporeality is not sheer physical process but is dependent on consciousness or self-understanding in terms of an active-passive or dialectical relationship, the description of this genesis or development will inevitably also refer to the development of consciousness. To put it briefly, the analysis, transferred from the level of art to that of anthropology, indirectly demonstrates some traits of the progressive structure of self-consciousness.

A. Sensuous Transcendence

In the introduction to the treatise here in question we find a kind of general definition of corporeality. In the introduction it is indicated that what is especially congruent with the musical form of expression is life's character as a self-sufficient entity. Thus we apprehend the peculiarity of the musical medium as an indication of the ontological nature of sensuous life. In this perspective one basic aspect of the relation between the sensuous and consciousness seems to be brought into focus, namely, the primitive consciousness of time that emerges from the individual's understanding of himself as a basically changing reality. The further specification of this connection between the consciousness of time and sensuousness is made explicit in the following analysis of the content, namely, the epic aspect of the music. However, insofar as the analysis itself uses the poetic-dramatic language of its object, no actual conceptual clarification is attained. The question of the structure involved is—as is generally the case with SK's descriptions of the stages of existence—answered indirectly by way of a self-exposition that places every object within the confines of self-reflection. And poetry's imaginative way of cognition is especially appropriate to the aesthetic mode of existence insofar as it corresponds to the “mere” psychological level of human personality.

The musical expression of the potency of life reveals it as a dynamic of time, “a force, a wind, impatience, passion, etc., yet in such a way that it exists not in one instant but in a succession of instants (...)” (2:56 Cf. 2:69). So far as the urge of the sensuous does not exist in itself, but only in relation to consciousness or perception, it would be wrong to say that the dynamics of time stems from sensuousness as such. In the manner of Fichte, the sensuous is inconceivable apart from consciousness. Within this context of consciousness as lived, however, the sensuous retains its autonomous status. It is not the product of consciousness but quite the contrary, a necessary “presupposition” for consciousness (the “metaphysical” question of a corporeal “substance” is outside the scope of this analysis).

The general idea of the relationship between life and consciousness (as will be shown in the following exposition of the “stages” of sensuousness) is that sensual life is the power which puts in motion the factual totality of life, namely, the original symbiotic unity of life and any later immediate synthesis of soul and body. This happens when it confronts the soul, that is, consciousness as perception and understanding, with new tasks, with new sensual-material correlates or objects. This is the basic motion, which, on a primitive level, determines the “extensionality” of human life. It thereby constitutes that which A calls a “succession of moments”, indicating a transcendence or negation of spatial simultaneity. It is this fundamental, sensually determined transcendence which music is able to express or illustrate, through its tonal dynamics.

Due to its structural function, sensuality must be seen as a central aspect of SK’s overall concept of existence (on this specific point SK is certainly not original). Sensuality is not only a condition of the total objectification in terms of moral self-consciousness, as is the case with sexuality, but it is also a basic condition of primitive consciousness, as a general presupposition for the very historicity of human life. In other words, a rather obvious fact is taken into account, namely that sensual existence is, genetically speaking, a primary element of existence (in the specifically human sense of the word). This imposes upon the possibility and necessity of self-understanding a tension between particularity and structure, factuality and possibility. The structural description of this dimension of sensuousness, therefore, anticipates the general determination, in terms of ontological structure, of man’s total situation.

This is indicated, for example, by the use of the term “passion” in the cited “poetic” definition of the sensuous. It is perhaps not too far-fetched to say that an idea is thereby introduced that is present in every step of SK’s exposition of the structure of human development. The concept of passion appears to be the quintessence of different formations of will, that with greater or lesser transparency, liberate the individual from the imprisonment of the contingent stream of events, thereby also modifying the character of finitude by an immanent factor of infinitude. Passion is the primitive breakthrough of infinitude on the level of individuality (cf. numbered section 13 above). In the words of Johannes de Silentio: “Every movement of infinity is carried out through passion, and no reflection can produce a movement” (3:105). This marks a general ontology of passion or will which is categorically different from Hegelian conceptualism, with its ascription of the basic power of movement to the concept. In addition to the plurality of passions within the sphere of the sensuous, passion is also the underlying incentive within reflective (cf. 6:38), ethical (cf. 7:146), and religious (cf. 5:109) forms of existence.

Passion is as such the quintessence of the existential situation, as the basic schism between possibility and actuality. This is so irrespective of the differences among the forms of consciousness or “gradations in the consciousness of the self” (15:133). Passion is consequently also, as has been mentioned, a necessary condition for any understanding of existential life, *i.e.*, for any form of empathy. “It is only momentarily that the particular

individual is able to realize existentially a unity of the infinite and the finite which transcends existence. This unity is realized in the moment of passion”, Climacus maintains (9:164). I propose to interpret this rather cryptic passage as follows: Only through the passionate realization of existential heterogeneity may this momentary unity be grasped, and thereby also *eo ipso* the existential unity as essentially synthetic.

There is of course a qualitative difference between an ethical-teleological passion and the passion of the passionate undercurrent of immediate life. The first, however, is only possible due to the second, in accordance with the idealist idea of a necessary “matter of the will”. “Give someone energy, passion, and he has everything”, says Judge Vilhelm (3: 247), thinking obviously of the importance of that the unification of the sensuous and the ideality of the soul may have for the formation of the ethical personality. No doubt this point of view is characteristic of the limited perspective of the ethicist. It is characteristic to the extent that the relation between the immediate expressions of sensuous life and the moral ideal are basically conceived as harmonious interaction, neglecting thereby the deeper conflict between spiritual and sensuous life that, according to *The Concept of Anxiety*, makes moral consciousness in itself emerge. This advanced point of view (that is, in terms of anthropology as theoretical knowledge) does not, however, contradict Judge Vilhelm’s view of the necessity of passion for the development of personhood, and this insofar as a true or lasting unity is based on a consciousness of the opposition between the sensual and the normative powers in the human self. Put generally, the contribution of passion is that of making the individual aware of his or her unique possibility and task. This means, in terms of ethical life, an awareness of oneself as a center of will: “For what is it to have spirit without having a will” (8:66).

This “voluntarism” is a basic presupposition of the critical attitude SK takes toward the view of life common for his day. He expresses his attitude through his immensely skilful use of irony, especially witnessed in *A Literary Review*. Here he explains spiritual indolence and the lack of passion as resulting from the dominating position of reflection within society and in the process of self-understanding. SK is of course far from swearing to passion alone, and does not deny reflection any constitutional or constitutive role whatsoever. What he criticizes is the perverted form of reflection, which ascribes to itself an exclusive ability to cope with the problem of personal consistency. For, in reality, reflection left to itself produces only spiritless abstractions or “representations”, which replace or subdue all personal enthusiasm and urge for life. “The present age is essentially a sensible age, devoid of passion, and therefore it has nullified the principle of contradiction” (14:88). There is then no decisive contradiction within life, because even the sensual-immediate power of life has withered under the conditions of abstract reflection. This is especially manifest in the “trivial compendium of experiences as to how things go, what is possible, what usually happens”, the discussion of which is characteristic of the philistine-bourgeois mentality described in *The Sickness unto Death* (15:97).

Such excursions into different parts of SK’s authorship allow us to add a new dimension to the description of the sensual genius: the discovery of the relevance of the sensual for a

general anthropology. Sensual life is fundamental to human existence and, consequently, its exposition as isolated “moments” by way of phenomenological analysis will come to demonstrate structural traits that apply to existence in its entirety.

There is an evident correspondence between the role of passion in SK’s anthropological thinking and what may be called the doctrine on passion within Danish philosophical psychology, that is, in the thinking of Treschow, Sibbern, Mynster, and Møller. Evident as well is the fact that SK’s more constructive, *i.e.*, less empirical concept is related more conspicuously to the constitutional aspect of human life. With Sibbern, for instance, we witness the passionate elaborated as a specific “pathological” supplement to the psychology of normality, insofar as that which is of primary concern here is “to consider the many conditions which represent a deviation from a normal and sound constitution and in which the human individual can find itself”²⁹¹ The implications of this view is a quite specific idea of that which is constitutive or constitutional of human beings, namely, the maintaining of the existence of a pure or “non-pathetic” subjectivity. This is a subjectivity that belongs to another “region” than the “self-perceiving and feeling ego”, which itself first comes into being “in relation to universality”, that is, by subordinating itself to this higher or autonomous actuality.²⁹²

The structural relationship between sensual life and man’s existence in general becomes evident on the level of terminology when the sensuous is said to have “a qualification of a kind of inwardness” (2:56). Within its immediate context it seems to say substantially nothing more than other terms such as “force”, “passion”, or “succession of moments” that attribute the character of transcendence to sensual life. On the other hand, due to the centrality of the term “inwardness” as a *terminus technicus* in SK’s exposition of the ethical-religious form of existence, it might indeed serve as a clue to the comprehension of the affinity, in terms of structure, between sensual and spiritual life.

The general implication might then be that the principle that “the outer is not the inner” (2:19) is applicable not only to reflective consciousness, due to its self-transparency, but to human life in its entirety—including the primitive stage of receptive-sensual life. In view of the nominalistic tendency of SK’s thinking, this possible isomorphism is not to be seen as a “metaphysical parallelism” (Schelling), but rather as a “dialectics of consciousness” in the manner of Fichte the elder.

When applied to pure or preconscious sensuality, the term inwardness denotes a peculiar expression of power. There is to the philosophical mind a conspicuous discrepancy between this power as the impulse and as the result of the activity, in the sense that potentiality is not exhausted by a single expression but, rather, gives constantly birth to new expressions. Hence the primitive temporal character of this power emerges as a kind of pure spontaneity. In view of what has so far been said about the over-all structure of sensuality, it is clear that the character of spontaneity and transcendence of the mechanical or causal ascribed to it is conditioned by its function within consciousness or perception. Hence it can be said that this primitive mode of time manifests the primitive essence of consciousness. On the other hand,

this level of consciousness is itself, in turn, essentially conditioned by sensual activity, which constitutes the access of consciousness to the sphere of objects or the objective world.

What is maintained here is, in terms of general ontology, the view that consciousness is basically a life-process. This view no doubt makes up part of the ontological foundation for the holistic imperative of existential analysis, that is, the alleged need to preserve the immediacy of factual life within reflective and moral forms of consciousness. Reflection as such is a force of disintegration, destroying the interaction between natural impulse and deliberation. This view constitutes a major motive underlying SK's criticism of idealist philosophy and Hegelianism, especially insofar as this philosophy is accused of promoting intellectualism. According to Haufniensis the false premise of idealistic philosophy is primarily its identification of reflection and inwardness: "Usually immediacy is posited in opposition to reflection (inwardness) and then the synthesis (or substantiality, subjectivity, identity, that in which this identity is said to consist: reason, idea or spirit). But in the sphere of actuality this is not the case. There immediacy is also the immediacy of inwardness. For this reason, absence of inwardness is due in the first place to reflection" (6:223). The basic anthropological implication then seems to be that the inwardness of reflection is defined as a form of consciousness, which "exploits" the substantial process of life. Its structural tendency is to deny its givenness or immanent character of facticity and the fact that its content is not created by itself. Accordingly, this pretended "self-creation" leads to a fictitious form of life that, in the end, transforms personality into a "demonic" agent. It does this insofar as the will is constantly diverted by the aesthetic flux. The process of life safeguards its autonomy by uttering itself independent of any control by consciousness.

Haufniensis exemplifies this general possibility of a synthesis of natural determination and reflection, of opaque experience and self-understanding, by referring to the functional relation between "disposition" and "earnestness": "Disposition is a determination of immediacy, while earnestness, on the other hand, is the acquired originally of disposition, its originality preserved in the responsibility of freedom" (6:229). In this context I will abstain from any further analysis of the implied concept of freedom or personality. I refer to this instance of true idealist anthropology to demonstrate the synthetic or integrating "logic" of SK's descriptions of the forms of consciousness. One might say that the dynamic of this "logic" occurs as a sort of Hegelian "annulment" so that the relation between sensuous life and primitive consciousness is, like that of "disposition" and "earnestness", a process of integration or mutual conditioning.

Sensuality constitutes consciousness as primitive sensual consciousness, and thereby the individual as existing within a temporal succession. It belongs to the essence of consciousness to establish a succession of time, that is, existential transcendence in relation to the factual content of consciousness or of any particular act of consciousness. As determined by sensual "affection", consciousness does not yet include a consciousness of time. Time is its functional form, but not its content or concept. This is indicated by A's definition of music as the fictional representation of sensual consciousness. "Music has an element of time in

itself but nevertheless does not take place in time in the proper sense. It cannot express the historical within time” (2:56). Consciousness of time in the stricter sense is constituted, as explicated by Haufniensis, only when the individual relates itself to itself as a totality, that is, as finitude or temporality within moral consciousness (cf. 6:177). The sensual consciousness is characterized by an abstract time-relation, “the infinite succession of time” (6:174), due to the fact that it is captured or absorbed by its object as an isolated moment. According to Judge Vilhelm “the sensuous is momentary. The sensuous seeks momentary satisfaction” (3:26). And this is manifest in the figure of Don Juan, whose being takes the form of an abstraction from concrete life: “the same thing repeats itself indefinitely” (2:90) to such a degree that “his life is the sum of *repelling* moments that have no coherence” (2:91). It is this fundamental lack of continuity that, disregarding any causally established connections, characterizes the structural tendency of sensual consciousness. Insofar as the sensual consciousness is affected by the impact of sensual life it becomes imprisoned by that life. Consciousness has not yet attained the level of reflection, which makes historical continuity possible.

My overall interpretation of SK’s idea of sensuality as part of his anthropology or theory of the constitutional logic of self-consciousness may be summarized thus: The corporeal aspect of human existence expresses itself in sensual awareness by virtue of perception. Thus, human life becomes basically contingent and dynamic, a succession in time due to the primitive discrimination between act and object. Sensuality is a central function of the basic human existential situation as determined by the conflict between possibility and actuality, that is, by the duality, which makes comprehension and, ultimately, self-understanding possible. It produces, on a primitive level, the objective correlate of perception. Within sensual consciousness it is the sensual attraction or urge that represents the element of infinitude (cf. 2:98), while perception or understanding is the finite or restricting factor. In terms of general anthropology this seems to imply that imagination, as “the medium for the process of making infinite” (15:88), is conditioned by this primary sensual transcendence. If imagination is “reflection” or “the self’s possibility” (15:89), then sensuality the condition or presupposition for imagination. This gives us an indication of the status of the imagination within Kierkegaard’s anthropological structure.

It is within this perspective we must understand that notions like “passion”, “inwardness” and “finitude” are attributed both to sensuality and to human existence in general. These notions, or concepts in a wider sense of the word, appear to be formal in the sense that they are applicable to different levels or stages of human life, and thus take on quite different specific meanings. In these variations, however, there is seemingly preserved a basic ontological meaning, corresponding to that encompassing unity within human life itself, namely, the connection between natural predetermination and self-determination.

An example *par excellence* of this idea of a qualitative gradation is to be found in Judge Vilhelm’s ethical vision of the synthesis between the erotic and moral obligation. In his view “the infinitude, the character of apriority, that the first love has” (3:61) is defined as an

indispensable condition for a morally qualified marital love. This love thus becomes a higher form of the initial romantic love due to its greater degree of inwardness or control by consciousness. “Even more than the first love, it has an interior infinitude, for marriage’s interior infinitude is an eternal life” (Ibid.).

What here has been defined as sensual transcendence, *i.e.*, the simple fact that consciousness is conditioned by biological process of corporeality, is of course a rather common philosophical insight. My interest in this regard is primarily to show to what extent this dualism of interaction is decisive for the structure of SK’s thinking as a whole. Nevertheless, in spite of obvious differences with regard to the comprehension of absolute reality, SK shares idealism’s paradigm of the sovereignty of spirit. Parallels among contemporary “theorists of consciousness” are legion. By way of illustration we may cite from the work, “*Das Erkennen als Selbsterkennen (Knowledge as Self-knowledge)*” of the younger Fichte: “But the entire consciousness is already present in the simple sensation, for only something self-conscious can feel sensation – but as yet this is only something dull, slumbering, as mere *dynamis*, which awakens to life precisely through the energy of the sensation and first of all senses only *its own self* therein”.²⁹³

Rosenkranz also, in his psychology, emphasizes the function of corporeal expression and perceptual objectification within the emergence of self-determination [*der Geist*]. By way of natural urges, feelings and perceptions the individual is gradually driven out of the state of nature, experiencing itself as practical spirit, which “takes possession of its natural quality”, enabling the individual to grasp the structure of its own existence as spiritual or normative: “and my various states, as I find them directly existing, are only the motifs which per se have no justification, since their obligatory character, the impulse of their urgency, must derive its justification only from that absolute obligatory character of the reason”.²⁹⁴ This constitutes a common enough conceptual scheme, namely, an objectification of corporeal dynamics. Yet the phenomena in and through which this dialectics is seen to occur may vary from sensual perception all the way to moral self-awareness. Now within this scope of idealist thinking it becomes easier to assess SK’s treatment of the phenomenon of sexuality. His is a relatively original contribution to the exposition of the genesis of selfhood, reflecting possibly a growing awareness of the estrangement of the region of corporeality from that of spirit.

B. Sensuality and Consciousness. Passion, Papageno and Don Juan

Within the genetically primary form of sensuality as the undifferentiated unity of biological urge and consciousness, the latter is, so to say, absorbed by the first or, as stated in Aristotelian terminology, consciousness is in a state of pure potentiality. In the mythological scheme of A this stage is the Page in Mozart’s Figaro. This is concerned with the form of sensuality present in the child’s symbiotic relationship to its biological environment, that is, the merely passive or receptive satisfaction of needs.

A more precise description of the psychological and social context of these forms of sensuality could not be given on the basis of the present text. One could, of course, speculate

about the matter the way Nordentoft does. He tries to complete A's analysis, which has not yet broken its ties to the conceptualistic method of Idealism, by using modern psychoanalytic theories. This comparison may, as such, produce some insights, especially in regard to SK's overall knowledge of psychology. On the other hand, one can in this way hardly hope to shed light on constitutional logic, as psychoanalysis remains strictly empirical in character. By thus interpreting what is formally a contribution to aesthetic theory as a piece of empirical psychology, one blurs the structural aspect of the analysis in that it is exactly the logic of abstraction involved in aesthetic analysis that serves as the link to structural anthropology.

The Page is, using an expression from the preliminary studies, a personification of "life itself" (I C 125). In other words, he symbolizes the biological foundation of human existence. In this human stage the essential possibility of consciousness is enclosed within the biological. The description of the Page's mode of existence illustrates the inner tension that thus arises. "Desire, consequently, which in this stage is present only in a presentiment of itself, is devoid of motion, devoid of unrest, only gently rocked by an unaccountable inner emotion. Just as the life of the plant is confined to the earth, so desire is lost in a quiet, ever-present longing, absorbed in contemplation, and it still cannot discharge its object essentially because, in a more profound sense, there is no object. And yet this lack of an object is not its object, for then it would immediately be in motion" (2:74).

The harmony is the symbiosis of soul and body, and the inner contradiction, letting a gentle emotion arise, emerges from the fact that the capacity of the soul is converted into actual perception, that is, perception of the independent expressions of corporeality. Perception modifies the immediacy of corporeal expressions by making them into separate objects that act upon or "impress" the original entity as subject. The Page represents the stage where this basic perception of corporeality is being constituted. The expressions are yet not made into separate objects, but are in the process of becoming such. "The desire is so vague, the object so little separated from it, that what is desired rests androgynously in the desire" (Ibid.). Here the tension is "the deep inner contradiction" (2:75) between sensual spontaneity or infinity and perceptual limitation, a tension that can be dissolved only by definite sensual expression. In terms of structure this implies that the contradiction is transposed from the sphere of "inwardness" to that of the "external", from the sphere of possibility to that of actuality. It thus becomes that "unconscious conflict with the environment" which the preliminary studies (I C 125) define as characteristic of the Page's mode of existence.

This definition, however, seems to blur the alleged distinction between possibility and actuality. If the Page is the symbol of the symbiotic unity of body and soul, in what sense could he then be involved in a "conflict with his environment"? This relationship certainly presupposes a relative separation of corporeal urge and the corresponding perceptual factors. The explanation to this apparent discrepancy might lie in the fact that the symbol refers both to the psycho-genetic and to the constitutional aspects of sensuality. On the one hand, with respect to the latter the inner tension between spontaneity and limitation pertains to sensuality as such. On the other hand, seen from a psychological-genetic point of view, this

inner tension appears most purely in the primitive symbiosis of soul and body. Sensuality as external conflict or definite sensual expression is a development of the internal tension that is seen everywhere (on every level or at every stage) as the fundamental layer of sensuality, its “inner” possibility. Put in exoteric terms, action presupposes perception.

As to the category of possibility, sensuality could, within the wider anthropological perspective, be defined as the foundation of the very possibility-structure of human life. In relation to Haufniensis’ definition of innocence as “the possibility of possibility” (6:136), the dialectics of sensuality might be labeled “the possibility of the possibility of possibility”. It is the general presupposition of that conflict between perception and immediate life, between reflection or language and factuality, which finds expression in the anxiety of the individual. Anxiety is that mood of life, which generates further realities out of possibility’s continual negation of factuality. This means that the individual is given up to the contingent successions of events. This process reaches its climax in the emancipation of corporeality, in the “totalitarian” perception of the sensual aspect of human life.

The stage of the Page represents, in the manner of ideal-typical abstraction, the mere possibility of perception and definite sensual expression. This possibility produces its inner contradiction, because its realization implies a rupture of its symbiotic harmony. Insofar as human existence is inconceivable without sensual expression, the Page appears as a pure abstraction or a logical idea beyond human life taken as an empirical-psychological reality. Conceived constitutionally, however, he is consistent with this reality, insofar as perception has to be conceived as a genetic process. He does not mark a stage ahead of perception, that is, a pure physiological reality, but the most primitive form of perception or consciousness where, consequently, “the object (is) so little separated, that what is desired rests androgynously in the desire” (2:74). The point involved here is the degree of determination of perception and object. So defined, the Page is not only a symbol of the fundamental structure of sensuality as such, the dialectics between spontaneity and perceptual limitation, but also, in terms of psychological development, corresponds to early childhood, although it is not possible on the basis of the text to indicate an exact delimitation of the period of time in question.

The primitiveness of perception and the corresponding generality and openness of sensual expression is reflected in the psychological peculiarity of the Page. His character is basically emotional; he is completely determined by the opaqueness of mood and not by ideas, which presuppose the capacity for perception. Thus in the preliminary studies the stage of the Page is described as “the becoming I with its searching feelers” (I C 125). The totalizing character of the feeling in question is expressed by its definition as “melancholy and depression”. “As yet desire is not awake; it is intimated in melancholy [...] That which is desired, does not vanish. It does not squirm out of desire’s embrace, for then desire would indeed awaken. But without being desired, it is there for desire, which then becomes depressed precisely because it cannot begin to desire [...] When desire has not yet awakened that which is desired fascinates and captivates—indeed, almost causes anxiety” (2:73).

Melancholy and anxiety are, in general, indications of a state of non-realized possibility, a contradiction between potentiality and actuality. This tension constitutes a basic structural characteristic of the dialectics of existence in its entirety insofar as it describes human existence as a process of realization whose ultimate telos is the possibility of selfhood. Especially on this level, namely, that of primitive consciousness, this possibility manifests itself, in the strict sense of the word, as *the unconscious* (cf. Pap. VII 1 C 5), insofar as what becomes realized is the simple possibility of consciousness as such.

Melancholy and anxiety are, accordingly, primarily structural determinations, whose concrete content varies with the level of existence and historical circumstances in question. As mentioned, they should not be thought of as empirical-psychological descriptions of the child's world or of typical experiences of reality, although such psychological correlates might indeed be found (not, however, in the form of a manifest or explicit experience of anxiety). The child's anxiety is what A, with regard to Don Juan, calls "a substantial anxiety" in contradiction to a "subjectively reflected" anxiety (2:121). In this context it is quite misleading to talk about "a melancholy infant", as Nordentoft actually does.²⁹⁵ This seems to provide a good example of his tendency to emphasize the empirical at the expense of the structural.

On the other hand there is obviously a constitutive or constitutional relation between latent and manifest anxiety. According to the exposition of different forms of anxiety in *The Concept of Anxiety*, they are realized in ways appropriate or relative to the gradations of self-consciousness. Yet anxiety is always conditioned by the basic human existential situation, that is, by the "inter-esse" between possibility and actuality. The relation between the manifest anxiety (associated with the emancipation of corporeality as the structural effect of the emergence of the sexual urge) and the more comprehensive tension between the unconscious and the conscious or reflection within moral self-realization is indicated by Haufniensis when he maintains that "anxiety has here the same meaning as melancholy does at a much later point when freedom having passed through the imperfect forms of its history, in the profoundest sense will come to itself". In a footnote Haufniensis points at the same time to the first part of *Either/Or* as the exposition of "melancholy in its anguished [*angstfulle*] sympathy and egotism" (6:137). The primary or pre-moral anxiety is, on its side, obviously conceived as a determination both of the totality of childhood's awareness of life and self and of the genesis of that awareness. "In observing children, one will discover this anxiety intimated at more particularly as a seeking for the adventurous, the monstrous, and the enigmatic [...] Anxiety belongs so essentially to the child that it cannot do without it. Though anxiety causes him to be anxious it captivates him by its pleasing anxiousness [*Beængstelse*]" (6: 136).

The situation here described transcends the stage of the Page in that perception has reached a level where it, so to say, negates itself, that is, where it transcends its purely receptive mode. In virtue of the ideality or productivity of language, perception develops into an image-shaping ability, namely, imagination, although consciousness is still essentially

determined by sensual impression. The “ideas” of imagination are shaped by a quantitative intensification of the sensually given. This mode of existence might be subsumed under the category that Anti-Climacus calls “immediacy containing a quantitative reflection” (15:106). Or, in the language of Haufniensis, man is still “psychically qualified in the immediate unity with his natural condition” (1:135).

The emergence of perception on the first level of life, sensuality, shapes the individual into that whose reality is feeling. Feeling is the form of its actuality. The development of perception into idea, language, and reflection does not eliminate the impact of feeling, but reduces its power and scope insofar as the identity of actuality and feeling is thereby negated. However, as is evident from *The Concept of Anxiety*, regardless of the level of consciousness, what endures is the basic functioning of feeling with reference to structure. This is true in that perception and factuality, consciousness and actuality will constantly stand in tension with each other. And they will do this because of the ontological fact that identity is unattainable. On the unconscious level this tension is expressed in feeling or a definite basic mood. Melancholy and anxiety are, accordingly, formal or ontological concepts that encompass the total spectrum of forms of existence and consciousness reaching from the primary symbiosis to the non-worldly inwardness of radical reflection (cf. IV A 213).

Melancholy general expresses a lack of self-transparency. This lack is of course radical, a sheer opaqueness, when subjectivity as such is not yet developed as a competence in shaping ideas which let a world of intelligible objects emerge. The mood is thus all embracing. Such is obviously the case with the melancholy of the Page, which “arises because the whole fullness of life presses down and, so to speak, overwhelms one; whereas the melancholy of another level (the romantic) can express itself, inasmuch as the individual, pursuing his vanishing object, is as if brought to a standstill by what it would call the poor, prosaic world” (I C 125).

This pursuit of the object starts on that stage of sensuality or process of life that is symbolized by Papageno. Here perception is developed. The expression of sensuality or corporeality has become objectified. The individual is primitively open to sensual reality or the multiplicity of the “world”. The melancholy and inner tension of the symbiotic stage of the Page has been replaced by Papageno’s carefree character and joy of life. He is one “whose whole life is such an uninterrupted twittering, twittering away uninterruptedly without a care in complete idleness, and who is happy and contented because this is the substance of his life, happy in his work and happy in his singing” (2:79).

The psychological context of this form of sensual life is probably hinted at in the note entitled “Something about Life’s Four Stages, also concerning Mythology” (I C 126), written, like the preliminary work of A’s essay on the stages of sensuality, in January 1837. Here life’s second stage is given the following description: “But after this turmoil comes peace, an idyllic wellbeing. It is the youth’s satisfaction in family and school (church and state)”. The description given of the stage of Papageno does not mention this state of harmony. When, quite on the contrary, it emphasizes unrest and endless movement, this is

due to what I have referred to as the psychological schema. In the one instance, namely, abstraction from conscious life, one aims toward the psychic-perceptual regulation of the urge of self-preservation. In the other instance, it is precisely this psychic control that forms an essential part of the whole and is accentuated insofar as consciousness is conceived as permeated by its cultural-linguistic context. The culturally assimilated personality can be interpreted as having adopted, as a necessary constitutional moment, that sensual expansion, openness and excitability which pertain to the mode of existence of Papageno.

The structure of Papageno's existence, in relation to that of the Page, is the transforming of inner tension into manifest expression, namely, into an expression that is definite to such a degree that it appears as an object to the individual, thus eliciting subjectivity. And the actuality of the individual is accordingly constituted as a relationship of subject and object. Yet the individual does not perceive itself as subject, that is, self-consciousness; it is merely living or immediate subject, confronting a reality which is experienced as its opposition, and in that sense as object. From a structural point of view its object is itself, inasmuch as the object is constituted through the expression of life and its perceptions. However, this connection is concealed from sensual consciousness, which is absorbed by its empirical correlate.

The transformation is qualitative, although mediated by a quantitative process, that is, by a gradual differentiation of the perception or its object and, thus, a development in the degree of definiteness. "Desire awakens [...] This awakening in which desire awakens, this jolt, separates desire and its object, gives desire an object.... but just as the moving principle shows itself for a moment disuniting, so it manifests itself in turn as wanting to unite that which is separated" (2:76f.).

From a formal point of view there is here a striking resemblance of what SK had done with Fichte's deduction of the structure and genesis of consciousness, specifically as treated in the third main principle of the *Science of Knowledge*. In both cases we find consciousness disclosed as a synthesis both of receptive and of spontaneous aspects of an original and purely non-objective activity. Again on the more formal level, the difference between SK's approach and that of Fichte lies in the area of what is included within the systematic approach. Fichte's transcendental ego is conceived as the ontological (not ontic) foundation of nature as a system of causality. In SK's existential analysis, which has as its purpose to show the road to Christian existence, the reconstruction of nature as theoretical object becomes irrelevant, and the first stage of the constitution of the self is envisaged as the practical dissolution of the symbiosis of consciousness with nature. This approach and intention on SK's part is itself in keeping with the structure of Fichte's thought, inasmuch as for Fichte the knowledge of nature is construed as a function of moral self-realization.

When Fichte's a priori deduction of nature is set aside, it remains then, on the level of anthropology, a similarity with regard to structure. In both SK and Fichte consciousness emerges from an encompassing state of emotion, which is the essence of the primary form of existence. About this Fichte says: "This is the foundations of all reality. Only through the

relationship of the feeling to the ego [...] does reality become possible for the ego, both the reality of the ego and that of the non-ego. [...] an activity, which has no object at all, but nevertheless is driven irresistibly towards one, an activity that is only felt. [...] merely through this any external world reveals itself in him”.²⁹⁶

The basic structure of sensuality is, accordingly, that of the triadic chain or of dialectical unity. The original unity is divided into two opposing elements, which, in turn, establish a new or higher unity through a process of synthesis. This synthesis is the satisfaction of that urge which emerges from the perception of a definite object. The individual is, as subject, confronted by reality as sensual objectivity and multiplicity. Its object absorbs only non-subject, symbolized by the Page-figure, because the object is not yet constituted as object. Objectivity means openness to a sensual universe, and thus to a multiplicity that establishes experience as an infinite process. “The result of the separation is that desire is torn out of its substantial repose in itself and, as a consequence of this, the object no longer falls under the rubric of substantiality but splits up into a multiplicity” (2:77).

The multiplicity of the sensual correlate, or, if one sees the matter from the opposite angle, the generality of empirical consciousness, is what conveys to existence its dynamic character. It is the general foundation of the previously mentioned dynamic of time that belongs to sensuality. “The object flees, multiple in its manifestations; longing tears itself loose from the soil and takes to wandering; the flower acquires wings and flutters, fitful and tireless, here and there” (2:77).

Again, in the somewhat less poetic words of the preliminary work: “It is like the concentration of the soul in the eye all at once for an instant — a single object — and then concentrating on the next, and so on endlessly, but yet in such a way that the full concentration does not take place because almost at the same instant a new pleasure presents itself” (I C 125). Sensual consciousness is an open approach to the surrounding world considered as an area of adventure and satisfaction. “Only momentarily a deeper desire is felt, but this anticipation is forgotten. In Papageno the desire sets out for discoveries” (2:77). The fulfillment or realization of the possibility of experience conditioned by interaction of soul and body is emphasized by the notion of “the boy’s satisfaction” (cf. I C 126), the need for experience, the ability to be open to constantly new experiences or pleasures. For all of these Papageno is the symbol.

Papageno is indeed the ideal type of the mode of existence of the child. He gives expression to its preliminary character as element in and condition for self-determination. He represents the individual’s basic stage of orientation, its extensive or outward relationship to, and appropriation of, its social-cultural context. As totality the mode of existence he represents is essentially passive and receptive because activity, the immediate expression of life, is a function of the establishment of identity. Cultural identity replaces, or is being built on, biological identity. This cultural and linguistic identity, constituting a common world of meaning, forms the general condition of the possibility of moral self-determination. Between the two levels there is an isomorphic relationship insofar as also morality is constituted

through a division of the existing identity, which then moves up into a higher synthesis of the divided elements or moments.

In conclusion, we can say that the stages of the Page and of Papageno reveal the basic structure of the constitutional relationship between biological self-assertion and consciousness as the possibility of self-reflection. The sensual urge, life's basic tendency toward self-preservation, puts pressure on the potential consciousness inasmuch as it is a necessary condition for the development of life in the biological sense. The emergence of consciousness shapes life as a specifically human reality. As determined by consciousness, the course of life is elevated from a cyclic-reproductive to a horizontal-productive course of movements. This is so because the individual, by its consciousness or perception, gives itself an orientation within its existential space from which it, as subject, is to some extent separated. This separation occurs in proportion to the development of consciousness at the same time as this cleft is bridged by the peculiar synthesis of consciousness. This unity of distance and integration forms the basic structure of cultural existence.

While Papageno represents a kind of equilibrium between sensual life and consciousness or psychic control, Don Juan is the personification of pure sensuality, that is, of radically emancipated corporeality. This "sensuous genius" is in fact the topic of the treatise. The Page and Papageno are aspects of or moments in the stage of Don Juan. They represent a duality, two moments, which are being held together here. Don Juan is the synthesis of the Page's intensity and of Papageno's extensiveness. The respective predominance of spontaneity and openness to sensual multiplicity are being leveled. "The first stage ideally desired the one; the second desired the particular in the category of multiplicity; the third stage is the unity of the two. In the particular, desire has its absolute object; it desires the particular absolutely" (2:81). Sensual multiplicity is concentrated in one particular object, in fact, in corporeality, which is the foundation of sensual life. Corporeality becomes an external object in the opposite sex.

At Papageno's stage or within the joyful existence of the imagination of the child, the existential structure was determined by division, by the distance between sensual life and consciousness. In Don Juan the homogeneous form of existence of the Page is re-established. This unity, however, is not equilibrium of sensuality and perception as equally original potentialities. The unification means the absorption of consciousness by sensuality, that is, by the sexual urge in which consciousness is reduced to the state of subsidiary functionality. It is only the perception of the desired object. In short, in terms of structure sexuality means the emancipation of corporeality and is, accordingly, an expression of life that reduces consciousness to a function of its self-assertion. The autonomy of consciousness, that is, its ability to be for itself or reflection, is eliminated. "In this kingdom, language has no home, nor the collectedness of thought, nor the laborious achievements of reflection; there is heard only the elemental voice of passion, the play of desires, the wild noise of intoxication, which are enjoyed only in perpetual tumult" (2:85f.).

The instance of Don Juan clarifies the meaning of the above-mentioned method of abstraction from consciousness. The reduction or elimination of consciousness gives expression to its essential interdependence with sensuality. On the level of Don Juan the contribution of consciousness is reduced to an absolute minimum. Pure sensuality, as manifested in the figure of Don Juan, does not here mean the synthesis or mediation of the duality of sensual impulse and conscious control that was characteristic of Papageno or the careless child. Quite on the contrary, it involves a deepening or completion of this duality. The synthesis, which is produced by Don Juan, is only a synthesis between the forms of sensuality represented respectively by the Page and by Papageno.

The anthropological significance of this radicalized dualism is not clarified in A's treatise. However, it finds indirect expression in the juxtaposition of the concepts of sensuality and of the Christian idea of spirit, that is, of the point of view that "Christianity has brought sensuality into the world" (2:60). In view of the idea of self in *The Concept of Anxiety*, in terms of anthropological structure the thesis here stated implies that sexuality, as the emancipation of corporeality, is the basic condition for self-determination. Self-determination is a moral relationship to individual reality in its totality. This requires that it be experienced in its ontological heterogeneity.

Speaking in the terminology of Idealism one could say: While Papageno's form of sensuality is typical of consciousness, meaning by sensuality here the general openness to the sensual universe or the "world", the absolute or absorbing sensuality of Don Juan corresponds to self-consciousness, to the subject's knowledge of itself as subject or moral agent.

In view of the logic of understanding and communication involved in the construction of the pseudonym A, the interpretation of A's treatise on the stages of sensuality put forward here sheds some light on the problem of SK's pseudonymous method itself. It has become clear that A does not primarily represent or personify the aesthetic attitude towards life, for that is especially the role of Johannes the Seducer. A's role is that of exposing—although rather indirectly—the aesthetic mode of existence's genesis and structure, that is, the aesthetic attitude's peculiar function within the development of selfhood. Climacus' characterization of the position of A as one which "keeps existence away by the most subtle of all deceptions, by thinking", insofar as "he has thought everything possible, and yet has not existed at all" (9:211), is in fact expressing A's self-understanding and, in the last resort, also SK's. Accordingly, A is, like Haufniensis, committed to the problem of sin, innocence and hereditary sin (cf 2:139), and he anticipates B's criticism of aesthetic existence as manifested in the figure of the reflective seducer (cf 2:284).

C. Genesis, Continuity and Change

Sensuality or the general urge of life is a constitutional condition of consciousness. The stages of sensuality emerge from the interaction of sensual spontaneity and perceptual

limitation. The logic of this process is that perception borrows its spontaneity from sensuality, which, in its turn, attains definiteness due to perception. Using one of SK's own favorite ontological distinctions, one could say that sensuality represents the "quantitative" aspect, while consciousness conveys the "qualitative" aspect of the process by attributing "meaning" to the sensual process of life.

In the light of this dialectic of quantity and quality it becomes easier to perceive the anthropological relevance of the division into stages which A applies to sensuality and which might then have a bearing on the dialectic of existence as a whole. What is characteristic of a "stage" is the fact that it is separated from the previous stage through a "transition" or, as it is called when the logical essence of the transition is emphasized, a "leap". This concept belongs to the "categorical" level of SK's thinking and is thus for SK a basic ontological category. With regard to rationality, it expresses opposition in two main directions, that is, both to the model of mechanism, which SK means to observe as the paradigm of natural science (cf. VII 1 A 182 and 186), and to the model of conceptualism as represented by Hegel's philosophy. The basic negative presupposition of SK's own philosophical project is the view that "Hegel has never done justice to the category of transition" (IV C 80).

In the writing preparatory to A's treatise this category of transition is applied to the relation among the stages of sensuality. It is said of the last stage that it "comes all at once as a new point of departure and cannot be explained by the previous ones [factors: Danish: "Moment"]" (I C 125). This qualitative change or transition is only conceivable when one takes into consideration the point that the genesis of the structure of sensuality in fact takes place on the level of consciousness.

I can now point out that Nordentoft's previously mentioned misunderstanding of the anthropological meaning of the method of abstraction is, in a way, confirmed by his definition of the stages as such: "These metamorphoses are of a quantitative nature, the transition from one state to another is gradual, while the qualitative transition is the transition to reflection".²⁹⁷ However, we should note the fact that the very succession of stages in sensuality coincides with the general emergence of reflection.

SK never presents a systematic exposition of the problem of transition on a general level that would correspond with its basic importance and variety of existential content. Only in three connections or places in the authorship is the problem discussed in more developed fashion: At least by way of implication in *The Concept of Anxiety*; as an essential aspect of the analysis of the genetic structure of moral consciousness in the clarification, as found in *Philosophical Fragments*, of the logic of historical progress; and the criticism of Hegel's idea of the system in the *Postscript*.

There are, moreover, in the Papers several allusions to this topic. SK raises a number of questions especially in connection with his study of the history of philosophy and of Greek philosophy, with particular reference to Aristotle's doctrine of the categories, and also concerning the thought of Descartes and of Spinoza. These are instances characterized by a concern for the theory of knowledge (cf. V A 74, V C 6). On the other hand, the distinction

between “pathetic” and “dialectical” transitions is an ontological distinction (cf. IV C 12, 105, VI B 13, VIII 2 B 85, X 1 A 219, 481) that expresses the basic difference in human life between existential movement and conceptual deduction. The general status of transition is expressed in V C 1: “Every quality consequently emerges with a leap. Are these leaps then entirely homogeneous [...] A qualitative difference between the leaps”.

The attempt of Malantschuk to reserve the concept of the qualitative transition for “the transition from one form of existence to another”²⁹⁸ is a misunderstanding with regard to both terminology and conceptual content because the connection between natural and spiritual life, between the general development of consciousness and ethical existence is thereby indirectly set aside. The continuity involved is schematically set over against the discontinuity of the “will”.

We find in Anz’ “critical” approach a corresponding confinement of this idea “transition” to the area of ethical consciousness. Since Anz elaborates at greater length on his restrictive reading of where transition occurs, his position has had greater impact on subsequent interpretation. He maintains that, “in the category of the leap, the absolute subjectivity of existence is established”.²⁹⁹ The alleged proof text he refers to is Pap. IV C 87: “Can there be a transition from quantitative qualification to a qualitative one without a leap? And does not the whole of life rest in that?” This passage could and should be understood in quite the opposite sense, in other words, as an expression of the fact that the absolute foundation of the self within self-determination is anticipated or genetically based on the general transcendence of consciousness. Consciousness as such is a dialectical succession of qualitative changes or stages due to and arising because of the fundamental tension between sensual “mechanism” and linguistic understanding. Absolute or ethical subjectivity is transparent to itself and thus conscious of itself as “product”, that is, as the result of an objective dialectics of life. Ascribing to consciousness such a structural primacy, however, is “not to attribute any essential significance of its own to the nature in the human person”.³⁰⁰

Disregarding the differences between types of transition, it seems that the general “law” here involved is that the transition from one quality to another transforms the previous quality into a quantitative entity, with the later then becoming only a condition of the following quality or state (cf. IV C 87, V C 1). Quantity exists only in relation to quality. In relation to itself, every moment, being a limited unity, is a quality. In relation to a moment for which it is a condition, the moment is a quality that is transformed into a quantity. And this then is exactly the logical essence of the leap, the subsequent transformation from quantity to quality.

A term, which SK occasionally uses, to express this quantitative aspect of the leap within the framework of anthropology is “approximation”. Such is the case, for example, in his description of sensual consciousness, where he describes sensuality as “approximation to consciousness” (I C 125). With this term SK gives expression to the constitutional meaning of emancipated corporeality for moral consciousness. The description of the Page makes the same point poetically with terms like “awakens”, “intimated” and “dawning” (2:73).

Leaving aside the polemical version of the *Postscript*, we find the most systematic use of the term “approximation” in *The Concept of Anxiety*. Here the category of the leap ontologically defines the emergence of the primitive consciousness of freedom. Haufniensis calls the factual-historical situation of the individual “quantitative determinations that explain nothing”, since they are only “preliminary runs to the leap” (6:127). Again, quantity is a determination of relation, and this due to the fact that the totality of qualities, which constitutes the situation of the individual, is or presents itself as a conditional or, perhaps better, conditioned process. It is the basis for and approximation to a level of consciousness, but not “ground” in the sense of being a sufficient condition.

The formula, “quantitative approximation–leap–quality”, is a statement, in summary fashion, of SK’s break with Hegel’s ontological conception, that is, with the principle that human reality and existence can be reconstructed on the basis of the absolute as sufficient reason, “as the position of all predicates”.³⁰¹ The transition here is one from reason to result, even though it does not occur as a linear deduction but through the inner contradiction of concepts. SK also takes into account this inner contradiction within forms of existence and consciousness. But he does not conceive of it as a purely logical contradiction. Furthermore, this is precisely the point to which the concept of the quantitative character of the situation gives expression.

On the stage or level of existence of the Page this inner contradiction is one between sensual potentiality and the capacity of perception. The leveling of this original contradiction or discrepancy, a leveling which characterizes the stage of Papageno, is itself the result of a development of perception. It is a process, with a basic quantitative aspect about it, which leads to a qualitative change, that is, to a new level of consciousness. This change is thus to be subsumed under the category of transition, namely, as a transition from quantity to quality. This implies that one cannot, strictly speaking, conclude with logical necessity that the development of perception as such will develop to the stage of consciousness of Papageno. One might recall that with Papageno consciousness is still taken in the primitive sense, being simply an incipient separation of subject and object or the transformation of the basic spontaneity of life into an object.

This denial of any logical necessity to such a transition might seem questionable insofar as the phenomenon of perception is already conceived of as an aspect of consciousness. A logical necessity exists if perception is thereby initially identified with consciousness. Given, however, SK’s general concept of knowledge in which he leaves out the absolute as the ground of knowledge, such identification indeed appears to be a leap. It emerges within reflective consciousness, which projects itself back into objective nature as this latter’s presupposition.

It might have been more illuminating to speak of a transition from nature or the spontaneity of life to consciousness. The relation between the Page and Papageno symbolizes the relation between the individual’s unconscious symbiosis with his biological milieu and linguistically constituted consciousness. SK mentions this problem of development in a few

notes on natural science, whose approach he rejects insofar as it is not fruitful vis-à-vis the problem of existence — both with regard to conceptual deduction and causal explanation: “Thus we learn from sophistical physiology that ‘the key to the knowledge of conscious mental life lies in the unconscious’ (Carus).

But if one cannot explain the transition from unconsciousness to consciousness, what does this say about the key? Rather, the transition is a leap (to which wonder corresponds) that no key can unlock [...] Therefore it [sophistical physiology] wants to conjure up an appearance, as if it nevertheless could almost, as good as, as it were, for the most part, just about explain the miracle” (VII 1 A 186, p. 126).

This criticism of natural science is obviously a rhetorical exaggeration, expressing a “moral” fear that it might go beyond its field of competence and that it might want “to enter into the realm of spirit” (Ibid. p. 124). In principle a certain correspondence could be discerned between the “approximation process” (Ibid. 125), on the level of physiology in relation to consciousness, and the status of psychology according to the description of the genesis of moral consciousness in *The Concept of Anxiety*. Psychology clarifies the quantitative or purely genetic presuppositions of the leap of moral self-evaluation. The aspect of consciousness accessible to physiology might be defined as an essential part of the wider psychological consideration, which in the next instance is itself basic to the encompassing philosophical analysis. In principle, the clarification of the complex of conditions of self-consciousness could thus include the physical aspect of the constitution of sexuality. It is this ontological multi-dimensionality that excludes any simple causal explanation.

Only within his analysis of moral consciousness does SK offer a concrete description of the transition from quantitative process to a qualitative level, that is, to a stage of existence or consciousness. Moreover he refers us to the indications found in the fact that concepts like “approximation”, “leap” and “the qualitative Dialectic” (VII 1 A 182, p. 120) are crucial to a general description of the sphere of conscious life. More specifically, he refers us to the rudiments of the theory of the leap found in the Papers.

Among the formulations of the problem of transition one may find, the formulation of the transition from essence to existence or “the kind of change [involved in] the coming-into-existence” (6:68), which moreover is identical with the most frequently used scheme of transformation, namely, the movement from possibility to actuality (cf. 6:120, 142, 171, 10:25, 38, 43, 3:232), only expresses the ontic aspect. It marks a change with regard to actuality (actuality being the comprehensive concept in relation to possibility, which has a double relation to actuality), but not a “qualitative” change or, in the words of Climacus, “a change in essence” (6:68). The latter problem of transition emerges when one focus on the constitution of possibility, that is, on what could be defined as the transition from actuality to possibility. This kind of constitution is essential within anthropology, where development from the outset is determined by essence, and thus a general progression from potentiality to actuality, while the first kind of transition rises in importance in step with the individual’s development into an ethical-historical personality. The historical-contingent possibilities

correspond with the growing ability for self-reflection. SK's obvious interest in the ethical individual in relation to Christianity gives priority to the transition from possibility to actuality, for instance, to man's decision as confronted with the Christian paradox that "there exists an historical point of departure for an eternal consciousness" (6:7).

The general ontological point expressed in this fragmentary manner, and mainly by way of implication, is the principle of the logical autonomy of consciousness in relation to its necessary genesis. This logical autonomy applies to every stage of the developing of the personality. Consciousness as consciousness is never identical with its actual content. Consciousness is primarily form or idea. This status as form or idea makes possible the transcending of any particular content. This content is thus logically determined as a product of consciousness. Analysis of the content of consciousness can then in principle not lead to the conclusion that consciousness is a product of its own content. The logical point here is identical with or conforms to the general meaning of the concept of stages. And this general meaning is valid wherever the concept of stages is applied or employed.

In other words, insofar as the development of human existence (like changes within sensual self-awareness), are formations of consciousness, its continuity can only be conceived on the basis of the essential discontinuity of consciousness. The continuity is established in the following way: the psychological -physical continuance, *i.e.*, the succession of "experiences", is transformed by consciousness into a new form of consciousness. Simultaneously the discontinuity of consciousness expresses its autonomy and its contingency, *viz.* that it is both absolute and finite. It can never be just absolute. The philosophy of identity or the idea of the system in Hegel is then seen to be based on the presupposition that consciousness, as logical discourse, is the absolute or, again, the ground of reality, making finitude only its medium of realization or expression.

This structure and the ontological status of consciousness is only indirectly conveyed by A's treatise on the stages of sensuality. This is so due to the treatise's methodical or phenomenological self-restriction in its focus upon to the biological correlate of consciousness. As has been shown, the activity of consciousness is presupposed but not spelled out. The specific activity of consciousness will be my general topic in the following analysis, where we will begin with the fragment *Johannes Climacus or De omnibus dubitandum est* (IV B 1), which contains rudiments of a kind of corresponding phenomenological analysis of consciousness. Despite its obvious ironic-rhetorical form, the treatise constitutes quite a serious consideration of the basic problem of idealism, namely, the mediation of reality and consciousness. It quite definitely questions the speculative theory of the ultimate transparency of self-reflection, which is supposedly due to its unity with the absolute itself.

Chapter III

CONSCIOUSNESS

The general problem of consciousness and, here more precisely in terms of the philosophical context of the present discussion, the reconstruction of the “theoretical-predicative” consciousness within idealism, is not considered explicitly in SK’s existential analysis. This is due to SK’s concentration on the problem of moral-religious existence and to the maieutic scope of the authorial interest here in question. It is for these reasons that considerations on this level of philosophical reflection, to the extent that such views are conveyed, are found first of all in the Papers, and especially in the fragment, *De omnibus dubitandum est*, and its drafts. Such considerations are also to be found in epigrammatic notes, comments and questions committed to paper during studies of philosophical literature.

This does not, however, mean that the problem of consciousness is irrelevant to the clarifying analysis of the structure of ethical-religious existence. Insofar as this analysis proposes to grasp man’s basic ontological standing, the question of the place, genesis, structure and even the competence of the rational-linguistic in relation to such existence becomes an essential part of the overall consideration. Elements of this approach to ontology are undoubtedly discoverable in any existential analysis. The problem of knowledge in relation to man is touched upon rather indirectly in A’s treatise on the genesis of corporeal consciousness. However, it is naturally treated with more precision in the *Postscript* as a necessary aspect of the criticism of Hegelian ontology.

What is focused upon in the *Postscript*, however, is not the internal structure of rationality or the *a priori* cognitive forms, but the relation between reflective consciousness and ethical self-determination. And even the short description of cognitive consciousness found in *De omnibus dubitandum est*, the fragment mentioned, is so conceived as to serve the purpose of practical or moral self-awareness. The point of interest here is the question of the range and competence of reflection in relation to the problem of reality. Thus the description provides an analysis, on a preliminary level, of the problem of “repetition” or personal identity which runs through the entire authorship. Interpreted within the context of such a philosophical project, the simple definitions of the structure of consciousness ascribed to Johannes Climacus are in fact clarifications of a most basic problem within existential analysis.

1. The Structure of Consciousness

A. Consciousness as an Act of Grounding the Self

Climacus seems to subscribe to the program of reconstructing the universal consciousness found in transcendental philosophy when he claims to clarify “consciousness as it is in itself, as that which explains every other individual consciousness, without, however, being one individual” (B 1, p. 145). And this affinity apparently pertains to or includes the “genetic”

version of the reconstruction of consciousness insofar as the “essence” of consciousness is illuminated on the basis of its “coming into existence” (cf. *ibid.* 14:9). But how far does this relationship between consciousness in itself and the individual consciousness go? It might be simple enough to ascertain that the two are not identical. But it is nevertheless difficult to explore and give expression to the negative and positive aspects of this general agreement, in terms of method, of the two. It is also difficult to identify the more specific views in SK’s existential analysis which can be connected with this agreement of “structure” and “existence”.

I have mentioned SK’s lack of interest in the traditional philosophical topic par excellence, namely, the theory of knowledge, which, in more anthropological terms, can be referred to as the theoretical or predicative consciousness. This lack of interest is evident from SK’s treatment and evaluation, in *The Concept of Irony*, of Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*, which, in accord with Hegel’s reading, is interpreted as the spiritual presupposition of the negative-ironic attitude of life in romanticism. “But since Fichte in his *I-I* insisted on abstract identity in this way and in his ideal kingdom would have nothing to do with actuality, he achieved *the absolute beginning*, and proceeding from that, as has so frequently been discussed, he wanted to construct the world. The *I* became the constituting entity. But since the *I* was merely formally understood and consequently negatively, Fichte actually went no further than the infinite elastic *molimina* [efforts] towards a beginning [...]. The problem of philosophy’s point of beginning is hereby brought to consciousness. That with which one has to begin is presuppositionless. But the enormous energy of this beginning does not go farther” (1:286).

First of all, it is obvious that SK conceives Fichte’s analysis of consciousness as an effort to find a solution to the problem of defining a starting point for philosophical reflection. In other words, Fichte advances a theory of “the absolute beginning” (1:186). With this concept of an absolute beginning SK is also alluding in a particular way to Hegel’s problem concerning the method of constructing a rational and totalizing system of reality. To a certain extent SK agrees with Hegel: Like Hegel he claims that the basic problem of ontology, namely, that of demonstrating the unity of consciousness and reality, cannot be solved on the basis of an abstract-formal principle like that of the transcendental ego. In other words, it cannot be solved by way of an abstraction from the historical-contingent content or experience of consciousness (cf. 1:285). Furthermore, it is within this Hegelian framework that Fichte’s concept of the ego appears as pure metaphysics whose arbitrary inner logic is what SK calls “a-cosmism” (1:286).

The fact that this interpretation of Fichte’s theory of consciousness is highly disputable is another question. The point here is to draw attention to the fact that SK is not as such arguing against the possibility of revealing consciousness as an *a priori* ontological structure. What he opposes is, rather, the specific idealist method of ascribing to consciousness a primary status within the metaphysical reconstruction of reality in its totality, as is the case in the philosophy of Hegel. He sees Hegel doing this when Hegel converts Fichte’s deductive description into his phenomenology of the progressive manifestations of consciousness.

SK's principal objection is in line with the view expressed by Climacus in the *Postscript* when he polemicizes against the idea of "an existential system". Climacus here maintains that the absolute abstraction itself is an abstraction, that is, a position of decisionism incapable of mediating reality. According to Climacus the basic ontological character of reality is actually ignored, namely, the fact that "existence is what divides (*Spatierende*)" (9:101). Hence it can be said that speculative abstraction is determined by only one of the two components within the divided entity. Any reflection which aims at grasping the unity of consciousness and reality takes place on the basis of the conditions set forth by consciousness and is thus a logical circle (cf III A 48): "Thus there exists no presuppositionless beginning; for if something else is not presupposed, the act whereby I abstract from everything is presupposed. But this I cannot ever (*i intet Øieblik*) do. I cannot get around to making a beginning since I am using all my powers in order to abstract from everything" (V A 70).

This line of argument is surely not sufficient to overthrow Hegel's idea of a philosophical system, as Hegel himself hardly has pretends to make a presuppositionless beginning. The decisive line of demarcation comes to view between the two philosophers, Fichte and Hegel, by interpreting the point of view just quoted from the Papers regarding the question of knowledge or philosophical method ontologically, that is, in connection with the concept of being. In any case, the present discussion does say something about the status and importance of the analysis of consciousness within the framework of existential analysis.

SK's rather general polemics against Hegel's "presuppositionless beginning" undoubtedly reflects the Danish controversy over the philosophy of Hegel at the time. At the same time it expresses a decisive premise for SK's attempt to define the concept of reality in a way different from the Danish discussion exemplified, for instance, by *Sibbern*, who considered this matter rather extensively in his 1838 treatise on Hegel. This might give rise to some uncertainty concerning SK's own position. The crucial point in Sibbern's considerations is the fact that he does not accept the notion that logic is an explication of the essence of the absolute itself. Logic only reveals the structure of experience, described in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, as a way leading toward the absolute, as "fathoming search for the original and really underlying ground from which one does not go out as from a starting point". This is, however, the method of Sibbern. He intends to take as his starting point what Hegel, again according to Sibbern, is approaching only by way of self-reflection ("the inverse movement") and, in this way, better than Hegel reconstruct the deeper connections of existence so as "to see everything constituted within totality".³⁰² Hence SK's rejection of the idea of a total system applies as well to Sibbern's philosophy. The criticism of the concept of an absolute beginning introduces a new concept of the subject and thus radicalizes the aspect of finitude.

In *The Concept of Irony* SK states that the Fichte's analysis of consciousness is inadequate to the problem of reality because it neglects the historical content and experience of consciousness. However, this line of argument itself has a structural or *a priori* character insofar as the historical character of consciousness is not an historical fact but stems from the

essence of consciousness. This is the same argument that is brought forward in *De omnibus dubitandum est* as an answer to the question of the conditions making possible “doubt” or radical philosophical skepticism, that is, as the foundation of that reconstruction of reality which takes place within the exposition of the *a priori* constitution of consciousness. It is along this line that Climacus deals with this philosophical project on its own level. His intention “to find out the ideal possibility of doubt within consciousness” (IV B 1, p. 145) is a function of his goal of showing that this epistemological field, even though it might be the necessary starting point of philosophical reflection, does not have the ability to make reality conceptually transparent.

I shall in the following focus on the premises of this conclusion, which in fact constitute a structural definition of consciousness. This constitution of a structural definition is, in turn, the decisive basis of the dialectic of existence.

According to Climacus the basic consideration concerning the ontological impotence of “doubt”, and something which also disqualifies it as a general method for ontological reconstruction can be expressed in the following way: “Doubt” presupposes consciousness, and as one of its functions, cannot hence transcend consciousness. Philosophical reflection, starting at this basic point of self-criticism, has in the strict sense to be immanent or shut up within the confines of consciousness.

This is so, in the last resort, as a consequence of the very essence of consciousness. The competence of reflection rests necessarily in what is self-referential or immanent. In the preliminary works this truth is stated in the simple definition saying that “consciousness presupposes itself” (IV B 10:14). Stating this thesis does not amount to saying that consciousness is absolute reality. However, this is what consciousness becomes for philosophical reflection if it is given, by way of postulate, the status of a “fundamental ontological” principle. In the opinion of Climacus, granting such a status amounts to the act of transforming a logical truth into ontological truth, namely, that the act of predication through language becomes self-grounding.

This structure of consciousness is, as argued in the previous chapter, the general meaning of the category of the leap. Forms of consciousness cannot be “explained” by, *i.e.*, be conceived as necessary results of, the “material” antecedence taken as a specific content of consciousness. That such an antecedent exists is of course not denied. Such an antecedent might exist, for instance, as a sensual correlate. What is claimed, however, is that what thereby becomes an object of consciousness does not establish consciousness but is itself established by consciousness. Consciousness is not without presupposition, but has as its own presupposition, from a structural point of view, that which it by itself converts into a presupposition. Climacus expresses this elementary truth as follows: “But how is immediacy negated? By a mediation, which negates immediacy by presupposing it” (IV B 1, p. 146).

This main point within transcendental logic has SK inherited from the tradition of idealism. He furthermore uses it as an essential element in his own attack on this very same tradition. He does this insofar as the idealist logic of consciousness has been transformed into

an ontology or philosophy of identity. From a formal point of view, the argument of Climacus is on a level with, for instance, Fichte's concept of the absolute spontaneity or "pure action [Tathandlung]" of consciousness: "But this character of the ego, which cannot at all be ascribed to the non-ego, is the absolute act of positing and being posited, and has no other foundation".³⁰³ In view of this, Anti-Climacus' adoption of Fichte's idea of the transcendental imagination (cf 15:88) is of course not accidental. Rather, it expresses conformity to Fichte's philosophical approach, even though one may find it difficult to determine the range of this affinity due to the difference of scope between the two positions. Imagination according to Climacus is not a function of the knowledge of nature, but is rather the producer of different forms of life - or self-understanding.

The active character here ascribed to a logical relation expresses the fact that consciousness determines human existence. The Climacus-fragment indicates this aspect by emphasizing the self-activity of consciousness (with an ill-placed sting against Hegel) (cf. IV B 1, p. 147). This activity on the level of ontology stems both immediately and mediately from the fact that consciousness is related to the existential self-interest (*cura*), which emerges from man's fundamental *inter-esse*, namely, his existence between "the ideal" and "actuality" (cf. IV B 13:18-20). The definitions found here are scanty and general, and thus cannot form any basis for an acceptably clarified systematic theory of the relationship between "theoretical" and "practical" consciousness.

The point of view of *Fahrenbach* that "one must attribute a precedence to the ethical consciousness in the interpretation of existence"³⁰⁴ is evidently correct. However, it says nothing about what this priority means in relation to the constitution of "theoretical" consciousness. The essential point of the fragment of Climacus is not the distinctions between these forms of consciousness "as modes of conduct" with "originally distinct intentions"³⁰⁵ but, rather, the opposite. The "ethical-practical" is the original level, which can only by abstraction assume the form of a pure "cognitive activity" (IV B 13:18). This stands, moreover, in agreement with the basic motive within idealist philosophy, especially that of Fichte.

Blass, on his part, blurs the dialectical picture by wiping out the distinction between consciousness and the ethical self-relation when he maintains: "the ecstasy of the consciousness is however at the same time something relevant to itself; the consciousness is essentially related to its own self"³⁰⁶ Blass seems to identify consciousness with the "self" of *The Sickness unto Death*. To this one could object that there is an essential existential distance between the rudimentary self-activity within the form of consciousness, described by Climacus, and that self-consciousness which manifests itself in different forms of self-understanding, even if the structure in all cases must be "triadic" (*trichotomisk*) (cf. IV B 1, p. 148). Within an anthropological-genetic interpretation of consciousness one should emphasize not only the primacy of self-activity but also the passive and receptive form characteristic of the primitive level of consciousness. In this perspective, the "theoretical-predicative" consciousness, as linguistic-rational competence, is the basis of the practical

attitude of self-determination understood in an ethical sense. The schema of idealism moving from “theoretical” to “practical” consciousness is, accordingly, compatible with SK’s anthropological approach. This is so even though idealism to a greater extent bears the stamp of Kant’s philosophy and comes to be seen as a kind of anthropological modification of his theory of knowledge. This latter is Kant’s definition of “theoretical” competence within the scope of natural science.

The fact that Blass seems to overlook the importance of the concept of the implicit or transcendental self-activity (which moreover is essential to the idea of the self presented in *The Sickness unto Death*, to which concerning the structure of SK’s thought, Blass attaches such importance) is a consequence of his attempt to disengage SK from the tissue of idealism. He thus maintains that SK separates himself from idealism by rejecting the idea of “a universal consciousness”, due to the alleged incompatibility between understanding this in general and an understanding of this as “self-consciousness”.³⁰⁷ However, first of all, there is thereby ascribed to SK an inconsistency of thought insofar as “self-consciousness” must imply a “general consciousness”, *i.e.*, a general structure organizing consciousness in its particularity. Secondly, SK’s own methodical approach is neglected as, for instance, in Climacus’ considerations of “possibility” as “total, essential to human consciousness” (IV B 1, p. 145), and Anti-Climacus’ exposition of a typology of the self by means of “formulas” and combinations of “abstract constituents” (cf 15:73, 87).

The relation between the “theoretical” dimension (consciousness) and the “practical” dimension (self-consciousness) can be defined in the following way: The ontological fact that consciousness is constituted by an immanent act and thus is self-grounding is the general condition for human existence, as a succession of forms of consciousness, developing as a movement of self-constitution. Existential reality is certainly determined by the chain of necessity. The life of the individual is shaped by the contingent character pertaining to content of consciousness. But, as mediated by consciousness this determination is in the last resort a product of that self-constituting activity which is the essence of consciousness.

The general difference between this concept of self-constitution and the speculative synthesis of idealism has already been explained to some degree above. In the following we will attempt to show in what way this difference or transformation finds expression within the explicit analysis of consciousness itself.

B. The Genesis of Consciousness in the Difference between Subject and Object

“Immediacy” is the category of any reality, which is outside the actual horizon of any consciousness, and this insofar as consciousness always “mediates” reality. This term is used therefore as a general definition of that stage at which the competence of mediation itself is in the process of being established, and where the extension of immediate or unconscious reality is the greatest possible. This is what Climacus defines as the level of consciousness of the child. “How then is the child’s consciousness determined? It is actually not at all determined; this could also be expressed by saying: it is immediate. Immediacy is exactly the

undetermined” (IV B 1, p. 145, cf. IV B 14:13). The idea of “immediate consciousness” is, strictly speaking, a *contradiction in adjecto*, insofar as consciousness as such implies mediation. This contradiction, however, expresses the basic truth that consciousness is not a simple fact but an historical process, that is, a successive reduction of the field of immediacy. That implies, expressed in the categories of personalistic philosophy, a movement from the “merely psychically qualified [...] something within the dimensions of temporality and secularity, in immediate connection with ‘the other’ ”, towards an “infinite consciousness of the self” (15:106). The extreme form of this external-quantitative consciousness is that primary symbiosis or harmonious interaction of corporeal and psychic factors which the Page personified in A’s treatise on the stages of sensuality. As has been pointed out, we were here shown some structural features of the emerging subjectivity within pre-reflective life. In this presentation the decisive cooperation of consciousness was set aside by way of experiment. Climacus now clarifies, one could say, what constitutes consciousness as the pole of determination, that is, as a negation of the “undetermined”.

The determination of immediacy makes the subject-object relationship emerge in what is a mutual determination, namely, that the subject determines the object and the object determines the subject. This process is, we must now remember, an asymmetric constellation insofar as it is also a receptive and objective relationship founded in the subject’s act of identification and validity. The medium of this act of identification is language or “the ideal”. “Immediacy is actuality, language is the ideal, [while] consciousness is the contradiction [between them]. In the moment I express actuality contradiction appears, because what I express is the ideal” (IV B 1, p. 146).

What Climacus emphasizes is the negative aspect of predicative consciousness. The immediate unity of life, that is, the awareness of reality through emotional mediation, is dissolved and replaced by the dualism of the subject-object relationship. This duality is both the presupposition of the act of identification and decisively established by the very same act. This is the basic meaning of the assertion that “consciousness is the contradiction”. This “contradiction” is a general structure of consciousness, regardless of the level of consciousness in question. Accordingly, “actuality” should not be identified with “the world which exists prior to us and surrounds us”, as claimed by Blass.³⁰⁸ We should, however, conceive this identification of “actuality” with the sensual world as characteristic of primitive consciousness or that stage of existence on which the individual’s position is basically receptive and determined outwardly by sensual multiplicity. That is the form of consciousness or existence of Papageno.

Insofar as the differentiation of existence through the subject-object relationship is mediated by language, the “coming into existence” (IV B 14:9) of consciousness is basically dependent on the child’s integration into the community of language. Linguistic competence constitutes emancipation from the confinement created by the existence of need. Language means the introduction of freedom or possibility through factuality insofar as language is “partly an original given and partly something freely developing” (III A 11, cf. III A 37, 2:65,

68). Thus that “transition” from actuality to possibility, which is so essential to SK’s discussion of the problem of freedom is inextricably bound up with the concept of linguistic competence (cf. 6:138).

Language or the ideal is both the foundation of subjectivity, possibility and freedom and, at the same time, a factor within immediacy or the factual situation. This means that the negation of immediacy is an immanent process, that is, a realization of immediately given possibility both within the psychic structure and the cultural context.

Within the naive and receptive consciousness of the child this relation between the ideal and actuality is basically “factual”, it is an almost symmetrical relation that does not realize the potential of consciousness as an act of self-grounding. “As long as exchange occurs without mutual contact, consciousness only exists by its possibility” (IV B 1, p. 147). According to Climacus, on this level no real “collision” between the two poles takes place in that naive consciousness at once believes that the linguistic term corresponds to the object. “It believes that it expresses actuality” (IV B 14:7). In this sense consciousness is immediate and hence not really conscious of anything, for “immediately everything is true [...] immediately everything is real” (IV B 1, p. 147). The correspondence between language and actuality, which is the ultimate aim of predicative consciousness, exists, however, in a form that contradicts its own essence. The correspondence is not established by consciousness in virtue of its own authority with regard to validity or truth, but is a pure fact, the result of cultural internalization. To ask whether such a form of consciousness is conceivable from a psychological point of view is irrelevant as the approach is not one of a “developmental psychology”, that is, it is not an empirical description of the content of consciousness. Climacus focuses on the *a priori* logical structure or what Kant defines as the conditions rendering “experience” possible.

Climacus’ reflections are similar to Hegel’s famous analysis of “sensual certainty”: “They mean this piece of paper on which I am writing this, or rather have written it; but they do not say what they mean. If they really wanted to speak about this piece of paper, which they mean, and that they wanted to say, it is impossible because this sensuous thing which they mean is inaccessible to the consciousness, which per se belongs to the universal dimension”.³⁰⁹ In both cases the point is that mediation through language is hidden from the subject.

According to Climacus the dissolution of the immediate awareness of identity is introduced by the interruption of “reflection”. Reflection is defined as “the possibility of the relation” (IV B 1, p. 147) that is consciousness’ awareness of the contradiction between language and object. Reflection in this context means a structure within primitive or naive consciousness and not that kind of reflective attitude or self-reflection to which SK attaches such importance with regard to man’s possibility of transcending the level of personal and cultural immediacy (cf. 1:228, 2:157, 285, 3:88, 5:163, 7:34, 109, 136, 141, 8:26, 170). On the other hand, this structural reflection or self-reference constitutes the general possibility of explicit or mature self-reflection. As both a negative-destructive and a positive-constructive

factor, reflection rests transcendently on the general competence of language as conditioned by psychic structure and cultural traditions and conventions. A kind of formula for expressing this relationship is found in Anti-Climacus: “The self is reflection, and the imagination is reflection, [it] is the rendition of the self as the self’s possibility” (15:89). The fact that reflection is rooted in immediate or pre-reflective life indicates in general the connection between genesis and self-determination.

The primary function of reflection is to relate the immanent ideal, that is, internalized language, to the immediate “experience”, a sensually mediated material or “actuality”. “Within reflection they get in touch with each other in such a way that a relationship becomes possible” (Pap. IV B 1, p. 147). Climacus here obviously takes a further step in identifying a state that modifies the original state of identity, namely, that “exchange” which is said to occur “without mutual contact”. The development has, however, not reached the point where the relationship reveals a definiteness that will establish a “mutual friction” (IV B 14:7) with this latter seen as the peculiarity of consciousness proper. Reflection alone only establishes the relationship between language and object as possibility; “the moment the ideal is related to actuality the possibility appears” (IV B 1, p. 147).

If one would attempt to formulate these considerations within the scope of psychological realism, one could say that the terminus of harmonious “exchange” which reflection brings forward is a kind of neutral or preliminary search for a linguistic means to express sensual impression, thus preparing the act of identification of consciousness. Reflection on this level is a horizontal movement across the multiplicity of internalized language to find an adequate term of denotation. This corresponds to the fact that reflection in general, regardless of the level of consciousness, is the medium of possibility. It “discovers” possibility without “realizing” it.

The introduction of language constitutes a schism between language and object. Language attains a status of priority, which temporarily displaces the object. Implicitly it is no longer true “that immediately everything is true”, and this insofar as the linguistic expression is not available immediately but has to be “discovered”. An element of activity has been introduced which was not present at the level of pure or symbiotic immediacy. This primitive activity is the first stage within a process aiming at constituting “what is said” as “something, which is created by me” (IV B 1, p. 146); in other words, its climax is predication as an autonomous act of consciousness.

The meaning of this definition is certainly not what Blass has the misfortune to maintain, namely, the postulating of an ontic spontaneity, “the understanding of the idea as a spontaneous achievement of reflection”.³¹⁰ An element of truth in this interpretation is that it emphasizes the fact that the medium of predication, the word, is “discovered” by the subject. This interpretation is, however, misleading to the extent that it overlooks the fact that the activity is relative to a factual-linguistic arsenal. The freedom that one finds within the activity of denotation is necessarily dependent on existing linguistic possibilities, and this is

especially the case on the level at which the constitution of consciousness or linguistic competence as such takes place.

“Critical” activity within the sphere of linguistic multiplicity means that the act-character, which is essential to consciousness becomes effective to a certain extent. Yet, according to Climacus, critical activity or reflection in this primitive form is not identical with consciousness, as its focus on linguistic possibility remains purely an “analytical” activity, a.k.a. a semantic analysis. The semantic element is not related explicitly to the object. This relationship, this bridging of the gap between meaning and sensuality, is the birth of consciousness. “Reflection is the possibility of the relationship, consciousness is the relationship, whose first form is the contradiction” (IV B 1, p. 147).

When Nordentoft speaks generally of reflection as a “registration of contradiction” he chooses to overlook what seems to be a trivial fact, namely, that Climacus uses the term “reflection” in a “technical” sense. The distinction between reflection and consciousness is thus blurred. It is misleading to define consciousness as “mere registration” since consciousness first of all lets contradiction emerge and may thus be defined as “subjectively engaged”, in a transcendental-logical sense. On account of his psychological-empirical approach Nordentoft fails to acknowledge this.³¹¹ The same criticism could be leveled against Malantschuk’s interpretation: “Only by language or rather by reflection is immediacy divided into two opposite components: actuality and ideality”.³¹² Language, which is the broader concept, is the general basis of the division while reflection is a function of language. As reflection on factual linguistic possibilities reflection is the presupposition of consciousness’ division of immediacy into language and its object. Thus language in the full sense as denotation presupposes reflection. On the other hand, insofar as language is both the presupposition of reflection, being that system of denotation on which reflection reflects, and the actual denotation, which is made possible by the preliminary work of reflection, it would be correct with Malantschuk to say that language and reflection are identical. However, the “technical” meaning of reflection is then lost, and so is thereby also the crucial distinction between language as conventional system and language as act of identification, all of which is implied in Climacus’ argument.

The application of the linguistic term, found by reflection, to the object constitutes consciousness on its primitive or negative level, that is, as a “question” about the agreement between predicate and object. In this way Climacus has discovered the answer to his initial question, “to find the ideal possibility of doubt within consciousness”, insofar as “the possibility of doubt lies with the third which establishes a relation between the two” (IV B 1, p. 148). By this transition from “analysis” to “synthesis” the bounds of immediate consciousness are broken through. Immediacy cannot contain doubt, because this doubt is doubt as to the meaning of immediacy.

This constitution of general or cognitive consciousness through the division of language and reality is reflected in the logical principle of identity and contradiction. In denotation identity is presupposed and expressed that “what is uttered is supposed to express actuality”

(IV B 1, p. 146). With that there is also established negation, non-identity. Any predication means that a phenomenon is placed in a position of contrast or contradiction within the totality of reality. This contradiction is not identical with the contradiction Climacus defines as the first form of consciousness. It is, however, fair to say that the first contradiction is based on the latter insofar as the predication and its implied contradiction is made possible by the “openness” of consciousness, that is, by the general dualism between language and reality. The space thus created makes predicative limitation possible.

This understanding of predication and identity is the basis for experiencing reality as determined by contradictions as is expressed with simple clarity in a note from 1844: “It is not difficult to comprehend that in a certain sense the principle of identity is higher than the principle of contradiction and is the basis for it. But the principle of identity is only the limit for human thought; it is like blue mountains, like the line sketchers call the base — the drawing is the main concern. As long as I live in time, the principle of identity is only an abstraction [...] As long as I live, I live in contradiction, for life itself is contradiction” (V A 68. Cf. IV A 4, 57, 192 and 10:111).

The main point within SK’s anthropological perspective is the fact that “doubt” and “negation” are essential constituents of consciousness when consciousness is analyzed from the point of view of ontology. With this definition a basic premise of SK’s criticism of idealism also appears. What is criticized is not the idea of the constitution of reality by consciousness as such, but rather a version of this general idealist idea conceiving constitution as an encompassing relation of identity. Criticism here is thus combined with what appears to be a methodological affinity to Hegel’s “dialectic of negation”. The crucial difference becomes visible through a closer definition or determining of the essence of doubt. According to SK or Climacus, doubt as a structure of consciousness reflects the ontological truth that consciousness is an “insurmountable” condition, which means that a “regression” to the absolute as the identity of subject and object, by way of self-reflection, is impossible.

Climacus expresses this point of view rather briefly when he claim that “doubt presupposes reflection”. The relevance of this view for the criticism of the speculative synthesis is indicated by the identification of reflection with “knowledge” and “objective thought” (IV B 1, p.148). From this one should not, however, on the one hand draw the rather absurd conclusion that Hegel’s position does not transcend the level of naive consciousness. On the other hand, it could be said that Hegel seems to be a victim of the illusion created when the structural or anthropological basis of reflection is overlooked, namely, the fact that “reflection produces doubt” (IV B 1, p. 148).

This same basic thought is developed, with a clearer address, in the *Postscript*, in which Climacus maintains that the deduction of the categories or the reflection on the logical conditions of language cannot be developed deductively into a system of reality. “The infinite preponderance which the logical as the objective has over all thinking is again limited by the fact that, seen subjectively, it is an hypothesis precisely because it is indifferent to existence in the sense of actuality” (9:94).

The essential motive in SK's treatment of "the dialectic of beginning" is to argue that logical categories are only presuppositions of consciousness' mediation of reality. Therefore movement in logic is out of the question insofar as it presupposes an original identity of concept and existence. This basic view is only indirectly expressed by the formulation in Climacus which is usually cited or quoted as the classic objection to Hegel³¹³: "That beginning of the System which begins with the immediate is thus itself reached by means of reflection" (9:95). This thesis is a negative expression of the fact that the immediate is the presupposition of the use of logical categories or language. As presupposition it cannot itself be part of the logical system, except as a reflection upon its very presuppositions.

Climacus' main argument is this: To develop reflection or language's possibilities of predication into knowledge of reality, the level of reflection itself has to be transcended. An ontological novelty has to be postulated, and this is exactly doubt. The basic question of Climacus' investigation has been this: "The act of doubt, what it is, a determination of the will or a necessity of knowledge" (IV B 5:6). And the result of Climacus' considerations is the realization that "in doubt there has to be an act of the will, or else to doubt would be identical with being uncertain" (B 5:8, cf. 5:13 and 13:21). This defines more precisely the general logic of consciousness, which is that consciousness presupposes itself or is self-grounding: The act of self-grounding is an act of the will, and consciousness is thus defined as practical in the strict sense found in transcendental philosophy. In this perspective logical necessity, that is, the medium of reflectivity, is, in contrast to what is the case within speculative idealism, reduced to a discrete factor within an encompassing freedom.

When Climacus rather generally maintains that "consciousness is spirit" (IV B 1, p. 148), the meaning of this widespread definition is primarily this interdependence of cognitive and practical consciousness. The primacy of the latter is a general notion underlying SK's engagement with ethical individuality, with this last as the sublime form of manifestation of this structurally embedded imperative of self-determination. This means that every form of human existence is a kind of self-determination independent of the individual's awareness of it as task. Volitional self-determination is the basic ontological situation of man, a task from which no exemption is granted insofar as even the attempt of abstracting from reality, as affording a ground for this kind of determination, is an expression of this self-activity.

This means further that every form of human existence is a kind of self-determination, independent of the individual's awareness of it as task. Volitional self-determination is the basic ontological situation of man, a task from which no exemption is granted, insofar as the attempt of abstracting from finite reality, as affording a ground for this kind of determination, is an expression of such self-activity.

Malantschuk's crypto-theological interpretation of this text is quite untenable. It is wrong to say that "spirit as the "third factor comes actually only with Christianity",³¹⁴ insofar as spirit is an existential-anthropological structure, and not an historically mediated entity. The meaning of the definition of Christianity as spirit is relative to this universal foundation. Christianity has made an unsurpassable contribution to the historical and social realization of

the “ethical” implication of the general structure of self-determination or spirit. In this way SK still adheres to the idealist view that development on the phylo-genetic level reflects contingently the ontogenetic structure.

C. Consciousness and Reconquering the Original Unity of Life

What is emphasized in the Climacus-fragment is the negative point of view that a mediation of reality or knowledge is not possible by way of reflection alone because knowledge presupposes a “transition” from language (possibility) to reality which as transition is essentially “doubtful”. Possible conditions of verification, *i.e.*, a theoretical concept of truth, are not discussed. On the other hand, this question of correspondence finds expression in the anthropological concepts of “interest” and “repetition”, which point in the direction of the main philosophical problem in SK, namely the clarification of the conditions of human freedom and personal integrity.

The concept of repetition might be conceived as an effort to make more precise or to determine the structure of the general problem of mediation. Within the scope of predicative consciousness repetition seems to point to – on the assumption that the rather brief exposition of Climacus harbors some philosophical thought – the innate pretension of language to reproduce authentically its objective correlate, “the external”. “The existence of the external I see. Immediately, however, I relate it to something, which also exists, something which is the same, and which will explain as well that the other is the same. Here is reduplication. Here is a question of repetition” (IV B, p.150).

The interesting thing here is not the epistemological point, the traditional problem of *adaequatio rei et intellectus*, but the way in which the problem is formulated or defined as one of “repetition”. If this category, namely repetition as applied to the problem of knowledge, is interpreted in light of its status and importance within SK’s existential dialectic or theory of selfhood, it appears to express the basic ontological structure of consciousness. Repetition is the ontological “task” of consciousness.

Consciousness is constituted through a rupture of immediacy. Its *telos* is, however, not to perpetuate this dualism, that is, consciousness on the stage of pure correlation or *res cogitans*, but rather to restore the original unity of life as a unity of vital movement and understanding. This idea of a new or higher form of immediacy is the regulative principle behind SK’s description of the stages of life. And the objective necessity of this standard is pretty evident since it can be derived from the primitive fact of consciousness; man as a conscious being is immediately confronted with the task of repetition.³¹⁵

Thus Judge Vilhelm defines a synthesis of ideal will and factuality, which is “a higher, concentric immediacy”, transcending the natural erotic immediacy of feeling by means of a “return to the immediate” (3:33f.). This is an immediacy “which contains mediation, that infinity which contains finitude, that eternity which contains temporality” (3:92). C. Constantius expresses the same anthropological logic by means of the category of repetition,

indicating at the same time its function as a general expression of the settlement with the ontology of speculative idealism insofar as it constitutes an alternative to the categories of “recollection” and “mediation” (cf. 5:115, 130).

Understanding reality on the basis of the model of recollection is the essence of the Greek-platonic ontology which, to use the words of the fragment of Climacus, maintained that “existence was a depiction of the idea [...] [that] the visible existence was a repetition” (B 1, p. 150, cf. 6:15). Haufniensis makes the same point: “The eternity of the Greeks lies behind as the past that can only be entered backwards” (6:177). Repetition too, is determined by the past, “for that which is repeated has been” (5:131). This factuality of the past does not, however, pertain to repetition itself, that is, to repetition as perception or understanding. Repetition does not reproduce a static-eternal sphere of ideas, but conceives ideas as possibilities with a view to the future. “The future is the *incognito*, in which the eternal, even though this is incommensurable with time, nevertheless preserves its association with time” (6:177).

An extensive interpretation of this philosophy of time will be presented below. The main point here is to establish the general importance of the category of repetition, the fact that it points to the problem of any holistic understanding. That is why Constantius defines repetition as “the interest of metaphysics” (5.131). Within the scope of existential philosophy, which gives priority to the question of personal freedom, such an holistic understanding is conceived as the individual’s “practical acceptance” of total reality, that is, to the extent that it affects the individual’s life and fate. In other words, the problem of repetition is an expression of the basic logic of consciousness, insofar as consciousness is constituted through both division and unity. The distortion of original unity demands to be healed by a repetition, which reconciles “subject” and “object”, reflection and spontaneity, while preserving reflection in remembrance.

The idea of repetition, in its general or overall form, bears witness to SK’s affinity to idealist ontology. An obvious example of this affinity is Fichte’s structural definition of the moral ego as “an alternating determination of the ego and the non-ego, which because of the unity of the subject must become an alternating determination of the ego through itself”,³¹⁶ or as “the (fundamental instinct) in agreement with the original ego, the ego determined in the mere idea, the genuine ego”.³¹⁷

In view of the fact that repetition attains its ultimate importance within ethical existence, one could say that the definition of predicative synthesis as repetition indicates that this form of consciousness is self-negating, and this specifically with regard to the problem of grasping or integrating the whole of reality. Repetition cannot, on the level of language and theory, solve the task with which it, out of a sort of innate necessity, is confronted. This impotency is, however, not a skepticism on the level of knowledge but rather, an existential incompetence. Basically, reflective knowledge cannot as such establish an existential position that is congruent with the ontological situation of man. In the *Postscript* the same point is expressed by the thesis that theoretical knowledge is “approximation”, that is, a position of

“uncertainty” (9:37), due to its dependence on the finite or existing subject. “Every subject is an existing subject, and this should receive an essential expression in all his knowledge, be expressed through the prevention of illusory conclusion in perceptual certainty, in historical knowledge, in illusory results” (9:70).

The self-negating or self-limiting character of predicative consciousness is more explicitly expressed in the drafts of the fragment of Climacus, which claim emphatically, that “doubt is not conquered by the system but by faith” (IV B 13:18). The same point is made in the following aphorism: “I can only leave by freedom what I have entered by freedom” (IV B 13:21). Despite the lack of precision of such expressions, the basic ontological view implied is pretty obvious. Insofar as consciousness is constituted - on the level of possibility - by doubt as practical or volitional, consciousness can only establish perception and an understanding of reality in the form of practice, that is, through the negation of the will of the previous negation of doubt.

As may have been noticed, it seems difficult to draw definite conclusions from the general results of this analysis of consciousness concerning the more definite concept of discursive-predicative certainty other than to affirm the general view that consciousness as such is basically contingent (cf. 9:24) and, on that account, essentially impotent when faced with the problem of mediating reality. It seems, however, that *Philosophical Fragments* applies this principle to the problem of historical knowledge. This is so insofar as “faith” is defined as the presupposition of knowledge due to the fact, that historical object is constituted through a process of “coming into existence”. Such an object is not accessible either for “immediate perception” or for “knowledge” as deductive reasoning (6:72). This kind of faith is not, however, identical with the one postulated in the fragment of Climacus. The scope of that kind of faith is more general. With regard to historical knowledge, faith appears to be a kind of intuition, “a sense for coming into existence” (6:77), which might be said to originate in the cognitive subject’s awareness of itself as an historical being. The rather obscure definition of this element of knowledge as “faith” is made possible by a restriction of knowledge in the strict sense to the sphere of logical deduction. Consequently, an agreement with the idea of practical consciousness is evident insofar as this idea is constituted by the fact that the logical-linguistic possibilities are a necessary but not a sufficient condition for an understanding of reality. The awareness of the historicity of existence, which Climacus defines as “sense for coming into existence”, has to be established through practical or personal experience of life.

Within the framework of linguistic-reflective consciousness, Constantius gives a description of psychological and epic proportions in his account of his journey to Berlin, in which he gives witness to his inevitably pessimistic-ironic attitude toward life. The result of the experiment is pregnantly expressed in that conviction of resignation, which realizes that one has to “let life unremittingly and treacherously *retake* everything it has given without providing a *repetition*” (5:150). The paradoxical definition is well chosen insofar as it draws attention to the fact that consciousness is constituted ontologically through a negation of its

immanent aspiration. “Experience” of reality within the framework of sensuous-linguistic perception is unable to create any unity of existence reconciling the individual with his factual-contingent situation. This is due to the very structure of consciousness as ontologically determined by the infinite multiplicity of its empirical correlates. Consciousness is part of an infinite and negative progress, the constant invasion of new impressions. Thus, even what is objectively the same appears to consciousness as something else. That is what Constantius calls, in the language of poetry, “a repetition of the wrong kind” (5:148). The structure of consciousness presented in the Climacus-fragment is sketched out from an ontological point of view. Climacus discusses the ontological possibilities of reflection and logical analysis. His answer to the question of whether reflection alone can mediate reality also determines the general ontological status of consciousness. In the following discussion I shall go more thoroughly into this problem in order to give, if possible, a more precise meaning to the rather scant and indirect definitions of the fragment. It may then be possible to determine more precisely the essence of SK’s break with the philosophy of identity. It may thereby also be possible to outline the philosophical basis for central concepts of his existential analysis, the first and most important of them being the concept of actuality.

For present purposes we might note that *Shmuëli* seems to interpret SK’s concept of consciousness in agreement with my own understanding when maintaining that “real and particular existence, or being qua being, can never be attained by reflective consciousness, as ‘being’ is always beyond it”.³¹⁸ However, as already mentioned, our agreement must be qualified in a very decisive way insofar as *Shmuëli*’s thesis, as will be evident from its application within the following interpretation of the doctrine of stages, possesses a degree of generality that, in the last resort distorts the structure of SK’s thought, at least in the way in which it is understood in the present study.

Shmuëli neglects the fact that what may rightly be called a “reflective” form of consciousness is actually conceived as an immature form of consciousness, one whose basic or constitutive law is the abstraction from its own immanent and practical character, that is, from its original relationship to potential ethical existence. Insofar as this possibility of conscious life or understanding is realized, it is not adequate to say that “being is always beyond” or that it is not mediated by “transcendent reality” in the general sense here implied.

This misunderstanding underlies *Shmuëli*’s description of “the ethical consciousness”. Consequently, his description is also misleading with regard to the problem of reality and ontology. This form of consciousness is defined by *Shmuëli* as “negativity”, “a lack that is confirmed by particular phenomenon”,³¹⁹ or as “the awakening of consciousness, which then becomes reflective”.³²⁰ It appears like a kind of *perpetuum mobile* in analogy to “aesthetic” fluctuation. However, SK’s main point is that ethical existence relates itself integratively to factuality (reality), and when this existential unity is dissolved it is because the problem of existential unification appears in a new form, namely as the problem of guilt.

2. *The Ontological Status of Consciousness*

SK's general ontological view with regard to consciousness in SK is that consciousness is finite or factual. It exists as a logical-universal entity within a particular phenomenon, the human individual. Its relationship to empirical multiplicity is at the same time *necessary and contingent*. This essential limitation is what basically constitutes consciousness as practical, that is, as conditioned by a non-transcend-able act of volition. Consciousness rests on its own grounds and presupposes itself when it relates to the reality from which it has been divorced by that process which negates the status of the individual as part of the natural process.

Is it this basic point of view or way of thinking which underlies the rather summary and therefore apparently unfounded criticism of the concept of the universal or pure consciousness (cf. for instance 6:168, 224, 232). What here is alluded to is the idealistic proposal that consciousness and actuality are identical due to their mutual participation in the absolute. SK's rejection of the idea of pure consciousness does not imply, however, that he rejects the basic idea of transcendental philosophy, namely, that universal possibilities structure concrete or individual reality. For SK this is also the general logic of the dialectic of existence. A more precise description of the crucial difference between the concept of consciousness in SK's existential thinking and that of the philosophy of identity is attainable only through a clarification of the status of the categories, that is, in what sense categories constitute or structure reality. Exhaustive elaborations on this matter are not found in SK, only in the form of epigrams.

A. *The Problem of Categories*

The problem of the role played by categories in SK's philosophical position is indicated by the fact, occasioned by his first major study of the idealistic philosophical and theological literature, which he from an early stage focuses on what could be called the axiomatic aspect of ontological positions. This is of course partly due to the fact that SK comes upon the specifically categorical approach of transcendental philosophy in the central texts of his philosophical education.

A somewhat obscure but yet conspicuous example of this commitment to transcendental analysis is found in a note from 1834/35, situated among excerpts from the Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre*. What causes trouble and provokes criticism is the role of *a priori* structures within ethics. This again gives rise to the basic question of transcendental philosophy, that of the relationship between the *a priori* and the historical-empirical element of knowledge in general. The critical point of view is that the first must be checked by the last, "since it could be the case that history did not correspond to our idea" (I C 20).

The question thus raised of identity finds another expression in a critical comment SK makes on Schleiermacher's concept of religion: "how can one say (p. 26) the absolute feeling

of dependence in which this opposition again disappears [das schlechthinnige Abhängigkeitsgefühl in welchem dieser Gegensatz wieder verschwindet]. How can one say (p. 26) that everything, which the subject opposed on the middle position, now is revealed as identical with him? Nature certainly is part of it" (I C 20). What is detectable in these deliberations is an un-clarified and so far preliminary skepticism towards the idealist concept of identity. In the present case the controversial point is the assertion that man has "access" to the absolute identity of subject and object through a kind of transcendental feeling. This experience of original unity with the ground of being is the "romantic" analogy to the "absolute Wissen" of Hegel (cf. I A 273).

A more comprehensive definition of the impossibility of grasping absolute indifference is found in a journal-entry from March 1837: "Neither Schleiermacher nor Schelling nor now the younger Fichte go beyond interaction (and speculatively hardly anyone can do this). The one single object of intuition and as such the one truth is the infinite unity moving through infinite multiplicity - the simultaneous infinite becoming and infinite completeness. Infinite multiplicity as such would be pure abstraction and, likewise, infinite completeness. They are discernable only in and with one another by a blow in the now of the beginning filling up infinite time and space; in the same way one may consistently explain individuality as an infinite completeness in infinite becoming" (II A 31).

In spite of the brevity and obscurity of the text, it is rather evident that the basic point of view expressed there agrees with the theory of consciousness developed in the fragment of Climacus, where it is claimed that identity is attainable only by the negation of indifference through an act of identification by the self-grounding consciousness. It is also worth noting that SK here strikes a note indicating the logical connection of his thought with the later developed concepts of "the leap" (a blow) and "existence" (individuality).

The rejection of the axiom of identity does not, however, imply a general repudiation of an *a priori* structure, which, in terms of history is its "critical" (Kantian) starting point. SK's attitude towards this question is generally characterized by the fact that he decisively rejects that transference of the categories to the level of ontology, which is the basic implication of Hegel's understanding of the absolute as logical system. Furthermore, from this perspective Kant's "critical" concept of categories also appears to be a source of delusion. The schism between appearing or constituted reality and reality itself which transcendental analysis gave rise to, could rightly be conceived as the *aporia* inspiring the "solution" chosen by the philosophy of identity. An early and rather indirect expression of this evaluation is found in II A 47: "The philosophers give with one hand and take away with the other, so for instance Kant, who certainly taught us something about the approximation of the categories to the genuinely true (*noumena*), but by making it infinite he thereby took it all back". SK hardly means to deny that theoretical knowledge of reality as such is infinite. One of his main objections to Hegel's thinking for example, is precisely the view that knowledge is basically characterized by "approximation". On account of this infinity or inconclusiveness, theoretical knowledge is not capable of solving the ultimate problem of ontology, which in the *Postscript*

is defined as that “misleading reflection which brought reality into connection with thought”, that is, in such a way that the problem’s decisive relationship to “the ethical” is disregarded (10:32).

It is this conviction concerning the practical or volitional presuppositions of the solution to the problem of ontology which is anticipated when SK, in a note from December 1838, seems to deny the importance of the transcendental demonstration of categorical concepts: “so also there is no deductive development of concepts or what one would call that which has some constitutive power - man can only concentrate upon it and to will this, if this will is not empty, unproductive gift, corresponds to this single prayer and like this is effected, so to speak, in us” (II A 301).

It seems advisable to understand this kind of poetic polemics as an expression of SK’s gradually beginning aware of the incompatibility of the idealist idea of system and his personal demand for existential clarification. SK’s position should not be read as a plain rejection of the method of transcendental philosophy as such, that is, as a denial of the existence and validity of “*a priori* basic concepts” (II A 301). For, in addition to the philosophical view that consciousness is essentially practical (implying that the categories can only be constitutive when they, as logical or formal relations, become instruments of a higher form of *a priori* validity, “the *a priori* which lies in the purpose” [II A 303]), there obviously comes into play a religious motive, one which could be defined formally as a theology of creation. Due to a divine “constitution” or creation the logical and linguistic possibilities are something given is, and therefore cannot rightly be defined as products of the spontaneity of the ego. Spontaneity or, in general, human freedom is itself a fact and, accordingly, a “derived” spontaneity: “One can therefore also say that all knowing is like breathing [Danish: Aandedrag, literally the drawing of breath], a *re-spiratio*” (II A 302). This corresponds to the basic scheme of SK’s subsequent anthropology: the vision of man as a unity of freedom and necessity constituting concrete existence as a dialectics of factuality and essential possibilities. In other words, self-knowledge is essentially “appropriation” of the factual situation, consciousness of one’s finitude and “embedded-ness” in history, not “pure self-consciousness” (6:224).

SK’s study on Erdmann’s *Lectures on Faith and Knowledge* [*Vorlesungen über Glauben und Wissen*] provokes on SK’s part reflections and objections, which run parallel to the ones presented above. SK comes to the conclusion that Erdmann’s idealist approach makes him subdue individuality and personality for the benefit of an abstract universality, by “letting the person (the I) disappear completely and in its place substituting a subject-object (reason-thought) which the previous development does not warrant” (II C 44). Man is not identical with universal rationality, “because reason as such lies above and beyond man” (Ibid.). That is not to say that reason is a transcendent “metaphysical” entity but rather that the concept of reason is established through an abstraction from individual and real consciousness.

The context of this philosophical decree signals the very hermeneutical nerve of the subsequent authorship. It is the interpretation of Christianity on the basis of the philosophy of

identity as a symbolic-objective representation of absolute self-consciousness which occasions SK's wider considerations of basic philosophical problems. This interest thus prompts the question concerning the ontological status of categories, to which the distinction between the *a priori* and empirical appearance had given rise. "In general the plunging chasm between abstract deduction and historical actuality is this: even though it can be shown that the necessity of thought lays down a certain element of thought, it still has not at all shown its historical actuality - cur deus homo?" (Ibid.). Or as it is said in the comments on lecture No. 21: "If all experience generally has a stimulating effect, a position generally maintained with good justification, then Christian experience has a fructifying effect, and here a border conflict takes place, because the question then arises, to what extent can I subsume Christianity, like every other fact, under my *a priori* judgment" (II C 46).

The excerpts SK makes from Erdmann's book further show that SK is quite aware of the fact that the theory of the constitutive power of consciousness, which was introduced by Kant and completed by Fichte, implies that consciousness is basically practical (cf. II C 49). The fact that this does not occasion even a partial approval on SK's part but, quite on the contrary, provokes critical questions, is due to the peculiarity of his approach (here also promoted by Erdmann's reduction of the positions of Kant and Fichte to preliminary "standpoints" within the history of idealism) insofar as he primarily sees this idea of consciousness as a central premise for the *a priori* reconstruction of reality accomplished in the ontological logic of Hegel. This is evident from the particular objection made by SK here: "From where do K. and F. receive an object without this consideration of the object holding up the whole activity (and does there not apply to this consideration of the object what Kant once and for all claimed to be the case with all objects)? But insofar as infinite approximation through action precisely is the truth, this consideration attains the truth through an untruth" (II C 49, cf. IV C 11).

This remark is hardly an expression of careful considerations, based as it is on a secondary and summary exposition. However, it bears witness to the "critical point" of SK's encounter with idealist philosophy. This circles undoubtedly around "the problem of categories", viz. the relationship between consciousness as an *a priori* logical system and as an historical, or more precisely, as a personal and ethical reality.

B. Being, Essence and Actuality

In his thinking SK has taken an enlightened position with regard to the problem of categories. The clarification on his part occurs, however, on such a general level that he does not present it through more explicit and exhaustive argumentation. The lack of more explicit discussion of basic philosophical decisions taken is also a consequence of the fact that most of his philosophical reflections in the published writings find expression in the form of epic exposition and didactic polemics. In this respect, we therefore have to rely mainly on rather casual epigrams found in the papers, and, also, the excursions and implicit viewpoints found in the writings, and especially in the *Postscript*.

The crucial point of SK's rejection of the philosophy of identity and, consequently, the decisive expression of his view with regard to the ontological status of consciousness is his firm conviction that the concept of "being" is not a "category". "Is being, then, a category? It is by no means what quality is, namely, determinate being, determinate in itself; the accent lies on determinate, not on being. Being is neither presupposed nor predicated. In this sense Hegel is right - being is nothing; if, on the other hand, it were a quality, then one could wish enlightenment on how it becomes identical with nothing. The whole doctrine of being is a fatuous prelude to the doctrine of quality" (IV C 66). A remark in the margin elucidates the point of the note: "If being were really a quality, then I must also be able to determinate it quantitatively [...] But to determine being quantitatively is meaningless; for either it is or is not, more or less here is that type of nonsense which would abrogate quality itself" (IV C 67).

The purely logical point of this reasoning is that the definition of being as "category", that is, as "quality", would abrogate the distinction between quality and quantity. This would mean that "quantity is a determination indifferent to quality" (Ibid.), and that logic would be destroyed from the inside by a basic contradiction. It would have to imply that, by applying the copula "is" to a quality or determination of content, one changed the subject of the predication and thus rendered oneself guilty of self-contradiction.

This classical Kantian assertion is (cf. X 2 A 328) repeated in a footnote in *Philosophical Fragments*, a footnote in which SK comments on the central thesis of conceptual realism, *essentia involvit existentiam*. And the critical view is here again that being, as a consequence of such a presupposition, is actually determined quantitatively in the sense that "the more perfect a thing is, the more it is; but its perfection consists in having more *esse* in itself; that is to say, the more a thing is, the more it is" (6:42). This last passage provides a variation on the assertion that to conceive of being as quality leads to self-contradiction. Tautology is the positive equivalent of self-contradiction. No real predication occurs, it only seems to do so. According to Climacus, the being of this ontology is not "factual being" but "ideal being": "But the moment I speak of being in the ideal sense I no longer speak of being, but of essence" (Ibid.).

Within the system of categories, then, the term "ideal being" is, strictly speaking, a *contradictio in adjecto*. When "being" here and elsewhere is used with reference to "ideal", that is, to linguistic and logical conditions (cf. 10:32 and II A 305), the general intention appears to be simultaneously to maintain their status as conditions of any appropriation of reality and to affirm the essential ontological limitation which is due to their status as pure possibilities. That being which could be ascribed to Climacus' "thought-reality" in the *Postscript* is, in the last resort, identical with logical necessity. "Highest ideality implies necessity and therefore it is" (6:42). In the words of Haufniensis: "In logic, no movement must *come about*, for logic is, and whatever is logical only *is*" (6:112, cf. IV C 23).

The "eternity" of linguistic-logical possibilities, should not, however, be conceived of as a metaphysical postulate, anchoring linguistic-rational competence in "transcendent" reality. This kind of ontology, identifying rational activity of finite man with the self-knowledge of

the Absolute, is precisely what SK decisively opposes in his polemics against Hegel. The thesis that logic excludes that movement which is fundamental to historical existence (cf. 9:94) should primarily be interpreted as an expression of transcendental analysis. Here SK is in effect asserting a basic principle within his rudimentary theory of predicative or theoretical consciousness. As has been pointed out, the fundamental point of view here is that language and the logical structures thus implied are only a necessary element in this process of appropriation. If logic “has thought actuality, it has included something that it cannot assimilate, it has appropriated at the beginning what it should only presuppose (*praedisponere*)” (6:109, cf. 9:94). It follows from this that to the logical dimension here should be ascribed, (in and through consciousness) an ongoing validity that is not applicable to the linguistically constituted experience as a whole. This is so insofar as any such experience is essentially contingent, determined, to use SK’s metaphors, by movement and unrest.

It does not, however, from this follow that the principles of logic, and even less the concepts bringing logical possibilities to concretization, therefore should be constant or “eternal” in any ontological sense. What could be maintained on the basis of transcendental analysis is that the continuity within this field of possibilities is bound to vary according to the positioning of principles and concepts on a line stretching from the concrete symbol to the relations of formal logic. Insofar as there is ascribed to these a status beyond historical contingency, the metaphysical question of their relationship to absolute reality remains open. The nominalism of transcendental (Kantian) philosophy leaves room for universal validity without ontological participation. In accordance with this separation of logic from being, SK tends to place universals of knowledge on a level with human existential possibilities, which for SK are “created” possibilities. In that case these universal possibilities are subject to historical alteration in the sense that they are “actualized” through historical experience.

In this matter we can trace a “categorical” change in SK as compared with his teachers in philosophy, even if the change is not asserted in programmatic terms. Both Sibbern and Møller insist on the basic principle that there exists a non-historical system of *a priori* relationships, which is “reflected” partly in objective nature and partly in consciousness and language. The contingent dimension of existence is confined within these borders in such a way that the latter are not affected by historical experience.³²¹ The question of the range of this contingency may be defined as a basic starting-point for the reflections leading to the standpoint of SK’s existential philosophy, namely, the idea of finite subjectivity.

When Climacus poses the question of “in what sense the categories constitute an abridgement of existence, whether logical thought is abstracted from existence or abstract without any relation to existence” (9:95), he unfortunately does not answer this question explicitly. This lack of an explicit answer reflects the ambiguity in the *a priori* being embraced by or immanent within the *a posteriori*. Due to this latter principle, one has to say that the alternatives are not exclusive, but complementary. The first alternative gives expression to the fact that the advancement of any rules of logic is possible only through an

analysis of concrete experience. Logic is constituted by the separation of the formal aspects of experience, that is, the linguistic structures, which direct this experiential process. The second alternative expresses the possibility of constructing a logical system in which the categories are not “infected” by the content of experience. Although the logical rules are deduced from factual language, one may, due to the systematic character of the deduction, ascribe to it an independence or self-sufficiency, which might justify the definition “abstract without any relation to existence”. On the other hand, logic, unlike mathematics, has no validity in and of itself; its validity or truth is dependent on its function in factual language and experience. Insofar then, as the truth of logic can only be determined in relation to existence, its truth “without any relation to existence” is merely “hypothetical” (cf. *ibid.*). Thus logic does not represent a privileged access to the structures of reality, as maintained by the philosophy of identity.

It is precisely this hypothetical function of logic in consciousness’ synthesis of language and (awareness o) reality, which necessitates an understanding of logic in terms of abstraction. This is so because it is this hypothetical function of logic that constitutes the possibility of experience as such. Logic should in principle then contain no reminiscence of the content of that experience from which it is derived. Such an idea of pure logic is also evident in Climacus’ approval of Trendelenburg’s main objection to Hegel’s idea of logic: “Hegel in his logic nevertheless constantly permits a conception to play a part that is only too well informed about the concrete and that which is next” (10:9).

Taken into consideration the quoted passage concerning the genesis of categories or logical system in Hegel’s thought, one could, although the passage as such expresses no unequivocal view, summarize SK’s criticism of Hegel’s idea of logic by saying that Hegel confuses “method” and “result”. Hegel makes no clear distinction between the fact that logical concepts are established through abstraction from concrete experience and their status as structural components within experience. The fact that they are accessible and effective only within experience does not imply that experience is completely determined by or confined within the boundaries of abstract logic. After all, the subject of experience is not purely logical; it is equally finite and historical. The dynamic characteristic of predicative consciousness does not stem from its logical element, but from that activity which is a necessary result of the subject of experience’s finitude. This could be defined as a basic ontological presupposition of SK’s polemics against Hegel’s “confusion” of movement and logic.

My interpretation of the thesis of the immutability of logical necessity, defining it in the manner of transcendental analysis as the indisputability of logical categories within predication, helps draw attention to the philosophical relevance of SK’s theory of consciousness. It stands decisively in opposition to the “metaphysical” interpretation by Søren Holm, in which he ascribes to SK a kind of Platonic realism, namely the view that the categories possess “divine eternity”. Holm states that for SK God is eternal, just like logical truths, and, therefore, God in this perspective is, like logic, incommensurately or non-

dialectically related to movement, coming into being and genesis”.³²² SK is, again according to Holm, not only a “naive nominalist”, but, at the same time, also a “reactionary” Platonist insofar as he does not accept that “the ideas are located in the sphere of becoming”, and insists that they belong to the “sphere of eternity, where no change is possible”.³²³ This, however, is an ontological dualism, which agrees perfectly with that Greek concept of eternity that Haufniensis accounts for in his observation that “the concept of temporality was lacking, and this again was due to the lack of the concept of spirit” (6:176).³²⁴

It is also incorrect to say that logic has an “incommensurable” relationship to empirical reality in SK. This is to ascribe to SK a pure nonsensicality in regard to logic, as even the basic structure of language can only take on meaning within such a relationship. Logic provides the linguistic possibilities of any predication. A more correct definition of this relationship would be to say that logical necessity pertains to language as system, and is not to be attributed to the object of the predication. This categorical distinction between language and predication is what Climacus has in mind when he asserts that the necessity of logic “does not involve it dialectically in the determinations of factual being” (6:42). P.L. Holmer states this point simply but very elegantly when he claims that SK “denies that the relation between discourse and the world discoursed about is itself a logical relation”.³²⁵

On the other hand, Holmer may be said to put forward a rather misleading interpretation of the distinction when characterizing SK unequivocally as “a formalist in logic”, that is, as one holding the view that logical categories are “empty of content and by themselves without existential and metaphysical significance”, divorced from what Holmer calls “intentional acts”.³²⁶ In such an exclusivist formulation, SK’s affinity to transcendental philosophy, that is, to the idea of the constitutional meaning of categories, is lost. Holmer himself expresses this point in a rather rudimentary fashion when he defines logic as “a tool” with “a prescriptive character”,³²⁷ or as “the meaning-structure of knowledge”.³²⁸ Knowledge as such is intentional; when one knows, one intends to say something *about* reality. And insofar as logical relations condition and structure this activity of description, they thereby also structure the very appropriation of reality. What SK rejects is not the constitutional function of logic, but the identity between logic and reality.

We can understand the philosophical importance of SK’s reluctance to accept being as a category, as part of the system of logic only when recognizing that for SK logical relations actually possess such constitutional power. It is only on this assumption then, that the consequence of defining being as a category becomes unacceptable. This amounts to a radical turn within transcendental philosophy. The role of consciousness or the subject is not merely that of “organizing” reality but also that of bringing it into being. This kind of “ontological” or constitutional functioning is not detectable within an analysis of the *a priori* forms of consciousness, because consciousness presupposes the division of subject and object and, consequently, that the object as being transcends consciousness. In order to view the realm of cognitive objects as products in the ontological sense of logical activity, consciousness has to negate itself by turning to the absolute as the hidden ground or identity of subject and object.

This kind of negation characterizes the Hegelian principle of system: “Logic is thereby defined as the science of pure thought, having as its principle pure knowledge, that unity that is not abstract but concrete and living, which means that I am aware of the provisional character of consciousness’ opposition of a Being which is subjectively for itself and of a second such Being, which is objective, and thus aware of Being as pure notion in itself and pure notion as true Being”. In other words: “thus this objectifying action, freed from the antithesis of consciousness, is more precisely the only action which is possible for thinking as such to take. But this action ought no longer to be called consciousness; consciousness includes within itself the antithesis of the ego and its object, an antithesis that is not present in that original action”.³²⁹

This means that being becomes a category with constitutional power due to the fact that absolute reality is conceived of as a hierarchy of logical relations. One may thus maintain that SK’s ultimate reason for denying that being belongs to the sphere of logic is his conviction that the self-negation of consciousness is not possible. It could then be said that SK represents a philosophy of immanence, a philosophy understanding finite and historical consciousness to be confined within which rationality and philosophical reflection operate. Consciousness can reflect on and become conscious of its logical and linguistic presuppositions. These, however, are essentially immanent in consciousness as conditions of the possibility of the appropriation of reality and not, as Hegel would like to claim, ultimate reality itself. This is what the Climacus-fragment alludes to when “reflection” is defined as the mere “possibility of the relation” (IV B 1, p. 148).

Logical possibilities are presuppositions which consciousness has only to accept. They are not created by consciousness; rather they make possible the autonomy of consciousness. In the same manner, being is presupposed; its existence precedes consciousness. Consciousness itself is constituted within the conflict or “inter-esse” between these two extremities or presuppositions, that is, between the factuality of the object of consciousness and the logical structures making possible an understanding of this object.

As already mentioned, the relationship is asymmetrical in the sense that the predication transforms objectively existing reality into a subjective presupposition. The ontological primacy, which thereby pertains to consciousness does not, however, abolish factuality but, on the contrary, bring about the presence of the “external” object within consciousness. This happens as the very possibility of predication arises, *i.e.*, the coupling of subject and object in an existential statement.

The fact that being or factuality primarily means immediate presence within consciousness and is thus not a category, a concept of being “applied” to the object, should not, however, be formulated in the way Schäfer does when maintaining that SK “posits [...] his Being precisely not as *esse*, but as a science of existence that demonstrates ‘*inter-esse*’”.³³⁰ This appears to be a somewhat absurd reduction of SK’s view in that the concept of “existence” as “inter-esse” necessarily presupposes being as general factuality. Objective existence is the ultimate condition of “existence” in the “hermeneutical” sense, namely, the immediate awareness of

individual and personal existence. Consequently, it is not quite correct to say that “One can speak of the Being of that which exists - of the fact that existent things are always reality in each case as these specific individual things - only if one keeps to the fact that he exists and that he intends to make others attentive to the existence each of them has as his own”.³³¹ Consciousness as such immediately grasps being in general. It does this, independent of that level of self-reflection, which is oriented toward the awareness of man’s ontological and ethical situation.

If one then holds that SK’s concept of being contradicts that which is perhaps the most crucial premise in Hegel’s idea of a philosophical system, it seems evident that one would also hold the view that such a concept must occupy a central position in SK’s philosophy of existence. From an historical point of view this is due to the fact that existential philosophy emerges from the philosophy of identity. In terms of hermeneutics, it constitutes an internal transformation of the idealist concept of spirit. This is evident from the fact that the question of being, in this categorical sense, is raised within discussions of problems, which, according to SK, are created by the idealist tradition. This proves to be the case particularly in regard to *Philosophical Fragments* and the *Postscript*.

In the first instance, the issue in question is that of a radical revision of the Hegelian-idealist idea of history, a revision carried out on the basis of a consideration of the decisive role of history in the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. The critical point SK makes is that history, as a unity of being and essence and as constituted by consciousness’ contingent-practical synthesis of language and factuality, cannot be conceived as movement due to logical necessity. This impossibility is reflected in the very process of knowledge itself. Historical factuality is only accessible through “immediate sensation” which appropriates “the presence of the historical” (6:74). “One who is not contemporary with the historical has, instead of the immediacy of sense and cognition (which, however, is not able to apprehend the historical) the testimony of contemporaries, to which he stands related in the same manner as the contemporaries stand related to the immediacy” (6:77).

This view is expressed in more general terms by Climacus in the chapter about paradox when he asserts: “Thus I always reason from existence, not toward existence, whether I move in the sphere of palpable sensible fact or in the realm of thought” (6:40. Cf. also II C 37, IV B 1, p. 150, V B 5:3 and 10:23).

These remarks, which as isolated points of view might be seen as rather trivial, take on a deeper meaning when viewed in light of the then ongoing attack on the Hegelian concept of being. According to SK, this concept implies that factuality is the product of a logical process. Thus the derivation of existence from logical possibility is conceivable, due to the ontological primacy ascribed to necessity as “the unity of possibility and actuality” (6:68, cf. IV C 62).

Regarding this formula, it should be underscored that SK does not maintain that actuality is beyond or inaccessible to logic, since actuality is indeed constituted by language. What

transcends language, however, is actuality's factual aspect, which is itself as original as language, being its necessary and independent correlate.

The anthropological meaning of the concept of being for SK is especially evident in the *Postscript*, where he elaborates extensively on the central concept of being. The basic connection between these two ontological aspects, namely between ontological being and concept of being, may be expressed in the following way: the concept of existence is the ontological explication of the theory of consciousness. It expresses the ontological situation, which is constituted by the fact that human existence is basically determined by consciousness. This means that one's manner of existence, irrespective of its existential content, necessarily displays a character of (self)-understanding. "Existence" in the specific sense of SK's existential philosophy means the essential finitude of (self)-understanding. On account of the structure of consciousness, man's mode of existence is established within the relationship of two dimensions of reality, which cannot be transformed into an absolute unity. The concept of existence simply expresses man's ontological heterogeneity, that is, that duality of being and essence, of logical-linguistic possibility and factuality, which belongs to consciousness.

SK's analysis of consciousness aims at and represents factuality as a presupposition accessible only through immediate presence. The factual aspect or the givenness of the object demonstrates to consciousness itself its dependence on an autonomous realm, which cannot be fully absorbed by symbolic representation or interpretation. If one move a step further and, on the basis of this conviction, endeavors to grasp the total situation of the subject, it becomes evident that the access to the givenness of the object is conditioned by the factuality of the subject. The fact that the subject exists is the condition, which makes possible an experience of factuality in general. In the drafts of the *Postscript* Climacus also make this point, whose truth seems so trivial at first, but which nonetheless is basic to his attack on Hegel's absorption of being into logic: "If I did not exist, my thought would never add existence; on the contrary, it subtracts from it" (VI B 54:10). Thus the factuality of the subject has an ontological priority over the factuality claimed in predication, and this insofar as the latter rests on the activity of the subject. This "resting" is not, however, to be understood in the sense that language, as logical identification and coordination, guarantees factuality, for only immediate sensual presence can accomplish that. Still, this presence can become part of rational activity only through its appropriation in language. "Objective" factuality is constituted by and within a linguistic appropriation of reality, a process much in the same manner as in Kant's "objectivity".

With regard to the subject, however, to quote some rather extreme and polemical definitions, it could with Climacus be said that "my actuality *allem meinem Denken zuvorkommt*, so I do not get hold of my actuality by thinking and only by thinking" (VI B 54:14), that "the only reality to which an existing individual may have a relation that is more than cognitive is his own reality, the fact that he exists [...] to every other reality he stands in

a cognitive relationship” (10:22). This means, more precisely, “with respect to every reality external to myself I can grasp it only through thinking it” (10:26).

To the extent that these assertions are related to the problem of the ontological status of consciousness, they may be characterized as one-sided, and, thus, to a certain extent misleading. This one-sidedness is obviously due to the fact that in the *Postscript Climacus* is focusing exclusively on ethical subjectivity, which is then defined as the necessary basis of personal or authentic existence. It is defined as this basis in view of the diagnosis that reflective-predicative consciousness is impotent when faced with the problem of the unity of existence. In such a wide perspective, the fact that even this form of consciousness or existence entails an appropriation of reality is pushed into the background as one emphasizes that the reality appearing within this mode of appropriation, appears to ethical subjectivity as “a conceived reality, a possibility” (10:26), that is, as a possibility in relation to ethical action. On that account “objective” reality is narrowed down to that aspect which is compatible with this “reduplication”, for example, when the moral person is considered a “model”.

This concentration, however, seems to be a consequence of the theory of consciousness’ principle of factuality. And the didactical-polemical theses of Climacus, as for instance the rather simplifying assertion that “the ethical reality of the individual is the only reality” (10:31), may indirectly shed some light on this problem. The latter thesis here cited could also be formulated in the following way: the reality of the individual is the only ethical reality. This meaning of the idea of the ethical, which is elaborated with great concreteness by Judge Vilhelm in *Either/Or*, is evident also in Climacus, when, for example, he says “the sole ethical interest of the individual is interest in one’s own reality” (10:29) or, again, in the following passage: “Ethically the ideality is the real within the individual himself. The real is an inwardness that is infinitely interested in existing, which the ethical individual is in his relation to himself” (10:30).

The basic solution to this ontological problem of existence through self-identification by an act of will occurs within that existential situation which has been created - due to structural necessity - by reflective consciousness. This means that the ethical position is established through a negation or transformation of the aesthetic position. This implies furthermore a definite view of the ontological status of aesthetic consciousness. The fact that the “norm” of ethical consciousness is the individual as a historical and factual entity and not something within the sphere of logic as, for instance, a rule for passing universal judgments in the Kantian sense, is the expression *par excellence* of that construction of reality which stems from the basic activity of consciousness within the duality of “essence” and “being”, language and factuality. The fact that this activity is, ontologically speaking, to be defined as a transition or “leap” means, put simply, that factuality enlarges its domain. This occurs to the extent that factuality is apprehended through linguistic possibilities and identified with a definite possible meaning, that is, through the negation of mere possibility. Factuality becomes the comprehensive determination of consciousness or that existence which is constituted by consciousness.

One could characterize the structure of SK's thinking by saying that it goes in a direction quite the opposite of Hegel, which, in view of the principle that the particular appears in virtue of the universal, is apt to define "the totality of sense perception itself as its essence".³³² SK, however, maintains that the non-logical basis of predication turns the total act of knowledge into an historical-contingent situation. The content of consciousness is thus not derivable, in the last resort, from logical-categorical possibilities but is given through the actualization of these possibilities within the context of a concrete, individual life.

Insofar as these *a priori* possibilities play, and indeed need to play, a role, it is evident that this content is not to be conceived as a pure fact for, as Climacus especially notices, "contingency is precisely the one factor in all becoming" (9:84). The same problem is treated rather extensively in a journal entry from 1840 in which the impact of the conceptual system of idealism is quite conspicuous: "The Hegelians distinguish between existence and reality: the external phenomenon exists, but only insofar as it is taken up into the idea is it real. This is quite correct, but the Hegelians do not define the boundary, to what extent each phenomenon can become real in this way. The reason for this is that they see the phenomenon from the bird's eye perspective of the metaphysical and do not likewise see the metaphysical in the phenomenon from the perspective of the phenomenon. The historical is, namely, the unity of the metaphysical and the accidental. It is the metaphysical insofar as this is the eternal bond of existence without which the phenomenological would disintegrate; it is the accidental insofar as there is the possibility that every event could take place in infinitely many other ways" (III A 1).

The widened meaning of factuality, which has been introduced by means of applying it to consciousness or cognitive subjectivity in its totality, could, in more current philosophical terms, be defined as the notion of the basically historical character of consciousness (Cf. V A 74). This concept could be said to summarize the many fragmentary and sprawling contributions to the critique of an *a priori* reconstruction of reality. On the level of logic and categories the metaphysical possibilities constitute a sphere of potentiality within the finite subject. This implies that ontological analysis cannot be accomplished solely by a transcendental analysis explicating the *a priori* content of predicative experience. What according to SK is neglected in this amalgamation of ontology and epistemology is the fact that transcendental reflection is from the outset necessarily dependent on the contingently accumulated content of consciousness, that is, on the fact that one sees "the metaphysical in the phenomenon from the perspective of the phenomenon". SK expresses this point rather conspicuously in III A 11: "If it were the case that philosophers are presuppositionless, an account would still have to be made of language and its entire importance and relation to speculation, for here speculation does indeed have a medium which it has not provided itself".

From a purely formal point of view, it could be maintained that SK's thinking in this early period is not basically different from that type of *a priori* philosophy that also his main teachers, Sibbern and Møller, represent. Both emphasize the necessity of approaching the *a*

priori structure through the phenomenon. SK's difference from Hegel and the philosophy of identity is at this stage still rather obscure or underdeveloped.

The logical-categorical dimension is, within SK's anthropological perspective, an aspect of that infinitude which constitutes the possibility of the relation of the self to itself (Cf. 15: 87ff.). On the one hand, infinitude makes it possible to transcend biological and historical factuality. On the other hand, however, this logic of relationship, namely that finitude is the presupposition of transcendence, qualifies infinitude ontologically as finite or relative. Climacus expresses this dialectic by means of the concept of a "process of becoming": "No, but however much the subject has the infinite within itself, through being an existing individual, he is in the process of becoming" (9:80). The immediate pretension of the subject as infinite is to reach an identity between understanding and reality, but "as soon as the being which corresponds to the truth comes to be empirically concrete, the truth is put in the process of becoming" (9:158). From a metaphysical point of view, the basic difficulty is that "of thinking the eternal in the process of becoming. This difficulty is unavoidable, since the thinker himself is in the process of becoming" (10:15).

Climacus' and, on the whole, SK's considerations regarding the problem of categories - a problem which undoubtedly is essential to this philosophical approach - do not go any further than this general marking off from speculation. The reason for this lack of interest in the traditional problem of transcendental philosophy is rather evident: Climacus' (and SK's) priority is "the problem of reality". That this is bound to mean an investigation into the conditions and structure of personal or individual existence is, in general, a consequence of Climacus' view regarding the ontological status of categories and the corresponding categorical analysis. The fact that the categories are tied up with finite-existing subjectivity renders impossible the reconstruction of a universal consciousness, that is, an eternal *a priori* structure which would anticipate any empirical-individual consciousness and thus pave the way of individual self-transparency (cf. 3:152, 8:271 and 15:74). The basic ontological insight drawn from such rejection of identifying logic and reality is that the unity of consciousness and reality is only possible or adequate when consciousness itself expresses its finitude by actualizing such an *a priori* bringing together of logic and "reality" with the facticity of individuality. Haufniensis expresses such an ontology of consciousness in a way which conspicuously draws on the key concepts of SK's existential philosophy when he points out that: "This self-consciousness is not contemplation, for he who believes this has not understood himself, because he sees that simultaneously he himself is in the process of becoming and consequently cannot be something completed for contemplation. This self-consciousness, therefore, is action, and this action is in turn inwardness, and whenever inwardness does not correspond to this consciousness, there is a form of the demonic as soon as the absence of inwardness expresses itself as anxiety about its acquisition" (6:224).

The general philosophical consequence of this break with an idealism of reason is pregnantly expressed in the formal-ontological thesis that "actuality is the unity of possibility and necessity" (15:94). Anti-Climacus puts this formula forward as a basic revision of what

he conceives to be the logic of the concept of actuality in idealism or, more specifically, Hegel, namely “that necessity is a unity of possibility and actuality” (15:93).

This precise formulation, however, is not found in Hegel. The assertion which may be said to be closest to it is the following from *Wissenschaft der Logik*: “The absolute necessity is thus the truth from which reality and possibility as a whole [...] are derived”.³³³

In light of what has been said, one could lay out the logic involved in the transformation proposed by SK as the reduction of logical necessity or the level of categories, which to Hegel is the ground of being, to one aspect or element in the synthesis to be achieved. Necessity has a twofold meaning; it is simultaneously inherent, as factual necessity, in the contingent historical situation and is the basis of that infinity or self-transcendence which makes synthesis or (ethical-volitional) self-determination possible. The latter kind of necessity could be called logical necessity insofar as here language is essential. Furthermore, language itself contains both kinds of basic condition or necessity, the historical and logical necessity. This duality or dialectic is very eloquently expressed in a journal-entry from 1840: “So also language is partly an original given and partly something freely developing” (III A 11).

SK’s view of categories as determining the relationship between the *a priori* and *a posteriori* factors of theoretical consciousness expresses his crucial rejection of the notion of an *a priori* reconstruction of reality. But that is not all; he thereby also indirectly ascribes a new and expanded meaning to the idea of “category”. The categorical or *a priori* element of existence consists, first of all, in man’s existential possibilities, in the different modes of structuring existence. Seen in this context, predicative-reflective consciousness is merely a “moment” or stage. It constitutes a partial appropriation of reality, which can both be converted into a fixed attitude towards life and lead beyond this aesthetic position, thus making man aware that it is a partial and preliminary possibility.

From a formal point of view, such an understanding of the categories as modes of existence agrees with Hegel’s ontological approach. As has been pointed out, the fundamental difference is that the basic possibilities of existence transcend the sphere of the necessary relations of logic. Both philosophers are in the general sense of the word, dedicated to transcendental reasoning, and this insofar as their common problem is the “conditions” of existential unity.

The fact that SK’s existential analysis is projected along the lines of and worked out according to this transcendental method is evident first of all from its content. In addition to the concept of stages, this fact is also indicated by his use of the term “category” in this context. Examples demonstrating the meaning of the term in relation to modes of existence are: “the category of the interesting” (2:15, 5:75), “the category of recollection” and “the category of repetition” (5:131), faith as “a new category” (5:56), “the leap” as “the category of decision” (9:85), “the category of the religious” (9:57), “the ethical category to choose oneself” (9:224, cf. 3:198), “the category of sin” (15:168) etc. In terms of systematic language or terminology, SK’s use of the term appears a bit capricious; in terms of meaning

his tendency is undoubtedly to want to designate or determine axiomatic elements in the flux of contingent life.

On the other hand, it is obvious that this anthropological or existential modification of the idealist foundational principle, that is, the establishment of ontological unity in virtue of *a priori* ideas, represents a new approach to the problem as compared with the original starting point of transcendental reasoning rooted in a theory of knowledge. This implies that concepts like “category” and “transcendental reasoning” can be applied to this project only indirectly or in a hermeneutical sense. In the strict meaning of transcendental philosophy, a category is a logical relation, which makes possible a certain understanding. It is hidden behind the expressible understanding and is not itself the object of understanding. A category becomes such an object only when understanding reflects upon itself and attains an awareness of its own presuppositions. The decisive point is, however, that such self-reflection is neither a condition of the function of the category nor an alteration of the original understanding; such self-reflection merely confirms the category’s validity, the critical aim of this process is restricted, in essence, to that of determining the limits of understanding and the distinctions among different forms of understanding.

Because the general philosophical approaches of Kant and SK are so different, namely, that in contrast with Kant one cannot really ascribe to SK a clearly resolved position with regard to the *a priori* synthetic presuppositions of theoretical knowledge, it is not possible to “conclude”, as Schäfer maintains, that SK considers the Kantian concept of the transcendental apperception as a “mistake” which really is “refuted” or, in the last resort, as identical with “the spontaneity of one’s relationship to oneself”.³³⁴ SK considers this concept “mistaken” only in the indirect sense that for SK Kant’s criticism of knowledge constitutes the basis for a practical metaphysics which leads to the treating of the problem of reality within a “quasi-theoretical” perspective, which Climacus defines as “Kant’s misleading reflection which brought reality into connection with thought” (10:32), and this to the neglect of reality’s more basic relationship with the ethical.

Now we are in a position to identify the decisive difference between the “categories” of existential philosophy, defining the structure of human self-determination, and those of transcendental philosophy. Contrary to the purely analytical project of a transcendental philosophy taken in a Kantian sense, existential analysis primarily establishes possibilities or conditions which are not as such active in immediate understanding. Rather it does this in order to attain a new understanding, which negates or transcends that immediate understanding. Putting it simply, one could say that the merely potential categories are ethical-religious possibilities, while immediate understanding is that which emerges from the biologically founded operation of aesthetic possibilities. Criticism in existential philosophy thus means confronting the factual with the potential.

The new understanding attained is not, however, a detached view of life seen as an alternative to immediate understanding. Its potential status is not merely logical but ontological. This means that, on the level of categories, its identification has to be based on a

critical exploration of the understanding it transcends. Thus, in its very constitution it is dependent on the aesthetic way of life. Such basic existential possibility or such an ontologically founded form of self-understanding is clarified by the method of descriptive analysis. It is the aspect of “existential dialectic” in this method which makes it appropriate to define it (such a method) as existential analysis and, further, which continues to assure an affinity on the part of the method with that of transcendental philosophy, namely, a reduction of concrete experience to its *a priori* structures.

Such an approach to the problematic of the existential conditions is of course most clearly displayed in the analysis of man’s aesthetic dimension, that is, in the analysis of the general form of the constitution of reality. This analysis is found first and foremost in *The Sickness unto Death* (first chapter) and in *The Concept of Anxiety* and more indirectly in the first part of *Either/Or*. The general aim of these texts is to show how basic ethical-religious possibilities are consequences of man’s fundamental ontological situation. SK endeavors to demonstrate that these are possibilities of understanding, which can, when realized, remove the inconsistency of the form of existence constituted on the basis of general consciousness, *i.e.*, the basic linguistic-rational competence.

But it then follows that the analysis will assume an imperative or maieutic character. The analysis or cognitive process of self-awareness is both a necessary condition for recognizing the imperative within factual existence for the philosopher and essential for the existential reception of that imperative. In other words, the constitutional explication of man’s aesthetic position or self-understanding in terms of “categories” is arranged in such a way that its structure, and thereby its built-in possibility of self-transcendence, is made evident. While transcendental philosophy subordinates possibility to actuality as the “justification” of actuality, existential philosophy emphasizes the primacy of possibility, seen as what reveals the illegitimate status of actuality. What it demonstrates as illegitimate, however, is “aesthetic immediacy” (cf. 3:172) or the self-sufficiency of aesthetic life and not its relative validity, which it, quite to the contrary, confirms.

Reference by way of analogy to the Kantian idea of the primacy of practical reason serves to emphasize the difference in question here insofar as what is attained through the transcendence of theoretical understanding is not a basis for metaphysical assertions but an existential integration, that is, the subordination of aesthetical interest to ethical ideas.

I will summarize my analysis by stating the following about the existential categories: They are (1) those elements of man’s fundamental ontological situation that can be part of the existential didactic which refers the individual to what is beyond mental and cultural facticity, thus making man aware of his or her existence as an ethical-personal task; (2) the more specific forms and conditions, negative and positive, pertaining to this ethical self-realization. However the decisive point is that these conditions either defined as *a priori* conditions (structural possibilities) or as *a posteriori* conditions (for instance Christ as “the God in time”), have somehow to come within the horizon of the individual’s self-awareness. By means of self-understanding the “existing” subjectivity relates itself to the conditions of

existence, and this with varying degrees of freedom depending on the ontological and existential status of the conditions themselves. The fundamental conditions, following from the original aesthetic position, cannot be transformed into pure possibility. From such a structural basis there does emerge, however, existential possibilities, such as, for instance, the concrete forms of “finitude’s/infinitude’s despair”. For that reason the description of the states of existence has a maieutic impact and is apt to alter self-understanding, as is the case, for example, with the “break with immediacy” (15:111). Even at this level what occurs is that the *a priori* structure is transformed into an *a posteriori* or existential reality. Structure makes experience or understanding possible insofar as its purely “transcendental” function is broken through and it becomes itself the object of understanding within the development of self-reflection, thereby altering original or immediate understanding. From the point of view of history of philosophy, one could say that the Kantian distinction between experience and transcendental knowledge is modified in accordance with the basic tendency of post-Kantian idealism, that is, the systematic application of the idea of philosophical reflection as basically self-experience.

In view of SK’s general dependence on the idealist approach it is easy to understand that existential analysis focuses on self-consciousness, which, in terms of structure, refers to what Anti-Climacus defines as “the graduations in the consciousness of the self” (15:133). The general constitution of self-consciousness will therefore be the topic of the following chapter. We will here endeavor to deepen and further elaborate the anthropological views presented in the chapters on “corporeality” and “consciousness” whose essence, with regard to the problem of reality, may be expressed in the following way: The unity of reality and consciousness is only possible through the willed or ethical determination of individual factuality, the latter perceived as belonging to both biology and culture.

Schäfer’s exposition of the question of reality, in the writings of Climacus, as a “hermeneutical ontology” portrays a misleading picture of the connection between consciousness and self-consciousness. The basic reason for this is that Schäfer does not take sufficiently into consideration the genetic dependence of the latter and more advanced form on an intercourse with reality carried out on the basis of general predicative-linguistic competence. Thus it is misleading to say that “the understanding of Being is not determined by the question of the relationship between Being and thinking”, or that “the subjectivity of the subject consists in its being determined by facticity” or again that “facticity establishes the relationship, the essence determines the significance of this relation vis-à-vis one’s own existence which comes into being in this relation”.³³⁵

What has now found expression in these definitions is the comprehensive meaning of the concept of facticity which it is Schäfer’s own aim to emphasize, namely that facticity is not only the correlate of understanding but encloses understanding and object. From this it follows that facticity is not to be identified with “de facto Being” in opposition to “essence” as its interpretation. Facticity constitutes an ontological duality insofar as “pure” facticity, the fact that consciousness implies an awareness of something existing, is constituted first

through the act of interpretation. Awareness of facticity occurs, then, through, but not before and independent of, “the will to make something available to oneself, imaging that one dominates it by understanding it”.³³⁶ For that reason it is misleading to maintain that “essence, however, never discloses *de facto* being”,³³⁷ even though it must be admitted that being is not derivable from essence. Schäfer himself seems to deny such one-sidedness when he asserts that “[i]n the strict sense, 'da' is an existent when one has attempted in persevering dealings with it as a fact, and for the sake of this relation, to elaborate an image of its essence”.³³⁸

Chapter IV

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

A's analysis of the genesis and forms of the sensuous-aesthetic consciousness, with a view to the emancipation of bodiliness in sexuality, and the Climacus fragment's sketch of the structure of consciousness can both be defined, from an anthropological perspective, as a reductionist phenomenological determination of the principal elements in self-consciousness. Climacus imposes a methodic division between two interrelated aspects of consciousness, consciousness as immediately factual movement of life on the one hand and as verbal-reflective identification on the other. As I have shown, the analyses themselves indicate clearly that what is involved here are "logical" abstractions. The formations of "sensuousness" emerge as forms of experience or consciousness, as interactions between libido and perception, and the analysis of consciousness determines consciousness as something that erupts from immediacy, such that its character as factual-finite reality of life is in principle maintained.

An alternative means of tackling the question of the constitution of self-consciousness is to unite these aspects in one perspective, where self-consciousness is thus explicitly presented as a synthesis of the duality of body and soul. In principle, this posing of the problem lies within the perspective of *The Sickness Unto Death*, which provides the widest structural treatment of the problem of the "Self". But it is precisely the formal-ontological breadth here (which is connected with the understanding of every form of existence or consciousness outside faith's unity with Christ as a "crisis", *i.e.*, as the individual's self-dissolution, either through falling away from the original imperative to self-determination, or through impotence vis-à-vis this imperative) that pushes this constitutional problematic into the background. The presupposition that the *telos* of the self is the unity of the ontological heterogeneity is however present. "[T]hus under the qualification of the psychical the relation between the psychical and the physical is a relation. If, however, the relation relates itself to itself, this relation is the positive third, and this is the self". (15:73).

It is primarily Haufniensis who gives an account of the manner in which this double relationship is constituted, and how the last relationship is genetically related to the original, simple "negative relationship" (15:73), through his analysis of one particular piece of mythical-historical material concerning the pubertal phase of human life, viz. Genesis' account of Adam's fall.

The epic presentation of the pubertal crisis we find in the first part of *Either/Or*, in "Shadowgraphs" and "The seducer's journal", fills out the picture and makes it more concrete. Here it is Cordelia's "developmental history" in the latter (2:333), which goes to the greatest depth and thus gives the most valuable illustration with regard to the question of the "synthetic" structure of self-consciousness.

There is, nevertheless, a fundamental difference between the story of Cordelia and the interpretation of the myth of Adam. In the latter case, sexuality, or the ultimate bodily

experience, is established as the condition for the moral character of self-consciousness, since sexuality is actualized through the individual's confrontation with the moral puritanism of the cultural environment; but the description of the account of Cordelia's emancipation, in keeping with A's "aesthetical" horizon, focuses on self-reflection, on the splitting of the individual reality in the conflict between the impulse of nature and intentionality, even if it is the "moral reaction" that plays the role of catalyst here too. But because *reflection*, as the basic organ for the immediate negation of the unity of life, is a necessary element in moral self-identification, the story of Cordelia is a genuine complement to the concept-oriented analysis of the story of Adam in *The Concept of Anxiety*.

This is the case in spite of the somewhat accidental character of the story of Cordelia's psychological starting-point. But here Frater Taciturnus' methodological principle that "one is able to study the normal in the aberration" (8:199) holds good. The lack of psychological representativeness is, however, attached not so much to Cordelia as a psychological case as it is to the context for the psychological mechanisms in her. This is the particular and "artificial" situation that is created through the interaction between two persons, both of whom can be said to be "paradigmatic" in psychological-existential terms, but for two distinct levels in the psychogenetic process. Thus they can be said to have great representational value in constitutional terms.

The story of Cordelia is thus a description of a person's concrete encounter with her own personal-existential potentiality, thanks to an interpersonal relationship, *i.e.*, a relationship to a person who represents the fictional hypostatized expression for this possibility in her own being.

1. Reflective-Aesthetic Self-Consciousness

Cordelia's "developmental history" is the personal process actualized through the manipulative technique of the reflective genius. Its anthropological "logic" is that the genesis and formations of the sensuous genius or of sexuality are "earthed" in a concretely historical figure. This means that they are placed explicitly within the framework of the codetermination of the dimension proper to the soul (consciousness).

Nordentoft formulates this situation correctly when he says: "Cordelia is the embodiment of the Page, Papageno and Don Giovanni, the female pendant to the development which in the Mozart-treaty was seen in three stages". He is mistaken, however, when claiming that Johannes is "an atypical abstraction"³³⁹ because Johannes, as the "model" counterpart to Cordelia, makes concrete in an extreme manner, Cordelia's prototypical possibilities. Only thanks to this greater degree of concretization, Johannes is less prototypical than Cordelia, but he is no "mutation".

Thanks in part to a difference in degree of concretization, *i.e.*, of consciousness and thereby of the contents of consciousness, it is not possible to make a casuistic parallel

between the story of Cordelia and the theory of the sensuous-erotic stages, even if it could in principle be possible were the psycho-genetic dimension the same. But because of the concentration on puberty, this is precisely not the case. On the other hand, one could hold that the breakthrough of sensuousness or of bodily awareness in puberty reproduced the structure in the preceding development, *i.e.*, the triadic-synthetic pattern (cf. 2:81). It seems that A's or Johannes' understanding of the specific psychological *habitus* of the female sex can support this approach in the case of Cordelia: "A young girl does not develop in the sense that a boy does; she does not grow, she is born. [...] She does not awaken gradually, but all at once; on the other hand, she dreams that much longer" (2:307). In this perspective, the female crisis of puberty will have a particular illustrative value in regard to the problematic of sexuality and self-determination.

A. Determination and Emancipation

The fact that the problematic of self-determination is the anthropological paradigm for the story of Cordelia is expressed indirectly when the aesthete sets up the category of "the interesting" as the regulative idea for his manipulative handling of Cordelia's naive consciousness: "Thus the strategic principle, the law for all the movements in this campaign remains to touch her always in an interesting situation. Thus the 'interesting' is the field on which the battle is to be fought, the potential of the 'interesting' is to be explored to the full" (2:320; cf. 2:282, 326, 403 and 3:217). This concept, which was quite commonplace in contemporary aesthetics,³⁴⁰ denotes in general the disputed field between immediacy and reflection in the individual's existence, namely, a situation of confrontation in the personal-existential situation, for example, in such a way that "it preserved the interesting precisely through the contradiction between outward appearance and the inner life" (2:403).

Basically, we may say that "the interesting" denotes the human person's "aesthetic" reality in general to the extent that it is constituted by an "inter-esse" between "existence" and "thinking", the duplicity between the life that is lived and consciousness (language). The confrontational relationship between these two poles characterizes the existence of the human person as ontologically-ontically determined by consciousness. Cordelia is a concrete manifestation of an ultimately critical stage in this dialectic. She makes concrete the mode of what constitutes a transition to a higher level in consciousness, the point where consciousness "reflects" upon itself or on the reality that "has" consciousness. Thus "the interesting" marks the significance of this general situation of conflict for the development from consciousness to self-consciousness.

The primary significance of this concept is the phase of transition itself, the genesis of primitive self-reflection within naivety, with the possibility this gives of self-determination. But "the interesting" can then denote the aesthetic consciousness or the very mode of existence irrespective of concrete substance and level of reflection. In this way, the aesthete in his reflection himself falls under the category. His existence, unlike that of Cordelia, is determined by radical self-reflection; self-reflection is the medium for his form of reality. But

the reflection cannot negate the dialectic between determination by nature and consciousness: it can only make this explicit, present to consciousness. And it is precisely this possibility for “reflective” control of immediacy that the aesthete develops to the maximum. His insight into the interactions between life as it unfolds and reflection determines his specific form of aesthetic existence with its manipulation and cynical exploitation.

Cordelia and Johannes represent two modes, viz. the extreme points of “the interesting”, where self-reflection is the form or basic function of self-consciousness. While Cordelia is interesting in her self, exists objectively in the contradiction between passion and reflection, and moves in the direction of the subjective explication of the dichotomy only thanks to this objective contradiction, Johannes is interesting in and for himself. He is aware of the contradiction in himself between the impulse of nature and intentionality, and he yields to this tension. “How beautiful it is to be in love, how interesting to know that one is in love. See, this is reflection” (2:309). The intensified “interesting” “always involves a reflection on oneself” (2:314). The one who is “subjectively” interesting has, or aims to have, total control over the situation in which his passions are activated. He is not overwhelmed by them, but lets himself be overwhelmed, in that his consciousness grasps the psychological context in which they arise, or (as A expresses it in the introduction to the Journal): “he then enjoyed the situation and himself in the situation” (2:283).

The ideal at which the reflective aesthete aims is the development of self-reflection to a total transparency in relation to the sensuous-receptive substrate of life. Viewed from this angle, *i.e.*, in relation to the anthropological possibility from which he profits, he is a concretized ideal-type of the first form of self-consciousness, the genetic-constitutional basic emancipation from naivety’s “extensive” form of reality. Or, to use Anti-Climacus’ pregnant form of expression: he is the negation of existence “in immediate connection with “the other” (15:107) via “infinite abstraction from every externality” (15:111).

The psychological interplay between Johannes and Cordelia can thus be said to have fundamental anthropological significance because they concretize the “possibility” and the “reality” of reflective self-consciousness. This also indicates that self-consciousness is generated, not only thanks to the immanent possibility, but also through the communicative confrontation of this possibility with reality, *i.e.*, in a social-interpersonal context. It is this anthropological regulative that determines “the interesting” as an ontic-aesthetic regulative, *i.e.*, the revelation and the dialectic between immediacy and reflection as an aesthetic object or ideal.

With basis in the anthropological possibilities of being, the aesthete’s egocentric and exploitative manipulation of Cordelia represents at the same time a form of existential midwifery: it is a contribution to her personal self-development. This is traced in his reflections on the kind of psychological interplay taking place and its limits: we see an interplay between potentiality and actuality, not a sovereign forming of an amorphous matter. The possibility and the limit of manipulation constitute the objective dynamic. “She is indeed quiet and modest, and does not issue any challenges, yet there lies unconscious in her an

immense challenge” (2:333). “Although I am making arrangements so that she will sink into my arms as if by a necessity of nature and am striving to make her gravitate toward me, the point is nevertheless that she should not fall like a heavy body but as spirit she should gravitate towards spirit” (2:334). And likewise: “She is being transformed within herself” (2:351). “She moves to the melody in her own soul; I am merely the occasion for her moving” (2:352). “Then insofar as I may have any formative influence upon her, it is by teaching her in again and again what I have learned from her” (2:361). Here we see that Johannes’ status as “the mere occasion” for Cordelia’s actualization of the possibilities of her being implies the situation we have discussed, *i.e.*, that Johannes is presented as a model, as the actualized counterpart to this anthropological potential. He shapes his behavior and his expressions in harmony with what he “has learned of her”, or, to express it even more clearly, “As I perform this set of steps before her, all this will develop correspondingly in her” (2:355).

Johannes’ motive is not Cordelia’s emancipation, to lead her to that level of self-reflection where she can communicate with him on his own terms, but the *experience* of the process of Cordelia’s emancipation as a projection or illustration of the dialectic in his experience of himself. However, he must necessarily acknowledge in this project the anthropological law governing the relationship between personal freedom and inter-personality or, in simple terms, the principle of self-development. In this perspective, Johannes’ so-called seduction appears as the first and indirect expression of what we can call the humanistic fundamental principle in SK’s thought, expressed later in concepts like the Socratic method (cf. 6:17, 9:170f) and indirect communication (cf. 9:60ff, VIII 2 B 82f). The primary concern of this principle is that direct communication is a necessary but not sufficient condition for emancipation or personal freedom.

On the basis of this understanding of the logic in the aesthetic horizon of life, *viz.* that the aesthete expresses fundamental anthropological principles in an epic-symbolic “disguise” (as I have shown is also the case with A’s analysis of the sensuous-erotic stages), it is also possible to extrapolate a general anthropological insight from Johannes’ quasi-philosophical center-piece about the being or category of woman: “I shall attempt to consider woman categorically. In which category is she to be placed? In the category: being-for-other” (2:396). The argumentation indicates the connection between *objectification and self-determination*.

The general goal of Johannes’ aesthetic-erotic project with Cordelia is that she is to develop in and through herself to an absolute dependence on her ideal-typical counterpart to the point where Johannes can say: “In me she is seeking her freedom, and the more firmly I encircle her, the better she will find it” (2:380). The erotic union becomes determinative of her consciousness and her mode of existence to such an extent that she realizes or “hypostatize[s]” “the deeper womanliness” (2:357). “She belongs altogether to the category of nature and for this reason is free only aesthetically” (2:397).

It is clear enough that the general anthropological implication of this program is that absolute dependence - here, total domination by erotic feeling - is the precondition and “point of coincidence” for the awareness of dependence. It is therefore anthropologically relevant that Johannes uses the category of “the Moment” (*Øieblikket*) in this context; this expression is used later especially by Haufniensis to express the essential connection between self-determination and historicity. “The moment is very significant here because being-for-something-other is always a matter of the moment. A longer or shorter time may pass before the moment arrives, but as soon as it has arrived, then that which originally was being-for-other assumes a relative being, and with that everything is finished” (2:398).

Since Cordelia identifies herself with the erotic expression and places her whole existence in this, she reduces her reality in one moment to an object, *abolishing her subjectivity* to the advantage of that subjectivity for which she is merely an object. But this mode of reality, as human reality, is a self-contradiction because the status as object is communication through consciousness or subjectivity, or (to say it with Fichte): “no subject, no object, no object, no subject”.³⁴¹ If objectivity is this kind of *self-objectification*, then it is in principle impossible for it to last: it exists only in “the moment”, since *the subjectivity at its base* will make its authority felt at the next moment. The reality of the individual, when seen from this total ontological situation, is what Johannes specifies as “a relative existence”. It exists as a “balanced” relation between immediacy and intentionality.

The main anthropological point in this course of events, which Johannes’ particular existential mandate does not permit him to explore in depth, is that the “return to” subjectivity involved here is not a simple “regression” but a new qualification of the fundamental ontological situation, since now the *restored subjectivity* is essentially related to its own negation in absolute heteronomy, namely, as the “negation of this negation”. Structurally, this is wholly in keeping with the *Hegelian* dialectic, with its triadic structure of position, negation, and higher position. Or expressed in anthropological terms, “freedom” can be gained only through an “alienation” that makes the individual discover or look at himself. In other words, the individual attains consciousness of his objective determination; in this case of his ontological heterogeneity as a being composed of body and soul. This form of awareness is the principal significance of self-reflection within the process of self-determination or the constitution of freedom. Johannes’ intellectual midwifery leads Cordelia to this point in the general movement of emancipation.

The connection between determination and emancipation is crystallized in the story of Cordelia in two main aspects, *i.e.*, *two forms of determination*. We can say that these refer respectively to the factor of the soul and the factor of the body, and this within the framework of the relationship of mutuality that constitutionally characterizes these aspects.

1) As has been shown, the first form is the communicative dependence on subjectivity at a higher stage of development, a person who concretizes his own possibility. In a wider perspective, this relationship is a mode of the necessity of inter-subjectivity and linguistic and cultural integration for self-determination. 2) This determination, which is mediated through

language, implies dependence on the sensuous and bodily functions, but is not identical with this dependence. The two forms of determination are rooted in equally original ontological dimensions. In the sexual crisis of puberty, the individual himself becomes aware of this autonomy of corporeality. The emancipatory significance of the crisis lies (to speak in terms of principle) in the fact that, as the awareness of being determined by the body, it is the primitive form of *awareness of being determined in general*. The understanding and acceptance of this determination, *i.e.*, of the essential *finitude and contingency* of one's own reality, constitute the necessary basis for personal freedom as the identity of the self or, to employ Haufniensis' pregnant expression: "Perfection in oneself is therefore the perfect participation in the whole" (6:125) or, with Anti-Climacus: "to become oneself is a movement in that place [at which one stands]" (15:93); or, again, we can speak of "being absolutely dependent through freedom" (III A 11).

Nordentoft's description of the emancipative tendency in the story of Cordelia is somewhat misleading from the viewpoint of anthropology (and thereby also when we study the problematic of "SK's psychology"), since it is limited to the boundaries natural to a "literary" way of reading the text. It is true only in the literary context, *i.e.*, for Johannes himself, that "Cordelia's attainment of autonomy, which the seducer aims at and achieves, is illusory". Nor can it be said even about Johannes that his "concepts of freedom and spirit" are identical with "the necessity of nature in her",³⁴² since "the interesting" consists for him precisely in seeing the erotic natural force developed through rudimentary self-reflection, *i.e.*, the limitation of the field of intentionality to one single point, the erotic intention. This unity of nature and intentionality means that Cordelia's emancipation is not illusory, because it signifies that the superiority of the instinct lasts only for a "moment" and that its actualization at once changes into its opposite - Cordelia's reflection on herself as intentional reality. And precisely this higher level of consciousness puts an end to Johannes' active commitment, and his journal has no value as a source for this sequence of events.

B. Cordelia's History of Emancipation

In what follows, I shall attempt to identify some chief moments in the history of Cordelia's development, as a concretization of the mechanisms in her soul, which make their presence felt in that process of becoming conscious by constituting the emancipation of sexuality or of corporeality. Understood in this way, it can complement, support and make concrete my clarification of *the structure of consciousness* according to A's presentation of the sensuous-erotic stages. As a fictional experiment, Cordelia, like the "mythological" Page, is ideal-typical for the individual's general symbiosis with his physical-psychical reality and cultural situation. Her primary mode of existence is an absolute quietus, because there is no decisive separation between "inner" and "outer" reality: these form a harmonious totality. This corresponds to that moment in the constitution of consciousness, which the Climacus fragment characterizes as an "exchange [...] without collision" (IV B 1, p. 147). It must be emphasized that this is an ideal-typical characterization, *i.e.*, a definition made in relation to

the full actualization of an essential factor. Since Cordelia is able to use language, her existence is determined by the antithesis between “ideality” and “reality” which constitutes consciousness as a whole. “Thus as soon as I want to express immediacy in language, contradiction is present, for language is ideal. [...] Therefore, as soon as I bring a reality [*Realitet*] into relation with an ideality, I have doubt” (IV B 12). This antithetical relationship lies, however, primarily on a transcendental plane; it is a precondition of consciousness, but this does not of itself mean that consciousness is actively aware of it. Consciousness does not imply that the conscious individual “doubts” in a psychological-existential sense; it implies a possibility for this mode of consciousness, in the sense that *transcendental* “doubt” makes existential doubt possible. It is this distinction between potentiality and actuality that makes it possible for Climacus to speak in a contradictory manner of an “immediate consciousness” (cf. IV B 1, p. 145).

Cordelia is an epic-ideal-typical illustration of *this naive consciousness and its self-annulment*. For Johannes, she is the manifestation of the idea of female beauty, *i.e.*, the perfect unity of soul and body “from which spirit is excluded”, according to Haufniensis (6:156). She is the sensuous expression of this non-sensuous “visionary picture [...] in which all these feminine beings blend with one another” (2:306). “She was preoccupied not with herself, but within herself, and this preoccupation was a boundless peace and repose within herself” (2:307).

However, this static-harmonious surface conceals a deeper dimension, namely, *the essential contingency of the harmony* or the possibility of dissolution of the synthesis that constitutes the harmony. This is why the soul’s peace contains an element of negativity, “a trace of sadness” (2:307), in the same way as the Pasha too is marked by a “deep melancholy” (2:73). Just as the Pasha’s status of pure potentiality is determinative of the poetic total characterization as “infinitely deep” (2:75), Johannes can capture Cordelia’s situation by means of the same symbol: “Her eyes were large and glowing; when one looked into them, they had a dark luster, intimating an infinite depth, since it was impossible to penetrate into them” (2:308). In her naivety, she is not transparent to herself: nor is she yet transparent to others. All that the onlooker can anticipate are the structural conditions for this revelation of the conflict between instinct and reflection, not the concrete contents of this conflict. Human individuality, in its essential contingency, is accessible only through self-revelation, since the reality that comes to be known is constituted in the activity of the self (cf. e.g. VIII 2 B 86, p. 171).

The structural conditions are defined in Johannes’ mini-psychological schematics as “imagination” and “passion”. “She has imagination, spirit and passion, in short all the essentials, but not subjectively reflected” (2:317). The middle term “soul” here is the comprehensive or formal concept, while imagination and passion are the dominating functions of the soul. This constellation of imagination and passion is an “isomorphic” expression of the synthesis between soul and body. And since Cordelia’s primary existence represents a harmonious form of this synthesis, passion and imagination are in a balanced

relationship. The categorical expression for this harmony of perception and feeling is “atmosphere” (*Stemning*) (cf. e. g. 2:299, 318, 352, 355, 369), just as it is atmosphere - viz., the conscious experience of this interplay - that is the goal of Johannes’ project (cf. 2:283). *Thus it is atmosphere, the harmony of immediacy, which is the primary state of Cordelia that Johannes wishes to reproduce in him self.* “For the one who lives aesthetically seeks to be absorbed as much as possible into atmosphere, he seeks to conceal himself wholly within it” (3:213).

It can be affirmed that Cordelia’s “aesthetical” emancipation consists in her coming to consciousness of this atmosphere, *i.e.*, the determination of the immediate psychological physical interplay. This changes the mode of understanding *from imagination to reflection*, and the anonymous unity of the atmosphere is replaced by reflective ambiguity, as A expresses pregnantly in the introduction: “that he has awakened multiple-tongued reflection, that he has so developed her aesthetically that she no longer listens humbly to one voice but is able to hear the many voices at the same time” (2:287).

The seducer’s intellectual midwifery, his successive dissolving of the contingent harmony, is oriented in its first phase to create a division between Cordelia and her cultural environment, between her subjectivity and the internalized understanding, the perception of herself as constituting the feminine role. “So this is the beginning. First of all, her womanliness is neutralized by prosaic common sense and ridicule, not directly but indirectly, at the same time by the absolutely neutral, namely, intellect. She almost loses the feeling of being a woman, but in this state she is not able to stand out alone; she throws herself into my arms, not as if I were a lover – no, still completely neutrally. Now her womanliness is aroused; one coaxes it forth to its extreme point of elasticity, allows her to offend against some actual validity or other. She goes beyond it; her womanliness reaches almost supernatural heights; she belongs to me with a world of passion” (2:321). This brief sketch gives a miniature picture of the whole course of events. *The internalized understanding is developed to an intentionality*, which puts Cordelia in a position that contradicts the socio-cultural boundaries of her very existence. The culturally ratified gender-determination becomes an absolutely subjective goal to such an extent that both the cultural legalization and the social integration fall outside the scope of the intentionality.

In this first exploratory phase, the anthropological principle that emerges is what we can call *the rational element*. The linguistic patrimony is now turned polemically against its origins; it is activated in keeping with the possibility it gives of a critically objectifying distance to the cultural context. According to Johannes, the precondition for sensuous emancipation and autonomy is a “discerning touch” (2:317; cf. 325). In other words, the dissolving of the harmony of soul and body is possible only through the development of the dimension of the soul or the understanding, since this is the comprehensive factor in the unity.

The embodiment of this *autonomy of the soul*, *i.e.*, reflection as principle of existence, in SK’s anthropological system of categories is *irony*. It is therefore anthropologically relevant

when Johannes says that “we must teach her to smile ironically” (2:325), and when he can affirm later on with satisfaction: “My irony over the foolishness of people, my ridicule of their cowardliness, of their tepid torpidity” (2:333). Johannes, as the personification of an hypostasized reflection into a principle of existence and as Cordelia’s “model”, actualizes her soul-reflexive possibilities and thereby also negates the symmetry in the interaction between soul and body in immediacy. “Cordelia hates and fears me. What does a young girl fear? Intellect [*Aand*]? Why? Because the intellect constitutes a negation of her entire feminine existence” (2:335).

Appropriately in this intellectual stratum of Cordelia’s being and in the consequent ambivalence between “understanding” and “reality”, her first step is taken in the direction of individuation, separation from internalized and anonymous self-understanding. “My pride, my defiance, my cold ridicule, my callous irony tempt her - not as if she would want to love me - no, there is certainly not the slightest trace of any such feelings in her, least of all for me. She wants to compete with me. What tempts her is a proud independence in relation to people, a freedom like that of the desert Arabs” (2:336). The medium of existence in which Cordelia now moves together with Johannes is not erotic passion but “this bold flight of thought” (2:336) She is captivated for the meantime by the possibility of reflective distancing from her social reality, and the next stage - with all the greater strength, as a result of this - will be her determination by the neglected vegetative pole of her being.

At this stage, Cordelia is analogous to Papageno despite the difference in method, employment of the material and breadth of perspective. In both cases we have a general individuation thanks to the development of linguistic-rational competence and the consequent orientation in relation to the world’s rich variety. The principal difference is that Cordelia’s “second” stage lies genetically closer to the form of existence exemplified by Don Giovanni, the breakthrough of sexuality, so that her “phase of orientation” is not Papageno’s cultural integration but, on the contrary, the dissolving of this integration through the intensification of reflection to become a critical (self) -reflection.

Thus the reflective tendency (“the bold flight of thought”) represents a transitory suppression of the sensuous potential for life, which makes it possible for this - as a demarcated reality - to acquire an autonomous validity of its own (*i.e.*, for the consciousness). The emancipation of corporeality is accompanied by the consciousness of corporeality, just as consciousness is basically constituted in the division between subject and object.

As long as Cordelia is in the process of suppression itself, her situation is essentially ambivalent. Her rudimentary reflection splits her reality, but does not imply an awareness of this division. Its unconscious character supplies a basis for Johannes’ manipulative technique, his playing on the register of ambiguities made possible by the un-clarified relationship between the sensuous eros and reflection, with the goal of causing anxiety in Cordelia. Anxiety is the psychological expression of *structural ambivalence*. “My intention was to destroy in Cordelia the impression of pathos the very moment it was awakened. She became a

little anxious, but it was apparent to me that this anxiety did not have a tempting effect on her, but rather made her *unheimlich* [uncomfortable]" (2:338)

Johannes nourishes and develops this anxiety, Cordelia's premonition of a possibility she does not know, hence the partial understanding. He does this through a well-considered fluctuation in word and act between "prosaic" and "pathetic" expressions, ironical outbreaks and erotic stimuli. "A double movement is necessary in relation to Cordelia. [...] Her womanliness will be matured in this conflict. I could use either conversation to enflame her or letters to cool her off, or vice versa. The latter is preferable in every way. I then enjoy her most extreme moments. When she has received a letter, when its sweet poison has entered her blood, then a word is sufficient to make her love burst forth. At the next moment, irony and hoarfrost make her doubtful, but not so much that she nevertheless does not continually feel her victory, feel it augmented by the receipt of the next letter. [...] If I am present only in a letter, then she can easily cope with me; to some extent, she mistakes me for a more universal creature which dwells in her love" (2:357).

The tension in Cordelia between rationality and the impulse of nature is accentuated by the corresponding dialectic in Johannes' therapy. The relationship is dialectic in the sense that the two poles in the existential totality act mutually upon each other. While reflection neutralizes or suppresses the erotic potentiality so that it can liberate itself from control by the soul which is involved in elementary socialization, the relative actualization of the potency of instinct will in turn provoke and develop reflection, since the actualized instinct offers itself directly as an object for reflection. The parallel development of the two dimensions is constitutionally necessary since *the instinct becomes real only through the intentionality*.

In the ambivalent situation, the development of reflection is tied up in the elastic un-clarity of the imagination, the rudimentary form of genuine reflection (cf. 15:88). "She must discover the infinite, must experience that this is what lies closest to a person. This she must discover not along the path of thought, which for her is a wrong way, but by imagination, which is the real line of communication between her and me" (2:361). The imagination is here a *primitive ironic negativity*, since this path permits her to dissolve her original tie to cultural facticity. She learns "to confuse poetry and actuality, truth and fiction, to frolic in infinity" (2:362).

This cultural emancipation is the overture to the decisive breakthrough of erotic passion, which occurs at the moment when she ceases to look for "the marvelous outside herself" (2:369) and thus finds it in her own erotic possibility. And the condition for this is that Johannes' manipulative superiority is modified and Cordelia is thrown back upon herself and her embryonic subjectivity. "When the turn is made and I begin to pull back in earnest, then she will summon up everything in order really to make me captive. She has no other means for that than the erotic itself, except that this will now manifest itself on an entirely different scale. [...] What I taught her to sense by inciting her, my coldness will now teach her to comprehend, but in such a way that she will believe that she herself discovers it. She will take me by surprise with it; she will think that she has outdone me in boldness and thereby has

taken me captive. Then her passion will be definite, energetic, determined, dialectical; her kissing will be consuming, her embrace not *hiatic*" (2:379). This is the beginning of the climax that is called "a war of conquest" in Johannes' strategic vocabulary (2:356).

We see the essential collaboration of reflection or imagination in this psychological situation in that Cordelia does not relate so much to a concrete individuality over against herself as to an erotic ideal image, which bursts the limits of the empirical reality. "Even if her ideal has found an ever so perfect expression in a particular beloved object, there nevertheless are moments when she feels that in the ideal there is a vastness that the actuality does not have" (2:383). This contradictory situation is a special emotional-imaginative variant of the overall contradictory structure of consciousness, of the discrepancy between "the ideal" and "reality", *i.e.*, the negativity which determines the consciousness's essential character of self-consciousness. It is only in the light given by the ideal that something can become reality for the individual, *i.e.*, through the act of identification. The critical point lies in the "transition" to reality or "repetition". As the anthropological schema in *The Sickness Unto Death* shows, the possibility is always present, that the individual may lose himself in the infinitude of the imagination, "the fantastic" (15:88), thereby also losing the possibility of self-consciousness in the true sense. This possibility is minimal for the naive consciousness, since reflection has not hypostatized itself to become a principle of existence. Thus, in the case of Cordelia, "the idea that the actual person is the author of the letter forms a natural and easy transition to the actuality" (2:383).

In this tension between ideal and reality, the anxiety, which is already incipient, emerges more strongly. This anxiety is so specific that it can be described cognitively as *doubt* about conformity. "After I have gone and the thought no longer occupies her, she will easily discover that I was different from what I have usually been. Because she discovers this change in her solitude, the discovery will be much more painful for her, will work its effect more slowly but all the more penetratingly. She cannot promptly flare up, and when she does have a chance she will already have thought out so much to say that she cannot say it all at once but will always retain a remnant of doubt. The disquietude mounts, the letters stop coming, the erotic rations are diminished; erotic love is mocked as something ludicrous. Perhaps she goes along with it for a time, but in the long run she cannot endure it. Then she will want to make me captive with the same means I have employed against her - with the erotic" (2:388).

Cordelia is now at the absolute *terminus of the interesting*, the unconscious conflict between the impulse of nature and reflective freedom, where erotic potentiality is now making the transition to its full actuality. Her fear is at its maximum because she senses more strongly than ever - but without having a clear awareness of it - the profound antithesis between the vegetative substratum and *the intentional control*. But as Johannes says when he compares Cordelia's psychological situation with nature's "beautiful harmony": "precisely this anxiety captivates the most" (2:391). This is true not only of Johannes, who consciously cultivates this anxiety in and outside himself, but also for Cordelia. It is anxiety that

actualizes instinct in her. In the “moment” this happens, Cordelia passes beyond the ambiguity and fluctuation of the interesting, for the vegetative absoluteness cannot assert itself against the intentionality that bears it.

The anthropologically speaking essential point in the history of Cordelia’s development is that division and synthesis coincide, that the division of the dimensions of soul and body raises the soul’s control to a qualitatively new level. This illustrates what *The Concept of Anxiety* expresses with conceptual clarity, that sexual consciousness is the decisive starting-point for self-determination since this makes it possible for the relationship to one’s self to refer to the existential totality that embraces soul and body.

The development of self-consciousness to a positive-concrete freedom in virtue of the moral acceptance of oneself does not however have a place in A’s aesthetic universe. Hans’ psychological-epic experiments include only characters that, viewed from an anthropological perspective, are detached projections of his own self-understanding, *i.e.*, of the aesthetic despair whose voice we hear in “*Diapsalmata*”.

Thus Cordelia is not brought any further through the naked experience of herself as a sexual being than to a state of *aesthetic despair* where the power of the vegetative element is replaced by a reflective unease in which “since the relationship had possessed actuality only figuratively, she had to battle continually the doubt whether the whole affair was not a fantasy” (2:285). In this unstable and regressive contemplation of herself, she is not yet liberated from the empty room of anxiety. But this anxiety has a character essentially different from naivety’s anxiety. The possibility, which now causes anxiety, is the possibility of self-determination, and this in a more direct sense than earlier. Cordelia has come to share in the fellowship of destiny marked as anti-social by A when he says: “Their lives were not cracked or broken, as others’ were, but were bent into themselves; lost to others, they futilely sought to find themselves” (2:285). She finds herself on the margins of the horizon of life of which Johannes is the intensified expression, “his infinite reflectivity into himself” (2:285).

Against this background, A’s essay “Shadowgraphs”, with its description of “the reflective grief”, is a kind of continuation of the “Seducer’s journal” in the form of a portrait of Cordelia’s situation in restless introversion. The category for this form of existence is a *higher potency of the interesting*, namely, its significance as “a border category, a *confinium* [border territory] between aesthetics and ethics” (5:76) where thus *the conflict between sensuousness and reflection is itself the object of reflection*. The individual is detached from the substantial context of his life through consciousness of its existential duplicity and through attempts to return to this along the same path that led to its dissolution, via reflection. The red thread in the portrait of the aesthetic existence in *Either/Or* is that this *reflective reconstruction* of the immediate level of life is an impossible project. Reflection only leads deeper into ambivalence and can only establish a kind of *illusory unity* in its own infinity: “so reflective grief eventually finds solace in this motion, which as an illusory motion becomes a necessity for it. At last there is a kind of balance” (2:158). This is a variant of Johannes’ momentary rest in the superiority of vegetative life over reflection.

This existential dynamic or “becoming” (*Vorden*) (2:160) is, however, a precondition for ethical self-realization. This is the reality to which ethical intentionality is related as to its object, since it supplements *reflective intentionality* with a comprehensive involvement of the will, which intentionally unites the elements of the existential division. A expresses this possibility in general terms when he says: “This path of thinking is infinite, and does not end until the individual arbitrarily breaks it off by affirming something else, by a determination of the will; but the individual thereby enters into ethical qualifications and does not engage us aesthetically. By a resolve, it attains what it cannot attain on the road of reflection: an end, repose” (2:166).

This formulation contains a concluding word on the history of Cordelia’s emancipation, and a regulative principle for her further development. The basis in morality and the will for the form of self-consciousness as concrete-integrative freedom thereby becomes the predominant anthropological theme in *The Concept of Anxiety*, to which I shall turn in the following.

2. Moral Self-Consciousness. Adam

A. The Typological Significance of the Adam-figure

Simplifying in a schematic manner, we could say that the figure of Adam is a form of unity of the mythological triumvirate in the treatment of the stages of sensuousness and the fictional Cordelia. He conforms in essentially two aspects to the phenomenology of sensuousness: as a product of the mythological imagination and through his fundamental representativeness of the same dimension of the psychogenetic process, the stage of childhood in its totality. He is linked to the figure of Cordelia through his form as concrete individuality, *i.e.*, through this form's unity of sensual and soul-related functions. This is presupposed, but not made explicit, in the "reductive" analysis of the sensual correlate in the first case. Further, in agreement with this integrating perspective, he resembles Cordelia by representing the same *crisis of consciousness*, the dissolving of naivety's harmony of soul and body.

Nordentoft fails to see clearly that the anthropological structure in all these cases is fundamentally the same. He characterizes the difference between A and Haufniensis in the following way: "For the aesthete, it is the surrounding world that is the shapeless object of anxiety, for Vigilius, it is the future identity of the individual. [...] In the case of the aesthete, 'object' is to be understood primarily as the object to which the sensuous instinct is attracted. In the case of Vigilius, to speak of the object is to speak of a kind of spiritual instinct, the pressure towards individuation".³⁴³ Two main points can be made against this assertion:

1) It is a misunderstood halving of SK's concept of anxiety if one makes a division, without a superior holistic perspective, between anxiety concerning "the world" and anxiety concerning oneself. Every expression of anxiety is constitutionally connected with what Nordentoft calls "the future identity of the individual". It is this identity, which is most profoundly at risk when the individual is detached from the primary biological symbiosis, since this process conditions his status as subject. This is the primitive form of this subjectivity. Anxiety is always an expression of a possible relation of determination between subject and object, thanks to the ontological primacy of subjectivity. The genetically primary fear of the "surrounding world" is, structurally speaking, anxiety in relation to the possible determination or understanding of this context of life. Nordentoft's description is here a reflex of the aesthete's ontic limitation to the "aesthetic" theme, the dialectic between the impulse of nature and intentionality, in abstraction from its *telos*.

2) In regard to the description of the Adam figure, it must be said that here too "the surrounding world" and "the attraction of the senses" belong as necessary elements to the complex phenomenon of anxiety. Anxiety's object or reason (both expressions are necessary, in order to bring out the point that anxiety is an emotion concerned with something subjacent that is in the course of objectifying itself and becoming present to consciousness) is "identity" in relation to these factors, indeed to the possible determination by them as parts of the reality of the individual.

Haufniensis' "attempt to dismiss the fixed idea that it is a myth" (6:139) does not deny Adam's ideal-typical significance. Rather, it is only an expression of a demarcation over against the so-called "myths of the understanding", here taken to mean the understanding of the constitution of moral consciousness as a logically necessary process, namely, that "the nature of the immediate is to be annulled, as though immediacy and innocence were exactly identical" (6:130). He makes an equally clear demarcation against an "orthodox" understanding of Adam as an historical primal figure, a view which implies "that the particular individual participates in inherited sin only through his relation to Adam, and not through his primitive relation to sin" (6:122). The principal determination of the anthropological meaning of the myth is expressed in the passage, which says, "the myth allows something that is inward to take place outwardly" (6:140). It is an esoteric-symbolic expression of human essence, here an expression of the anthropological structure in the constitution of moral consciousness.

In this perspective, it is somewhat striking that Haufniensis has difficulties in accounting properly for the significance of the serpent in the narrative of the fall. "I freely admit my inability to connect any definite thought with the serpent" (6:141). In the sketches, however, we find the following ambiguous commentary on this point: "[...] and if someone wished to instruct me and say, 'Well, in keeping with what has been said above, you could say that it is language', then I would answer: 'I have not said that'" (V B 53:11).

The point of such a reservation is nevertheless clear, even if one could wish a clearer formulation of the symbol. The serpent is the symbol of the act of temptation, the individual's experience of a particular possibility of acting against a moral taboo. *Once again, the moral taboo is communicated by language*, and the ambiguity in the symbol of the serpent is a reflection of what language is, as "partly an original given and partly something freely developing" (III A 11). Linguistic competence has an objective dimension in linguistic internalization, but as a linguistic act it is also an expression of subjectivity. The reception of the moral taboo is by that very face a *subjective activity*, and this is why it is anthropologically necessary to claim, that "each person is tempted by himself" (6:141). This explains Haufniensis' reluctance to identify the symbol of the serpent with language and thereby with the act of temptation, because this expresses only the objective precondition of the temptation, the receptive transfer of symbols and meaning to the subject.

B. Anxiety and Language

Adam is the ideal-typical expression of the naive consciousness as form of reality: "Innocence is a quality, it is a *state* [...] for it is always sufficient unto itself" (6:132). "Innocence is ignorance. In innocence, man is not qualified as spirit but is psychically qualified in immediate unity with his natural condition. The spirit in man is dreaming" (6:135). Naivety is that *opacity*, *i.e.*, that passive-receptive structure in the self-understanding, which is the result of the individual being handed over to (and thereby unconscious of) the essentially harmonious interplay between the cognitive functions of the soul and the

sensuous-vegetative affections and expressions also present. The harmony here in question has its basis in the lack of self-consciousness, since *self-consciousness is constituted precisely in a diastatic abolition of the interplay*.

According to Haufniensis' phyllo-genetic perspective, this form of consciousness is characteristic for the Greek self-understanding and perception of the human person, *i.e.*, before the decisive irruption of self-reflection through the philosophical critique of culture. The embodiment of this harmony between soul and body (as also expressed in the history of Cordelia's emancipation) is the idea of beauty. "When beauty must reign, a synthesis results, from which spirit is excluded. This is the secret of all of Greek culture. Because of this, there is a repose, a quiet solemnity about Greek beauty, but precisely for this reason there is also an anxiety, of which the Greek was scarcely aware, although his plastic beauty trembled with this anxiety" (6:156). Or, as it is stated at I C 126: "Greek mythology. Here is the genuine equilibrium, and here the divine is merged in the world".

Since there is as well a situation of determination or priority in this balance (thanks to the asymmetrical structure of consciousness as a whole), it can be defined as an autarchy of the soul. This primacy of the soul, *i.e.*, the form of understanding prior to the existential division in the emancipation of corporeality, means that the individual's orientation to reality is essentially communicated by feeling and imagination, and is correspondingly unstable and indeterminate. The transformation of this sentimental and immediate understanding into genuine reflection, to which is related the goal-determined will, presupposes that it becomes subordinated to a higher authority; and this is what is realized within the framework of self-determination. What this means is that feeling and imagination are dominant in relation to reflection and will; it does not mean, however, that they alone rule, in the same way as the negation of naivety in self-consciousness in no way could imply the annihilation of the constitutional functions of naivety, but only a shift in primacy within human existence, by its transference to reflection and goal-determined will.

In Haufniensis' analysis of concepts, this idea of the *habitus* of the child's soul is expressed in condensed fashion in the following passage: "In observing children, one will discover this anxiety intimated more particularly as seeking for the adventurous, the monstrous, and the enigmatic" (6:136). We find a more detailed description in a journal entry from 1837 (II A 12) which I shall use here as an illustration both of the concept of naivety as an autarchy of the soul and of the primacy this then gives to imagination and feeling.

The anthropological point in the concept of childhood finds expression in the following rhetorical passage: "Now comes the question: *what significance does childhood really have?* Is it a stage with significance only because it conditions, in a way, the following stages - or does it have an independent value? Some have expanded the latter position to the point where they assume childhood to be fundamentally the highest level attainable by human beings and that everything beyond it is a progressive degeneration. The first position has had the practical result that people try to make time pass by and if children could be shut up in the dark and force-fed on an accelerated schedule like chickens, everything would certainly be

organized to this end. Another consequence has been to use ‘this tiresome time of childhood’ primarily for caring for children’s physical well-being” (p.14). For SK, the truth lies in the mediation between these extreme views. The significance of childhood as a precondition for the mature personality, *i.e.*, for the individual under the imperative of self-determination, can be recognized only when the particular character of childhood is recognized.

And the collective expression for this *proprium* is precisely *imagination*, for it is nourished and challenged by what SK calls “stories”. “Children crave fairy stories, and this alone is sufficient proof of their value” (p. 17). For thereby the prosaic reality of everyday life is lit up and modified by a *poetic dimension of infinity* which sets the understanding in motion and opens the individual up to that totality of life which is to be integrated into the coming self-determination. As has been continually pointed out, the precondition for this determination is the noetic identification of the object of self-determination and the consequent diastasis between subject and object. The imagination’s intensification of linguistic-perceptual facticity is the form of identification that embraces all life: “(...) one does not do their homework with them, but quietly inquires about their lessons, masters them, not in order to quiz them, not to take a particular part and dramatize it for them, not to give them an opportunity to show off if there are others around - but rather to let a glimpse suddenly leap forth, to connect it in a special way to what usually occupies them, yet entirely *en passant*, so that the child’s soul is electrified and feels, as it were, the omnipresence of something poetic, which is indeed precious to him but which he nevertheless dares not approach to closely. In this way, intellectual-emotional mobility is constantly nurtured, *i.e.*, continuing attentiveness to what they hear and see” (p.12). The dynamic here in question is constituted in the tension between reality and possibility (cf. 1:305, 8:208, 10:19), as Haufniensis formulates this philosophically in his definition of the phenomenon of anxiety as “*a sympathetic antipathy and an antipathetic sympathy*” (6:136).

The main genetic-structural point is that the child here becoming swallowed-up by the imaginative-poetical element renders ambiguous or dialectic in itself the child’s general determination by his or her given socio-cultural facticity. Thus there occurs a decisive modification to the character of the relationship as a *process of internalization*. It is no longer a purely one-way communication that fills the child’s consciousness with “a completely atomized knowledge” (p. 18). Like speech in general, the imagination and its collision with prosaic reality become a medium for the *individual’s activity upon himself*. This “self-activity” (p. 14) takes here the form of a “*perpetuum mobile of enthusiasm*” (p. 13) which anticipates self-determination in the stricter sense.

Another intensified characteristic of the naivety determined by imagination in its role as functional basis for the integration of the personality is found in a passage from *Repetition*, where C. Constantius reflects on what he calls “the magic of the theater” in relation to a “young person with some imagination” (5:135). Here we must say that the imagination is pressed into service anthropologically on a categorical level, when it is defined as a dream about personality”. Here we have a poetic variant of the scholastically-formulated thesis in

The Sickness Unto Death about the imagination as “the self’s reproduction”: “In such a self-vision of the imagination, the individual is not an actual shape but a shadow, or, more correctly, the actual shape is invisibly present and therefore is not satisfied to cast one shadow, but the individual has a variety of shadows, all of which resemble him and which have moment by moment equal claim to being his self. As yet the personality is not discerned, and its energy is betokened only in the passion of possibility” (5:135).

Thus the ontological category of childhood or youth is *possibility*. The existential dynamic and progression in this mode of existence are conditioned by the priority of possibility in relation to reality. Imagination is the psychological medium for this *self-transcendence* in possibility, since imagination (unlike perception) does not “make a copy” of the prosaic-factual reality by which the individual is determined, but gives it depth in the idealized image.

When SK in a journal entry characterizes childhood as “the paradigmatic part of life” (II A 41), this is meant most deeply as an expression of precisely the genetic-constitutional necessity, which attaches here to the primacy of possibility. This is therefore no “mere stage” (II A 12, p.14), but the development of a necessary aspect of the autonomous and integrative person as a whole. Haufniensis develops this insight in the concluding chapter of *The Concept of Anxiety* when he speaks of being “educated by possibility” (6:235). The primacy of possibility embraces the whole of life. It is established as an inescapable challenge to every form of existence, since it prevents the individual’s identification with his socio-cultural facticity, “the finite relations in which every individual is assigned a place, whether they be small, or everyday, or world-historical” (6:235). Thus the individual’s responsibility for his own reality is maintained. “When individuality is thus not transformed by itself in relation to fate, he will always retain a dialectical remnant that no finitude can remove, just as no man will lose faith in the lottery if he does not lose it by himself but is supposed to lose it by continually losing when he gambles” (6:238).

The figure of Adam must be situated and then interpreted within this framework. He exemplifies *the general dissolution of naivety thanks to the unity of reality and possibility in language, i.e., the dialectic that is defined psychologically as imagination*. “Innocence can indeed speak, inasmuch as in language, it possesses the expression for everything spiritual” (6:139). This *linguistic competence* is the function of a consciousness that structurally implies self-consciousness; this is why language and “spirit” are one. “The categories of consciousness, however, are *trichotomous*, as language also demonstrates, for when I say, I am conscious of this sensory impression, I am expressing a triad” (IV B 1, p. 147).

This is the structural implication expressed in the concept of the dreaming spirit: “So spirit is present, but as immediate, as dreaming. Inasmuch as it is now present, it is in a sense a hostile power, for it constantly disturbs the relation between soul and body, a relation that indeed has persistence and yet does not have endurance, inasmuch as it first receives the latter by the spirit” (6:137). The asymmetry in the relationship between soul and body determines a possibility for self-reflection, which “disturbs” it. “Reflection is fatal to the immediate”, says A (2:68).

This implication cannot, however, become existentially effective without a particular linguistic content or an experience, which is communicated through language. In principle, it is possible for potential self-reflection not to be developed, because the necessary possibility of identification and the corresponding experience are lacking. This is what is claimed in the polemic against *Hegel*: “Innocence is a quality, it is a *state* that may very well endure” (6:132). The pregnant formula for this is that “innocence is ignorance” (6:132).

This ontic aspect is kept in mind and accentuated in the expression: “in language, it possesses the expression for all that belongs to the spirit”. That which innocence relates to here in general terms is the *moral imperative* to self-determination in relation to the individual psychic-physical reality.

Primitive self-reflection, with the consequent disharmony in the unity of soul and body (something that produces anxiety), *i.e.*, the disequilibrium developed in the tension between the ideal and reality essential to imagination, cannot create a decisive split in this unity. Such a split can be created only by the particular linguistic situation which expresses this split, as happens in the moral evaluation of emancipated corporeality, *i.e.*, of sexuality. The individual is confronted here with a “knowledge of good and evil” (6:138) which, unlike the poetic-concrete ideality of the imagination, has a clear logical identity and a determined reference and which demands or makes possible a correspondingly determined *experience*. It is this corresponding experience that naivety lacks, and its “experience” is limited to the “*a priori*” dimension, *the experience of the possibility of experience*. This anticipated experience is the structure and ground of anxiety: “The actuality of the spirit constantly shows itself as a form that tempts its possibility but disappears as soon as it seeks to grasp it, and it is a nothing that can only bring anxiety” (6:136).

Anxiety is brought about when the individual, through moral-cultural internalization, is given words for a reality, which he does not experience as such. When it is said, that “innocence always sees this nothing outside itself” (6:136) it is strictly speaking a tautology. Yet this formulation makes it clear that the experience, which is lacking is not an idea about sexuality but the experience of oneself as a being with sexual instincts. As long as psychosomatic development has not attained the level where this experience is possible, the individual cannot genuinely grasp the moral imperative in this field: it is “altogether ambiguous” (6:137). This ambiguity, which is obvious to the individual, corresponds to *his ontological heterogeneity* as a being composed of soul and body. Anxiety in relation to a sexuality, which has not become experienced, is the final point of the unconscious interplay between these aspects. It forms, as it were, an unconscious form of consciousness about this situation.

When *Nordentoft* makes a distinction between “fundamental anxiety and the anxiety determined by circumstances”,³⁴⁴ he does not understand that it is the idea of sexuality and the moral evaluation of sexuality that unleashes the fear in the individual, and this to the extent that the individual does not find them applicable to him self. This misunderstanding is connected with *Nordentoft*’s failure to see how radical *Haufniensis*’ “demythologization” of

the Adam figure (*i.e.*, its ideal-typical status) really is. “Quite certainly, Adam is the prototype of the human being, but since he has not descended from anyone else and does not enter any societal and family context, it is only the fundamental, anthropological anxiety and the corresponding intra-psychical development that can be illustrated by means of him as an example, while the complications, in the form of hereditary and environmental factors, are illustrated in Chapter II”.³⁴⁵ It is incomprehensible how Nordentoft can unite Adam’s non-sociality with his linguistic competence.

What can, however, be united - with anthropological necessity is essential possibility and participation in a socio-cultural contingency. The possibility of freedom as anxiety is therefore developed in the interaction between what Nordentoft calls “the universal potential”³⁴⁶ and the moral normativity of the cultural context, just as all aspects of human freedom are constituted in a conflict between essence and facticity seen as a shift from objective to subjective determination.

Only in this constitutional perspective is it meaningful to speak of naivety as morally ignorant or incompetent. *Moral competence* is incomplete from a structural point of view as long as it does not embrace the totality of existence as soul and body, *i.e.*, as consciousness of ontological heterogeneity. It is this situation that determines the fundamental anthropological significance of sexuality, by marking the emancipation of corporeality, which makes such consciousness possible, as I have already explained. In constitutional terms, freedom and sexuality are equally original.

The systematic ambiguity of anxiety reflects this existential doubleness. It is not only anxiety of “the unknown”, but also anxiety concerning this as a dual possibility, *i.e.*, the contemporaneity of two possibilities that are mutually exclusive. For (as I shall set out in greater detail below) sexuality is the negation of freedom as intentionality *vice versa*. This antithesis is the subject of the pregnant expression: “the difference between myself and “my other” which emerges in anxiety as “an intimated nothing” (6:136).

Accordingly, the concept “my other” does not denote (as the explanation given by the editor of this passage asserts) “my eternal spirit in antithesis to myself as a natural being”, but precisely the latter, *viz.* corporeality. If the first meaning is retained then the thesis claiming that “the difference between my self and my other is posited” (6:136) would acquire the absurd meaning that there exists within moral consciousness (being awake) a fundamental antithesis between “myself” and “my eternal spirit”.

Thus it is through *the moral imperative* that the naive consciousness is confronted with *the norm of self-determination* and *the reality of sexual instinct* as objective or “*a priori*” realities, as phenomena to which it cannot assign a place in the self-understanding, which it now has. Despite logical identity and unambiguousness in the linguistic communication, these phenomena are in principle absolutely indeterminate possibilities for the individual, because the determination here in question is an “application” to a datum of experience. The indeterminate possibility is, however, determinate as a logical unity, and this form of “*a priori*” determination allows for a specification or degrees of determinacy which can count as

an *approximation to experiential determinacy*. We come then upon the problem of the relationship between “instinct” and “concept” posed by *Sibbern*, but with a tendency in the opposite direction. Here instinct is understood essentially as a natural process (although in virtue of an underlying reality), while the concept is a secondary reaction that may perhaps give the instinct a more determinate form and direction. According to *Sibbern*, it is only in the case of needs having a more “cultural” origin, such as the pleasure of receiving honor, that one may attribute a constitutive role to the concept.³⁴⁷ But this distinction points to a deeper difference, namely, that *Sibbern* does not appreciate that type of constitutional problematic (in terms of transcendental philosophy) that characterizes *SK*’s analyses of consciousness. The more the logical identity of the phenomenon is made explicit from all angles for the subject, the nearer does the phenomenon itself draw towards something becoming experientially evident. This *quantitative aspect in the anticipation* indicates that what is involved here is experience of oneself, in the sense that the phenomenon is constituted in part by the subject’s own action and thus is an intentional reality. Sexuality is a unity of natural impulse and intentionality. It is this *intentional constituent* which makes possible an “*a priori*” approximation to the experiential determinacy. This progression in intentionality is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the phenomenon itself, since the control of natural impulses is outside the power of intentionality, and this in that it is an expression of corporeality as an essentially *non-intentional reality*.

Haufniensis’ chief point is that the moral imperative in its totality represents this decisive anticipation. The viewpoint of development refers here primarily to the fact that the imperative confronts the individual with the possibility of self-determination in a more defined way than is the case in the more general complex of anxiety which is created by the tension between speech or imagination and reality, and the then consequent primitive self-reflection: “Innocence still is, but only a word is required and then ignorance is concentrated. Innocence naturally cannot understand this word, but at that moment anxiety has, as it were, caught its first prey. Instead of nothing it now possesses an enigmatic word” (6:138).

Nordentoft’s claim that “Adam’s development towards the Fall is described as an ascending course in three phases”³⁴⁸ which can be set in parallel to the stages of sensuousness in *A*’s essay³⁴⁹ is untenable. If one is to speak of stages here, one must speak of only two, the situation before and after the introduction of the sexual taboo. Formulations like “innocence has now reached its uttermost point”, “ignorance is concentrated” and “innocence is brought to its uttermost” (6:138) are all expressions for the same stage, even if the context of the first expression seems to point in another direction. “Innocence has now reached its uttermost point” is, on *Haufniensis*’ own premises, not a correct characterization of naivety before the irruption of sexuality. The positioning of this expression must either be understood in an anticipatory sense or as a misleading formulation, or else as a lapse in the arrangement of the material. Furthermore, the distinction between “the word of prohibition” and “the word of judgment” is not of a genetic kind, but is an analysis of aspects of the moral imperative. Forms of expression such as “now draws closer” (6:139), indicating a temporal succession,

must be attributed to the epic-mythological form, and thus must be seen as quasi-anthropological expressions.

The open and extrovert naivety is now fixated on a particular point in the empirical-worldly multiplicity, “concentrated” in an experience of its ignorance, a certainty of its own limitation and of the unknown: “The prohibition induces in him anxiety, for the prohibition awakens in him freedom’s possibility. What passed by innocence as the nothing of anxiety has now entered into Adam, and here again it is a nothing, [*i.e.*,] the anxious possibility *being able*. He has no [real] understanding of what he is able to do” (6:138).

The prohibition (which we can here interpret freely as a demand for intentional control of the sexual impulse in agreement with the already-existing demands for social integration, since such a demand will be valid irrespective of the cultural context) refers to a possibility of understanding or acting that the individual cannot unite in a concrete manner with his previous understanding of reality. The uniting link is however essentially of a “formal” character, since the matter in question is understood - to the extent to which it is understood at all - with hermeneutical necessity in a manner analogous to the form of understanding which is already in effect. The individual already accepts experientially the prescriptive significance of the word, or moral language as a whole, and he will therefore directly understand himself as confronted with the possibility of action, the frightening possibility that he could do something (6:138).

When it is emphasized so strongly that this preliminary understanding does not imply a “concept” of the action, this does not mean a total absence of concepts in connection with it. On the contrary, it is essential that the imperative challenges the imagination and awakens concepts, just as we are told that Adam, through “the word of judgment” (the communication of the social sanction), has “acquired a notion of the terrifying” (6:139). In principle, ignorance of sexuality is compatible with very concrete ideas about it. This is why the expression, “He has no conception of what he is able to do”, is not particularly well chosen. As has been said, what is involved here is a lack of experience of sexuality as part of one’s own reality. Fear is created and made acute precisely in this dialectic between the concrete determinacy of the concept, *i.e.*, the logical content of the moral imperative, and the lack of firsthand experience.

Once again, it is the mythological-symbolic material that overshadows conceptual discourse. This ambiguity in the application of *the idea of “concept” (Forestilling)* can however also reflect a more concrete motive, viz. the desire to guard against the view that the primary consciousness of sexuality is the product of a rational process, *i.e.*, that it is identical with a linguistic identification of the phenomenon. Haufniensis’ point in the sentence I have quoted would then be that the linguistic expression of sexuality is valid as a fully-achieved concept of it only if it also reveals itself in the corporal sphere independently of this logical identification.

On the other hand, the constitution of sexuality itself is necessarily linked to a rational process, and this in the form of an anticipatory intentionality or concept. Precisely this

condition of possibility qualifies it as the action of the individual in such a way that it becomes a constituent in the basic consciousness of freedom. *The basic freedom is an apperception of rationality and irrationality as equally original elements in one's own reality.* Irrationality, or vegetative nature, emerges as an autonomous reality only by means of intentionality, *i.e.*, against a rational background. Structurally speaking, the constitution of sexuality is the negation of intentionality by means of intentionality itself. But this does not happen through intentionality alone, for otherwise one could not speak of a genuine negation. *The negation is the reduction of intentionality to a medium for the self-regulating or instinctive nature.*

The ontological primacy of intentionality reveals itself in *anxiety*, namely as the expression of *the ontic powerlessness of intentionality*. It is powerless as long as its objective correlative, sexuality, is not experientially evident. The particular quality of this mode of anxiety is that the realization of what is anticipated linguistically and intentionally will necessarily take the form of an attack against this dimension of the human person's being. The contingency or lack of control of the sensuous correlative (which according to *Kant* is characteristic of empirical-theoretical reason in virtue of its aprioristic-transcendental nature) has here the status of a fundamental anthropological principle, and as such it also has a wholly different significance. The limitation of rationality is not only a transcendental fact; in order to institute the sovereignty of rationality, the individual must experience that "When the sexual is once posited as the extreme point of the synthesis, no abstraction is of any avail. The task is of course to bring it under the qualification of the spirit" (6:169).

Adam's fear is thus an expression of the level of conflict between intentionality and determination by nature, where the latter element, out of a necessity that belongs to its very being, will make itself absolute. This primacy of the structural autonomy is reflected in the powerlessness of the individual: "for it was not he himself but anxiety, a foreign power, that laid hold of him" (6:137), or as it is formulated in a sketch: "psychologically speaking, the first sin always takes place in powerlessness, and therefore in one sense cannot be laid to the account of the sinner" (V B 55:21; cf. 6:153 and III A 233). In what follows, I shall examine in greater depth the sense in which this structural necessity is according to *Haufniensis*, different from logical necessity.

Malantschuk makes the anthropological significance of anxiety unclear when he distinguishes it categorically from "despair" by defining it ontologically as "the psychological level" or "the whole area of the human being's synthesis of soul and body", while "despair" is defined as in disproportion to "the eternal element in the human being", *i.e.*, the "higher level where the spirit reveals itself".³⁵⁰ I would make the following objection here: anxiety is essentially related to "spirit" or to self-determination. It is impossible to misunderstand *Haufniensis* on this point. This basic possibility is the fundamental meaning of human being's immanent "eternity". Anxiety is, in general terms, the psychological expression for "despair", since this is the category for the defective relationship to oneself. Thus it is not a "stage" or a "prior position",³⁵¹ but a totality of genetic forms or "stages". Adam's anxiety is prototypical

of one of these, namely, that which corresponds to a merely dawning (and thereby defective) relationship to oneself.

C. Determination and Freedom

It is the structural necessity involved in the removal of naivety and the reshaping of the totality of life into the two-dimensional constellation of rationality and irrationality that Haufniensis - precisely because of this dual foundation in ontologically autonomous moments - wishes to demarcate clearly over against both a natural-organic self-regulation (cf. VIII 1 A 182) and a logically necessary process. Since both forms of autonomy are involved, the totality cannot be understood one-sidedly on the basis of only one of them. In concrete confrontation with *Hegelianism*, it is the latter explanatory model that has practical priority: “Innocence, unlike immediacy, is not something that must be annulled, something whose quality is to be annulled, [...] immediacy is not annulled by mediation, but when mediation appears, in the same moment it has annulled immediacy” (6:131).

These somewhat cryptic formulations allude clearly to Hegel’s *logic*, aiming at the starting-point of his logic in a negation of the concrete consciousness which Hegel calls “beginning unreservedly at the beginning with its immediacy [*unbefangen von vorn bei ihrer Unmittelbarkeit anzufangen*]”.³⁵² According to Haufniensis, this concept of the immediate does not adequately cover the immediate, *i.e.*, that which is hidden for consciousness, the exchange of mental intentional control and sensuous receptivity which characterizes naivety, because the concept absolutizes one single element in the situation, namely intentionality (rational monism). Ultimately, there are *two axioms in the understanding of reality* which here stands in mutual antithesis.

To the extent of which it is at all possible to speak of contrary arguments on the basis of this, *i.e.*, irreconcilable fundamental presuppositions, Haufniensis’ principal charge against Hegelianism is that it makes a mess of ethics through the consistency with which it deprives the individual of personal responsibility: “It is indeed unethical to say that innocence must be annulled, for even if it were annulled at the moment this is uttered, ethics forbids us to forget that it is annulled only by guilt” (6:130).

The connection between Haufniensis’ defense of personal responsibility and his concession to an anthropological-structural necessity can be expressed as follows: only a conception that maintains the *ontological heterogeneity of reality* makes this combination not only possible, but also necessary. This is the “fundamental-ontological” basis for SK’s anthropology, which is an explication of the connection between determination and freedom. It is against this background that we must understand the theory of the “leap” which Haufniensis elaborates as a general ontological characteristic of the negation of naivety within the moral self-consciousness.

In its form as mental-corporal synthesis, ontological heterogeneity is the structural basis of consciousness; it is an intensification of the psychical control thanks to language. This

intensification of a duality represents a qualitative change; it constitutes the asymmetrical structure of consciousness: “Consciousness is mind, there everything is trichotomous (three elements belong to the most insignificant sensuous consciousness). - In the world of mind, one always becomes three” (IV B 10:12), or, formulated more precisely: “when one is divided in the world of the mind, there are three, never two” (IV B 1, p. 148). Consciousness, as self-transcendence, is the absolutely fundamental “leap” (cf. VII 1 A 186, p. 126) in human reality, and all the forms of “leap” within this sphere are concretizations of this possibility. The unity between determination and freedom is based on *consciousness's self-transcendence*. Determination is not an accidental starting-point for freedom, but a necessary element of this, since transcendence is possible only on the basis of facticity. This defines freedom also as *concrete freedom*, because determination gives it its contents.

Haufniensis' *complementary analysis of moral self-consciousness* from, respectively, a “psychological” and an “ethical” angle reflects this basic structure in consciousness. The aspect of determination is the theme of the “psychological-quantitative” analysis: “The subject of which psychology treats must be something in repose that remains in a restless repose, not something restless that always either produces itself or is repressed” (6:119).

The point in this somewhat fluid and poetic formulation is not that a form of consciousness or of existence appears as a static reality when it is examined from a psychological angle but, on the contrary, that the change and development which are observed are situated within a defined framework and are thereby understood as a continuous process of events. This framework is defined by an overarching anthropological perspective, which, unlike the psychological approach, has a *normative character* because it is this that first of all qualifies a psychical stratum as a form of existence, *i.e.*, as a normative reality. The study of the psychological mechanisms in naivety presupposes the anthropological concept of moral consciousness as the counterpart to naivety. It is only in relation to this normative qualification that psychological understanding can subsume human reality under the category of what “continues to have its quantitative determinability” (6:132). This last is reduced to a “disposing presupposition” for morality (6:120). Within this framework, it must necessarily retain qualitative relationships or “ideality” as the basis for a quantitative relationship, since what is involved is what Anti-Climacus calls “a graduation in the consciousness of the self” (15:133), just as Adam's “disposition” (6:132) for moral self-consciousness is determined by language or the moral imperative.

While *psychology* studies their determination as a nexus of unconscious *mechanisms* and corresponding “reactive” experiences, the overarching *anthropological* understanding relates to consciousness's *self-transcendence*, the actual and potential negation of facticity or the unconscious. The degree and kind of this negation or form of consciousness is relative to the determinate contents of consciousness, the verbal possibilities of identification. The moral imperative in the case of Adam has the particular character, as has been shown, of actualizing the unconscious interplay between the mental-intentional dimension and the corporeal-

sensuous dimension. It is this structural consistency that determines the form of consciousness as self-consciousness in the decisive sense of the word.

The fact that this constitution of self-consciousness is a “leap” in ontological terms is not, however, based on this specific content of consciousness, namely, the demand for moral-intentional control of sexuality. The transition occurs when the imperative takes on an experiential evidential character by acquiring personal validity “by his act” (6:133). Human freedom, in its fundamental anthropological significance, is not created through moral “enlightenment” but through the individual’s self-transcendence in confrontation with the moral demand: “Ethics points to ideality as a task and assumes that every man possesses the requisite conditions” (6:115). The anthropological basis of ethics is the essentially “practical” character of consciousness in general, *i.e.*, that it is a unity of determination and transcendence which, precisely for this reason, becomes self-transcendence.

As a determined transcendence, self-transcendence is limited and not pure productivity. It therefore implies contingency or ontic openness. It is this ontic openness that makes possible forms of existence that denies the very condition of their own possibility. The transcendence may be distorted into productivity, “something existing in an imaginary manner, made infinite in abstraction” (15:91), or else the determination can hypostatize itself into becoming a genus-existence, so that the individual might “permit it self to be tricked out of its self by “the others” (Ibid.).

Holl holds that he hits a weak point in SK with the following view: “How many small, indeed utterly tiny causes and effects establish a causal nexus which calls into question his theory of how things come into being, even if ultimately there occurs a decision and hence a leap”.³⁵³ This must almost be counted as an elementary mistake of reading: SK never meant to claim that anything “came into being” without a “causal nexus” (cf., e.g., IV A 60 and XI A 468).

The anthropological justification of the “leap” in consciousness as self-transcendence makes completely superfluous that type of sophistic defense of Haufniensis’ complementary line of thought, which *Nordentoft* establishes. For, when he holds that “some of the book’s formulations must be read as the expression of a radical indeterminism”³⁵⁴ this is a consequence of his lack of agreement with the basic principles of the analysis. *Nordentoft*’s confusion of the leap with the “cause” (“årsag”, a concept that thereby takes on a double significance) is also the false foundation for the artificial antithesis he constructs between Haufniensis and Anti-Climacus.³⁵⁵

Lønning’s question about the extent to which the genetic-psychological analysis (which he also permits himself to call “that which is meaningless among the questions of the work”) “abandons the strictly existential interest”,³⁵⁶ is based both on a misunderstanding of the schism between anthropological insight and existential realization and on a corresponding inability to perceive clearly SK’s anthropological-philosophical intention. The “leap” in the sense of a personal-ethical condition of responsibility for the determined state is not only an

“existential standpoint”, but also a structure in human reality as a whole, which I have called an essential possibility.

D. The Historicity of Determination

The conflict between nature and spirit, or between corporeality and intentionality, is an actualization of essential possibilities. But this takes place in a particular socio-cultural context, because the individual is essentially part of a historical-contingent totality. The structural dichotomy in personality is manifested by social process. In what follows, I shall examine one aspect of this dependence, namely *the historical contingency and variation, which, thereby are linked to the structural necessity*.

In the interpretation of the figure of Adam, this relationship is compressed into the moral imperative of the control of the instincts. This moral imperative is a cultural element compatible in principle with most forms of ethos, which are culturally determinative: but here there is no doubt that we have a reflection of its specific version in the Christian tradition. A alludes to this historical specification when he says that “Christianity has brought sensuality into the world”, viz. through its interpretation of self-determination as the negation of sensuality (2:60; cf. 6:161). The overarching perspective for this interpretation is the already-mentioned dialectic between ontogenesis and phyllo-genesis. SK never gives a fundamental explanation of this relationship; for him it is, in a general form, a mode of thought he shares with the idealistic tradition. It is especially in *The Concept of Anxiety* that he examines in greater depth how the individual’s self-realization is conditioned in a variety of ways by collective history. Haufniensis’ thesis is: “man is *individuum* and as such simultaneously himself and the whole race, and in such a way that the whole race participates in the individual and the individual in the whole race” (6:124).

We may define the structure of the determination resulting from this incorporation into the human collective as follows: since the collective has an ontogenetic basis, *i.e.*, is constituted through individual self-development in interaction, it functions as a kind of “pattern” for the self-constitution of the individual in question. *The ontogenesis is preformed by the collectively projected ontogenesis in historical facticity*. This situation is formulated by Haufniensis in the following passage: “At every moment, the individual is both himself and the race. This is man’s perfection viewed as a state. It is also a contradiction, but a contradiction is always the expression of a task; and a task is movement, but a movement that as a task is the same as that to which the task is directed is an historical movement” (6:124). The main point is not the view of “existential philosophy” that history constitutes a potential for “the choice of self-understanding”, although this can form a secondary aspect or consideration. The anthropological basis for such an existential eclectic is, rather, the objective participation of the individual in the collective. This means that self-understanding or *self-realization in its concrete content is preformed by historical facticity*. In general

ontological categories, we can say that what is involved is an antithesis between reality and being, or form and content.

The possibility of structuring the mental-corporal synthesis as “self-reality” in a pregnant sense - what Haufniensis calls “the same point as its task” - is a datum of human existence. This is why “the individual begins constantly anew” (6:125). The pole of reality or object for self-constitution however exists only through the individual’s factual situation, which is first of all a datum independent of the activity of the subject. This situation constitutes what we can call *the concrete determination*. It is the ontic correlative to the determination as structurally necessary element in the self-constitution.

In agreement with the problem of the connection between sexuality and self-determination as posed in *The Concept of Anxiety*, the reference to this concrete determination is concentrated on that aspect of the collective situation which is most relevant to this problematic, viz. the cultural and psychological expression of *the split between intentionality and corporeality*. One must admit that Haufniensis’ views on this point are rather summary and disconnected, as well as being so intimately linked to the specifically Christian-dogmatic evaluation of self-determination as a sin (cf. 6:167) that it is difficult to attribute a clear universal anthropological significance to them. The dominant dogmatic concept here is that of original sin as a progressive-quantitative process that “sinfulness has now attained a greater power, and hereditary is growing” (6:145). Any philosophical-anthropological approach to this complex must consist in a clarification of the psychological-cultural aspects of this normativity.

The main idea on this level is that “Anxiety in a later individual is more reflective as a consequence of his participation in the history of the race” (6:145). This means that the anxiety which is structurally generated from ontological heterogeneity and the possibility for self-determination which this gives, both undergo a general intensification thanks to the historical-cultural development. In order to understand Haufniensis’ argumentation on this point, it is necessary to bear in mind that, despite his “demythologizing” or ideal-typical interpretation of the narrative of the Fall, he thinks on the basis of the mythological idea of Adam as primal human being. It is only in this perspective that it becomes possible to speak of the intensification of anxiety as a consequence of the “situation of procreation”, the situation in which the individual is the product of a sexual union. This is the biological basis for the further context of life, “the historical situation”. “The procreated individual is more sensuous than the original, and this “more” is the universal “more” of the generation for every subsequent individual in relation to Adam” (6:162). Haufniensis finds an expression of this in the myth of creation itself, conceiving Eve’s relationship to Adam as a “derivation”, having the consequence that “anxiety is reflected more in Eve than in Adam” (6:155; cf. 6:140).

Despite the lack of clarity in the exposition of this, due to an inconsistent concession to the mythological-symbolic mode of thought, the anthropological point in this line of argument is clear enough, even if it is not very explicit: for “derivation” (6:155) is an expression denoting the fact that the human being’s corporeality is the absolute condition for physical existence at

all. Thus the anxiety, which is generated from this situation, is identical with the genetic primary anxiety, which is constituted in the structural tension between corporeality and intentionality: the figure of Adam is the typological expression of this. One can get the impression that this anxiety is secondary in relation to biological origin. But this is due to the mythological fiction that Adam's corporeality is thought of as independent of this origin. In anthropological terms, one cannot at all on this level speak of degrees of anxiety or of sensuality, since such a gradation is an historical concretization of a structural necessity, *i.e.*, a product of the psychological-cultural context. Haufniensis himself states this when he speaks of the "general 'more' for every later individual" (6:162) or says, that "[t]he difference exists for all later individuals *in pleno*" (6:155).

Nordentoft claims that we have here "a strange theory about how anxiety is inherited from generation to generation [...] a piece of speculation in biological heredity".³⁵⁷ This is a misunderstanding caused by his "confusion" between the matter of interpretation, namely, the mythological-symbolic material, and the interpretation itself. The fact that Haufniensis is not wholly unambiguous on this point should not prevent us from interpreting it in keeping with his general line of thought.

The general link between biological derivation and the intensification of the potential for anxiety in the historical context is that it is the basis for the *numerical* aspect in this context, *i.e.*, the whole dimension of the link between generations. The relationship between the experience of anxiety and this whole dimension can, however, scarcely be conceived of in linear terms, *i.e.*, as an increase in anxiety proportional to the numerical growth of the human race: that would mean a naturalization of history or, in other words, the removal of its most profoundly personal dimension. The most that can be in question here is the general possibility of such intensification. Haufniensis' exposition of this connection is limited to the following general hypothetical sentence: "On the other hand, anxiety will be more reflective in a subsequent individual than in Adam, because the quantitative accumulation left behind by the race now makes itself felt in that individual" (6:145).

If we take this argument in itself, the meaning is, to put it mildly, unclear. For if it is the case that the concept of "reflected" or intensified anxiety comes from the quasi-anthropological (mythical) idea of Adam as corporeal being without any biological origin, and therefore as really identical with the anxiety he represents, then this concept has been exhaustively explained and there is no scope for attributing any explanatory value to the extent of the situation of inheritance itself. We must, therefore, understand this view, as it is formulated here, as a quasi-anthropological reflection of the dogmatic axiom that "original sin is increasing" (6:145). Ultimately, Haufniensis himself disavows this line of thought by accentuating the contingency or the individual variation in the intensity of anxiety: "But this "more" of anxiety and sensuousness for every subsequent man in relation to Adam may, of course, signify a more or a less in the particular individual. Here lie differences that in truth are so appalling (...). What Scripture teaches, that God avenges the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation, life proclaims loudly enough" (6:163).

The reason for the historical growth in the potential for anxiety thus does not lie in biological necessity, but in what we may generally define as *ethical reality*, the modes of existence and action in the human collective. And “quantitative growth” is only one necessary element in this process. Nothing lies further from Haufniensis’ intention than to agitate in favor of a general theory of degeneration; in this context that would mean a naturalistic interpretation of the dogma of original sin. Expressions pointing in this direction are the result of a defective harmonizing of traditional mythological-dogmatic concepts and the anthropological-psychological analysis. The former is more a framework that defines the problem than the real object of explicit interpretation, as Haufniensis has made clear in the program of his essay.

The intensity of the individual’s experience of anxiety is, thus, determined generally by the relationship to the psychological cultural context, itself a product of personal ethical realization. The chief channel for this influence is *moral tradition* and internalization, since these reflect the ontogenetic constitution of the collective and thereby and only in this way - actualize the moral past which Haufniensis calls, in biblical terms “the sins of the fathers”. The moral tradition is initially a uniform, unvarying reality, as is also the case with the given potential for anxiety. The individual variation, which is emphasized so strongly, must be explained in part (to the extent that it can be explained) by means of modifications of the general moral tradition, which occur thanks to the social form of the link between the generations, namely, *the family*. This form of life has its primitive justification in the very form of the biological origin of the human person. It is against this background we can understand why Haufniensis is so concerned with this situation and can even use an expression like “the consequences of nature” (6:163) to speak of the determining situation.

It is this narrower moral environment, *i.e.*, within the framework of education and influence of the family, that forms the basis for the differentiation of anxiety, that is to say, the varying intensity of the individual’s experience of the conflict between corporeality and intentionality. This is clear when we are told that “a maximum” of anxiety will arise when “an individual, from his earliest awakening is placed and influenced in such a way that sensuousness for him has become identical with sinfulness” (6:165). As has been shown earlier, the structural basis for this outcome or effect lies in the defenseless openness of the naive consciousness, and this because of the lack of self-determination. This consciousness is not transparent to itself. Rather, it is a *tabula rasa* open to conditioning by the cultural reality around it. When “the individual confounds himself with his historical knowledge of sinfulness” (6:165), this, occurs as merely the intellectual consequence of a structural necessity. Naturally, the fact that it occurs is conditioned by a certain level of intellectual equipment which not all individuals receive, but which was certainly bestowed on the person whose painful experiences are reflected in Haufniensis’ argumentation.

It is at this last point that the biological factor enters with a meaning different from the one mentioned hitherto, namely, as a *differentiation of the mental constitution*. This genetic basis is then an active element in the concrete mental *habitus* formed in the psychological-cultural

environment and which forms the total receptivity, “a psychological intermediate term” (6:165), for the influence that creates anxiety; the genetic basis makes it possible “that the example has so much power” (6:165). Haufniensis does not discuss this biological factor that brings about differentiation, but there is no doubt that it is an underlying premise in his argumentation. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the following reasoning: “Within the Christian difference, this ‘more’ may again signify a more and a less. This is owing to the relation of the particular innocent individual to his historical environment. In this respect, the most dissimilar things may produce the same effect. [...] A warning may bring an individual to succumb to anxiety (...), although of course the warning was intended to do the opposite. The sight of the sinful may save one individual and bring another to fall. A jest may have the same effect of seriousness, but also the opposite. Speech and silence can produce an effect opposite to what was intended. In this respect there are no limits” (6:164).

The link here between the intensity of anxiety and the genetic-biological aspect in the mental constitution can, however, scarcely be interpreted to imply that biological heredity as such would be determined or modified by history as a personal-ethical reality, *i.e.*, included in what a dogmatic concept calls the historical consequences of sin. It is primarily in light of the fundamental basis of SK’s anthropology that such a view must be seen to be an untenable interpretation. Such an interpretation is incompatible with the basic idea at which Anti-Climacus hints in the following argument: “If the synthesis were the disproportion, then despair would not exist at all, despair would then be something that lies in human nature as such” (15:75).

One must admit that there are aspects of the argumentation in *The Concept of Anxiety* that appear to point in the opposite direction, e.g., the situation in which two forms of the maximizing of anxiety are involved, within “the generational relationship” and within “the historical relationship” (cf. 6:163f). We must, however, attribute this to a weakness in the arrangement of the material, which once again is related to the link between these ideas and the mythological idea of the primal human being. If we relativize this division, the distinction between the two forms of anxiety can still be given a meaning that is philosophically relevant.

That “maximum” that “*anxiety about the sin produces sin*” (6:163) can then refer to the historical modification of the genetic, *a priori* mental structure. In this way, the historical modification becomes commensurable with the ethical dimension of the situation of inheritance or the “sin of the fathers”, which can imprint itself (so to speak) on the mental structure of psychological interaction during the earliest years of an individual’s life. We have many examples showing SK to be thinking along these lines, *i.e.*, that historical situations turn into a *quasi-nature*, in harmony with the fact that this way of thinking is a primary element in one’s own self-understanding (cf., e.g., X 3 A 789): “It is a dreadful thing if a person’s consciousness from childhood on has been under a pressure which all the resilience of the soul and all the energy of freedom cannot remove. Sorrow in life can certainly oppress the consciousness, but if the sorrow comes for the first time in later years it does not have time to become essentially formative; it remains an historical element, not something which

encompasses, as it were, consciousness itself” (IV A 60). In a later memorandum from 1849, he speaks more generally, of “all unhappy individualities” who “usually have a background of a faulty childhood” (X 1 A 468).

What Haufniensis defines as “the historical situation” is the context, or the source, of this quasi-naturalistic process. Because of the contingency in psychological-cultural determination as a whole, the individual can have a looser relationship to this process than to the result of the process in the form of a mental *habitus*. The anxiety born more directly from the determination as “context” is constituted by means of a form of primitive self-reflection. The individual applies the moral demands of his environment as a criterion for his own self-evaluation, so that “*the individual, in anxiety not about becoming guilty but about being regarded as guilty*” (6:165). What is involved here is a more reflected mode of moral internalization that creates anxiety and thereby also has less effect on the mental structure itself. The more “history” there is, the less “nature” will there be.

I must point out that, because of the lack of clarity in what Haufniensis says on this point, this interpretation carries a high degree of uncertainty. It is, however, certain that *Malantschuk* oversimplifies Haufniensis’ argumentation on the basis of a popular-psychological version of the division between heredity and environment when he identifies “the generational relationship” with “the hereditary burden which the individual receives from his parents”, without relating this more precisely to “the consequences of the historical situation, what one would sometimes call today the influence of the environment”.³⁵⁸ There is no doubt that the purely biological inheritance is a determining factor in the individual’s experience of reality and is thereby also relevant to the specific experience of the conflict between corporeality and intentionality. But the “burden” which Haufniensis primarily has in mind, the individual disposition to anxiety, refers first of all to the mental *habitus*, which is constituted in the dialectic between the genetic basis and the psychological-moral environment. It is only in this way that “the sins of the fathers”, the historical life-context, becomes a factor in the situation of inheritance.

Christensen is guilty of a similar oversimplification when he states, as if the question were unproblematic, that “the consequence of the relationship of the generations” “corresponds to the propagation of original sin”, and even believes that he can find an expression of this in “examples of hereditary damage”. This “naturalistic” misunderstanding makes his question about “the exemplary influence, or the propagation of hereditary dispositions; which of these is essential in the transmission of original sin?” an unreal problematic.³⁵⁹

E. Disintegration and Synthesis

I shall now return to the main anthropological line found in the first part of *The Concept of Anxiety* the point that sexuality is a constituent element in moral consciousness or in self-consciousness as a whole. Because of the book’s overall orientation to the problematic of original sin, the clarification of this point is to be found here, and only in a fragmentary

manner, in chapter II, which essentially deals with sexuality as the basis for the intensity of the experience of anxiety, *i.e.*, the aspect which I have analyzed above. This makes the identity, in principle, of guilt and sexuality rather unclear since the concept of guilt is extended to moral prohibitions in general as, for example, in the view that one “becomes guilty out of anxiety of being looked upon as guilty”.

The anthropological history of constitution, which Adam represents typologically, is the development of the harmony of mind and body in naivety in the direction of its immanent collapse. Sexuality signifies in principle the emancipation of corporeality from mental-intentional control. This *existential dichotomy* is the structural condition, which permits the original synthesis between body and mind to be lifted above the factual-receptive fluctuation in primitive consciousness, in that it is brought in its entirety under intentional control. This is the general structure of self-determination: “In the moment the spirit posits itself, it posits the synthesis, but in order to posit the synthesis it must first dividually pervade it, and the ultimate point of the sensuous is precisely the sexual” (6:142).

As has been shown, this possibility of division is made known in the anxiety concerning a sexuality, which has not yet been experienced, so that this anxiety takes on the same originality as the anxiety concerning freedom or self-determination. Anxiety is naivety’s presentiment of its own demise in confrontation with the sexual taboo: “it constantly disturbs the relation between soul and body, a relation that indeed has persistence and yet does not have endurance, inasmuch as it first receives the latter by the spirit” (6:138). Its structure is *ambivalence*, which corresponds to ontological heterogeneity. It is related to a self-contradictory possibility, both to sexuality as the negation of intentionality and to intentionality as the negation of this negation, *i.e.*, sexuality’s intentional control.

This constitutional perspective is (to say the least) much watered down in *Nordentoft’s* interpretation, when he - probably thanks also to his intention to portray SK in relief against Freud - seems to want to find the primary object or occasion of anxiety in a “repressed” sexuality. “The sensuality which is emancipated in this way, wins psychological influence over the development of the single individual. The individual perceives it to be sinful, and thereby it awakens anxiety”.³⁶⁰ It is, however, impossible to speak of the repression of a reality, which, strictly speaking, does not exist. This “repression” of sexuality is identical on this level with the moral imperative, which the individual does not understand, since he lacks the experience that would make it relevant. The correct element in Nordentoft’s reasoning is that the linguistic identification is a necessary element in the constitution of the phenomenon itself, “that sexuality is stimulated”, as he puts it.³⁶¹

While the Assessor gives expression to the idealistic regulative principle concerning the harmonious integration of the erotic determined by nature and the moral ideality of intentionality (cf. 3:49), Haufniensis represents anthropological realism. He focuses on the crisis and its conditions, *i.e.*, the structure of realization in ethical self-constitution.

The possibility of division is expressed in psychological and emotional terms as a dawning consciousness of sex, what Haufniensis defines as “modesty”, characteristic, in the history of

ideas, of the Greek consciousness or naivety (cf. 6:156, 2:89). “In modesty there is anxiety, because spirit is found at the extreme point of the difference of the synthesis in such a way that spirit is not merely qualified as body but as body with a generic difference. Nevertheless, modesty is knowledge of the generic difference, but not as a relation to a generic difference, which is to say, the sexual urge as such is not present. The real significance of modesty is that the spirit so to speak cannot acknowledge itself as the extreme point of the synthesis” (6:159). Here the abstract “knowledge” of sexuality, which is communicated to the individual by the moral imperative, is losing its abstract character. It is translated into the concrete reality of the individual through his experience of an inexplicable correspondence between language and reality. *The imperative has become relevant in the experience of shame over one’s own body*, even if in modesty it is an essential element the individual does not understand the reason for it. Shame is the unknowing form of knowledge of sexuality, a knowledge that “does not dare to understand it” (6:160). This progression from the abstract level, *i.e.*, the linguistic possibility of identification or anticipation, towards the concrete, the emotional verification, is of course determined by the sheer biological process of coming to maturity. Without this autonomous line of development, the imperative would never become genuinely relevant. Reference is made to this biological basis for modesty when we are told that “anxiety in modesty can awaken by itself” (6:159), or as it is formulated in the sketches, “through the mere sight of itself” (V B 53:50).

Geismar’s definition of modesty as “the protest of the sexual stratum against the division of the personality”³⁶² is so wide of the mark that one can take it only as a lapse in formulation, which however reflects his dominant scheme of “strata” in the personality. Not only is it meaningless to attribute this kind of “spiritual” protest to sexuality; modesty is a function precisely of the division of the personality. The intentionality “protests” against annexation by its vegetative substratum. In other words, the “moral individual” does not wish to acknowledge the body as a part of his own reality.

Despite the evidential character of experience in relation to sexuality, which is characteristic of modesty, this last is located in principle within the framework of a harmony between body and mind. The pregnant formula for this is that it is “the reposing (---) the purely erotic” (6:159). This expression corresponds to the concept of “beauty”, the category for the mind’s control over corporeality (cf. 6:156, 2:61). It coincides likewise with the Assessor’s concept of “first love”, which appears to stand for an instinct less in the form of sexuality (cf. 3:25, 7:142) anticipating sexuality proper. Sexuality proper is first constituted in the moment when the individual becomes conscious of what is unconsciously expressed in anxiety and modesty, *viz.*, corporeality as a “foreigner” (6:160) or as an autonomous reality in relation to intentionality. This happens when sexuality expresses itself as an instinct in virtue of biological necessity. The individual stands at the intersection of two forces or authorities which exclude each other: “spirit cannot participate in the culmination of the erotic” (6:162), since it is a spiritual-intentional being and therefore cannot “sink down into the vegetative” (6:138).

On the other hand, as I have said, this division of the personality is a precondition for the primacy of consciousness. The mythological expression for this is: “By the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, the distinction between good and evil came into the world, but also the sexual difference as a drive” (6:166). The coincidence of moral consciousness with sexuality is a decisive stage in the anthropological teleology towards total self-communication. The emancipation of corporeality in sexuality makes possible the relation to oneself as a relation to the totality of mind and body. The essential point in the relation with oneself is intentional control over the passive-receptive exchange in this dimension. The control depends on the separation or objectification of the poles of the exchange. What is involved here is, of course, the principle starting-point for this self-penetration, not its concrete realization.

The categorical expression for such a synthesis is that it is identical with “selfishness” (6:167), which is also the primary anthropological concept regulating the existential analysis in *The Sickness Unto Death*. While Anti-Climacus essentially describes defective forms of the constitution of the self, Haufniensis presents a positive-constitutional basis for the constituting of the self as a whole. In the first case, “not to be conscious of having a self” (15:73, 99) is established as the basic or “inauthentic” form of a defective relationship to oneself; here, it is made clear how this consciousness, or the possibility of it, is developed in its primitive form.

The antithesis between corporeality and intentionality makes the individual pay attention to himself as a unique individuality, “For selfishness is precisely the particular, and what this signifies only the individual can know as a single individual” (6:167). This consciousness of individuality is constituted in experiencing the antithesis between the *particularity* that results from bodily limitation and *the universality*, which is proper to intentionality: “But “self” signifies precisely the contradiction of positing the universal as the particular” (6:167). It is against this background we must understand the earlier observation that “anxiety is of all things the most selfish” because it is “the possibility of every concretion” (6:153). It is only the constitution of the self, which makes the human person’s existence genuinely concrete. As a relationship to the totality of the circumstances of existence, self-constitution is a *conscious synthesis* of the particular and the universal, *i.e.*, of corporeality and intentionality.

It is a meaningless neutralization of the constitutional intention in Haufniensis’ line of reasoning, when the editor asserts that anxiety’s “self-oriented” character means “that, in its endeavor to keep clear of the choice between spirit and nature, it is concerned exclusively with its own self”. This is to abolish the essential ambivalence of anxiety, its antipathetic-sympathetic character: and this is plainly a contradiction of the categorical definition of anxiety. In virtue of this neglect, the individual is equipped with an unambiguously “selfish” intention that he cannot have in anxiety’s openness, since this points precisely to the “self” as a removal of the conflict through the “choice” of this conflict. This kind of construing of an ontological-structural view as ontic seems to be widespread among Kierkegaard-researchers. Here are a couple of representative examples: In an otherwise excellent excursus on this

theme, *Henriksen* says that the existential task at this point consists in “leaving behind and renouncing that which belongs to the self”, justifying this by a reference to *Haufniensis*’ description of Christianity as the negation of sexuality.³⁶³ There can be no doubt that that which is selfish (in its concrete ethical significance) must be denied, but it is identical neither to sexuality nor with what is here defined as “that which belongs to the self”. This latter also forms the constitutional basis for “self-denial”, and this all the more so in that it is the human person’s resistance to an immanent demand for self-determination or for taking responsibility for oneself which is the origin of life’s ethical failures: for example, it leads the individual to exclude altogether ethical inter-subjectivity in “the empty abstraction of inclosing reserve” (6:207).

We find a similar misunderstanding in *Malantschuk*’s paraphrase of *Begrebet Angest* (The Concept of Anxiety), where the selfish character of anxiety is expounded as follows: “This sentence expresses the position that the body by itself, with its possibilities (although no concrete decision is taken), is something extremely selfish, and therefore tempts the human person to remain in anxiety”.³⁶⁴ It is the opposite that is true: anxiety is “selfish” only to the extent that it points to the negation of possibility in the conscious act. The point of the sentence quoted is clear enough: it seeks to accentuate the intentional aspect of the act (here, of sexuality): although sexuality (so to speak) overwhelms the individual *qua* natural impulse (“takes place [...] in weakness”, 6:153), nevertheless (“also”) it is, structurally speaking, an event for which the individual as a being with a conscious will accepts responsibility: and precisely in this manner it becomes an action in a fuller or more pregnant sense. It is thus a unity of event and action. *Haufniensis*’ use of the term “that which belongs to the self” to characterize a constitutional aspect is entirely traditional, and ought thus not to be open to misunderstanding in this external context, as in the internal context, viz. within the body of *SK*’s writings. According to *Sibbern*, (it is a question of) “selfish, egotistic utterances” about the fundamental situation in which “an ego constitutes itself as ego”.³⁶⁵

In order to make visible the course of such a synthesis, we can begin with another mistaken interpretation by *Malantschuk*, his interpretation of the sentence, “Hence anxiety is the dizziness of freedom, which emerges when the spirit wants to posit the synthesis, and freedom looks down into its own possibility, laying hold of finiteness to support itself. Freedom succumbs in this dizziness” (6:152). *Malantschuk* comments on this argument: “Theoretically, the individual could overcome anxiety of the possibilities through freedom, but because of his weakness, the human person seeks support in finitude, in that which is certain in this world. [...] This means that the human person wishes to avoid individual endeavors by conforming to the world, to finitude, and becoming completely like the others”.³⁶⁶ This is a highly misleading transposition of *SK*’s otherwise clear ethic-existential pathos unto a level appropriate to anthropological structural analysis. The passage quoted is a poetic expression for the situation I have called *the structural unity or contemporaneity between self-determination and self-alienation*. In the present context, the fact that the individual “takes hold of finitude as something to hang onto” denotes not his taking refuge in

conventional anonymity but quite simply that the individual is overwhelmed and determined in the control over his own life by the sexual instinct, *i.e.*, by what I have described as the separation of the corporeal factor from the symbiosis of mind and body, which in turn is the condition for freedom as self-determination in relation to the existential totality.

Unlike Malantschuk, *Knud Hansen* sees that what is involved in this negation of freedom or intentionality is that sexuality is the indicator of finitude. But like Malantschuk, he fails to see the constitutional logic, involved here when he constructs the false opposition between synthesis and antithesis, an opposition obscuring the basis of the synthesis in the antithesis or in the existential division. "Instead of 'establishing the synthesis' and thereby bringing corporeality into its correct relationship to spirit, the individual is overwhelmed by a fit of fainting, and when he reaches out to something in this condition, he takes hold of finitude".³⁶⁷ Hansen disregards the point that the "correct relationship" depends on the presence to the consciousness of the alternatives ("choose between nature and spirit"), but it is precisely this presence, the consciousness of corporeality that is constituted when one "takes hold of finitude as something to hang onto". Once again, we find a corresponding mode of expression and thinking in *Sibbern*, who sees "a determinate and fixed relationship to the world" as a necessary precondition for a fundamental self-consciousness since, without this, the individual will "totter and faint".³⁶⁸

The idea that human freedom could be realized without this "fall", *i.e.*, without the denial of intentional freedom through the emancipation of corporeality goes against the entire line of thought in *The Concept of Anxiety*. The apperception of corporeality is the decisive or "extreme" point for *identification with "finitude"*, which in turn is a necessary element in the self-constitution as self-identity, *i.e.*, a "synthesis of infinitude and finitude that relates itself to itself" (15:87). The ontic counterpart to such an "idealistic" conception of an absolute or self-regulating subjectivity is what Anti-Climacus defines as "infinitude's despair", namely "to lack finitude" (15:88). This means that the individual pretends to deny that he belongs in factual finite reality.

The effect of the sexual instinct is thus that *the individual comes to consciousness of his essential finitude*, the corporeal particularity, which thereby becomes the starting-point for freedom as "totalitarian" self-determination. Freedom can be realized only in and through its own "destruction". This failure opens the way to its true task. In that freedom is lost as instinct follows its own laws, this happens in and of itself. The sexual expression is parasitic on intentionality. In other words, intentionality is present in a rudimentary form in the very negation of intentionality. This means further, that – thanks to the transcendence, which it has as its own proper law, resisting every factual limitation – intentionality will come into play directly as the negation of the negation.

The concrete expression of this structure is the moral evaluation, which corresponds to the internalized moral imperative about control of the instincts: "In that very moment everything is changed, and freedom, when it again raises, sees that it is guilty. Between these two moments lies the leap, which no science has explained and which no science can explain"

(6:153). Consciousness has immediately the content, the concrete intentionality, which is needed to effectuate the structurally necessary negation of the negation, since this content is already present as a catalyst for the first negation, viz. sexuality. Sexuality and consciousness of guilt, or moral self-consciousness, are equally original.

This consciousness of existential division or ontological heterogeneity is not yet the fully achieved synthesis, which constitutes the “self”, but it is the necessary basis for that synthesis. Awareness of the body is a necessary function in self-constitution. Thus, what is involved here is not an understanding of the body (as SK once put it in a sudden outburst of personal feeling) as “this fusty, perspiring mush-envelope” (VI A 103), but as an absolute condition of existence which the individual must accept and with which he must be reconciled if he is to be formed into an integrated personality. It is precisely the moral tradition which is the *de facto* background for Haufniensis’ argument, “the tendency of Christianity is to bring the spirit further” (6:161), that provides a possibility for the “spiritualistic” mistake: the claim, as the Assessor puts it, “that spirituality does not want to recognize the corruptible body in which it lives, this temporality in which it has its home, its transient residence, this piecemeal-ness out of which it must collect itself” (7:152).

This deficient acknowledgment of oneself is all the more catastrophic if it is linked to psychosomatic defects: this is what Haufniensis in his analysis of the demonic forms of personality characterizes as “freedom lost somatically-psychically” (6:218), based on a “disorganization” (6:205) or a reduced functionality in the relationship. The consequence is that “the body revolts” (6:218). Since self-determination presupposes control by the mind, that “the body is the organ of the psyche and in turn the organ of the spirit” (6:218), implies a sheerly factual obstacle to this form of existence. Unlike *Nordentoft*, I would claim that the reference here is to what he calls “somatic-genetic psychic conflicts”³⁶⁹ (something he believes SK does not appreciate), since it is clear that a causal function is attributed here to constitutional anomalies. When this is spoken of as an act of freedom, however, as the result of “when freedom conspires with the body against itself” (6:218), then this is quite simply because self-determination, in the structural sense, is within the grasp of the individual. Or, to put it in other terms, the psychosomatic imbalance finds expression in consciousness or the individual’s self-understanding (cf. V B 60, p. 133).

The point I wish to make here is that when lack of freedom is dependent on “the revolt of the body”, the significance attached to the consciousness of the duality of mind and soul and to the corresponding interaction as the basis of freedom is all the greater, *i.e.*, it demands a concrete level which goes beyond what is necessary in a normal process. To put it differently: an incomplete consciousness of the body will intensify the given psychosomatic defect.

Where the individual refuses “putting on the generic difference” (6:161), perhaps because of the intensity involved in the reception of his milieu’s moral demands, we have clearly a case of what psychoanalysis calls *repression*. Neither Haufniensis nor other pseudonyms follow this theme up in relation to sexuality, apart from mentioning personal disintegration as a general consequence; we can employ the Assessor’s expression, “various kinds of

eccentricity” (7:152), to characterize this, even if the range covered here is much wider. Repression (or what *Nordentoft*, with reference to a passage in *Either/Or II*, calls “*suppression*”) ³⁷⁰ is the object of attention in a more general sense, viz. as the genetic form of a defective relationship to one’s own self as a whole.

We find in *Anti-Climacus* a macroscopic (one could indeed say, a cultural-philosophical) elaboration of this concept: “There are very few persons who live even approximately within the qualification of spirit; indeed, there are not many who even try this life, and most of those who do soon back out of it” (15:112 f; cf. 18:63). The Assessor speaks more specifically in *Stages on Life’s Way* about “back away from a task”, *i.e.*, the task of “being true to oneself in one’s impression of childhood” (7:137). More generally, this means that self-determination or personal-ethical integration demands awareness and *recognition of psychological-cultural determination*. The pregnant expression for the consequence of such an escape-maneuver, the lack of self-identification, is “depression sooner or later” (7:138). “*Melancholy*” is the category proper to the situation where a repressed vital relationship hypostatizes itself to attain unconscious influence on consciousness.

The same fundamental anthropological conception underlies *Haufniensis*’ passage about sexuality that is disowned, when he says that the individual “leaps off” (6:161) in relation to the task with which sexuality confronts him, and thereby also avoids self-determination. Thus it is not sexuality alone that is repressed, but also the possibility of establishing that relationship to oneself which makes possible the acknowledgment or integration of sexuality. This holistic perspective - *i.e.*, the starting-point in a concept of the human person’s “being” which sees self-constitution as the integration of facticity thanks to the consciousness’s immanent possibility of self transcendence - makes it in principle impossible to define repression as a natural process, irrespective of the degree of natural-factual determination that might be involved.

Structurally speaking, every impregnation of the consciousness through *unconscious processes* is the result of a defective or incomplete self-determination or self-acceptance. SK is indeed clear that such a total penetration of one self is impossible in concrete terms. An idealistic theory of a transcendental ego, “a metaphysical I-I”, is of little avail when one cannot specify “how a person manages to exist in this manner” (8:272). This does not prevent it from standing as a regulatory ideal.

Against the background of a constitutional connection between sexuality and self-determination, it is necessary to conclude that where self-determination is clearly incomplete, or occurs on a false foundation, sexuality too will necessarily come to express itself in a disintegrating manner. A programmatic enjoyer of life like the aesthete A, or a cultivator of erotic pleasure like Johannes the Seducer, can scarcely be accused of being unconscious of their bodily-biological basis, but both are victims of a lack of acknowledgment of this side of their personality. In the reflexive hypertrophy, the duality of mind and body cements itself into a permanent existential division, and the result of this imbalance is, as always, *melancholy*, the plague of the aesthete. Against this background, the recipe found in

“*Vexeldriften*” [The Rotation Method] for “the art of forgetting and the art of recollecting” comes across as a measure aimed at preventing “the unpleasant” from “surprising a person with the full force of the sudden” (2:271). The Assessor declares this attempt to be an *illusion*, even if the goal of the attempt is precisely to create an illusion. It does not get beyond the facticity which it uses as material for self-creation: “*the person [...] always posits a condition that either lies outside the individual or is within the individual in such a way that it is not there by virtue of the individual himself*” (3:169; cf. 3:78). The prototype of this mode of existence is *Faust*, who, “precisely by willing to become sheer spirit finally succumbs to the wild revolt of sensuality” (7:161).

Haufniensis does not indicate more precisely how the task with which sexuality confronts self-determination, is to be carried out. The only point he makes is an implication of the structural antithesis between corporeality and intentionality: that the *unity* must take the form of a *moral relationship* which gives the instinct a place in the inter-subjectivity which is the very basis of the moral demand: “The realization of this is the victory of love in a person in whom the spirit is so victorious that the sexual is forgotten, and is recollected only in forgetfulness. When this has come about sensuousness is transfigured in spirit and anxiety is driven out” (6:169).

Such a brief indication shows that the perspective here is limited to the constitutional (or what Haufniensis calls the “psychological”) level, where the more precise specification of the moral position of consciousness is left to the moral tradition which is presupposed, or to the individual’s personal development within this tradition. In any case, it is untenable to adduce in this connection SK’s situationally-conditioned discussion of sexuality in the Church-struggle, as *Malantschuk* does, thus making the passage quoted above mean “that one lives with the sexual dimension as something forgotten, but yet as something that has once been a reality for oneself”.³⁷¹ The characterization of the situation as a unity of forgetting and remembering is only a poetic expression of the fact that sexuality is incorporated in an ethical-intentional horizon and therefore does not bring its power into play autonomously, as pure instinct. For if it is forgotten and not remembered, then it is suppressed, and will inevitably bring itself into play in a manner in keeping with its own being, threatening the control by consciousness, which constitutes freedom.

Sløk in general asserts with strength, and as his main view of SK’s anthropology, that “the task is to bring the entire given immediacy under the determination of the spirit (...), so that no utterance, not even that of sexuality, is permitted to be content with existence for the sake of its own purpose”.³⁷² But even he seems to underestimate the significance of sexuality in SK’s concept of personality. At the very least, he falls victim to a misunderstanding here, when he claims, in relation to Plato’s concept of eroticism, that SK’s position is that “the sexual element cannot be a member in the general function within which the human person realizes himself”.³⁷³ I have attempted to show that the opposite is the case: sexual awareness represents the ultimate point in awareness of one’s corporeality which in turn - as an indicator of finitude - is the necessary condition for a relationship to oneself as a totality. Against this

background, it is misleading to expound Haufniensis' sexual theory so as to make him or SK "hold out the prospect of an attitude in life where the sexual, as instinct, simply vanishes".³⁷⁴ What we have here is an over-interpretation, along the same lines as Malantschuk, of the expression "recollected only in forgetfulness" (cf. 6:169). If this refers to ethical-intentional control, the word "vanishes" is misleading.

We find the most effective argument against this idea of the absolute neutralization of sexual instinct in the programmatic thesis that "man is *individuum* and as such simultaneously himself and the whole race" (6:124) Since the instinct has "a *telos*, which is propagation" (6:159), an attempt to extinguish this must mean a rebellion against this condition of existence, totally against the golden rule that "Perfection in oneself is [...] the perfect participation in the whole" (6:125). The individual lives only as a parasite (a distorted form of participation) on the historical collective.

The same erroneous interpretation of the concept of sexuality appears in Sløk's commentary on A's discussion of the erotic stages. What is defined as moral essence in the Christianized culture is placed, without any intermediary stages, within the context of the structural anthropology. "There exists something that is purely bodily, a bodily function, which cannot be integrated into the personality in such a way that it is related to the mental dimension, or in such a way that it receives its specific ethical place in the human synthesis. The sexual function cannot be assigned a place under the spirit; it cannot be an expression of the ethical, but only of various, aesthetical ideas".³⁷⁵ This turns the whole line of thought on its head through the failure to see the dialectic point that "exclusion" is identical with, or a function of, the specification as "the act of assigning a place". The difference between the Assessor and the aesthete A, which Sløk refers to, is merely a difference in terms of the approach taken to the problematic of self-determination.

Sløk's attempt to come to terms with what he registers as an ambiguity here, by his assertion that "sexuality is lived under the determination of the spirit" if "the human person remains in the state of innocence" so that "sexuality does not experience a sheer bodily expression",³⁷⁶ is a *contradictio in adjecto* on the basis of Haufniensis' argument. For here sexuality is precisely the emancipation of bodiliness, and therefore is also "guilt" in the fundamental sense that the individual experiences himself as an ontologically heterogeneous reality.

F. Freedom

The *intentional control* of the unity of mind and body constitutes the structure of self-determination. Freedom is the category for the concrete form of this synthesis. Freedom is thus the concrete realization of the responsibility of guilt in relation to the totality of individual reality. *Consciousness of guilt* is the *conditio sine qua non* of real or concrete freedom, and to the extent that it is "repressed" (cf. 6:194), freedom is not realized, but (as for naivety) is only a possibility.

Structurally speaking, the possibility of freedom is rooted in guilt, but in its concretization it is the opposite of guilt (cf. 6:194), since guilt was the division of the existential reality, the antithesis between corporeality and intentionality. Freedom is the struggle for integration or the sovereignty of intentionality, *i.e.*, the task that is present in the consciousness of guilt. Freedom is thus the unity of self-identification and moral obligation or intention. “The good is freedom. The difference between good and evil is only for freedom and in freedom, and this difference is never *in abstracto*, but only *in concreto*. Therefore, for one not experienced in the Socratic method it is disturbing when Socrates instantly draws what is apparently infinitely abstract, the good, back to the most concrete. The method is entirely correct, except that he was mistaken (according to Greek thought, he acted correctly) in conceiving the good from its external side (the useful, the finitely teleological). The difference between good and evil is indeed for freedom, but not *in abstracto*. The misunderstanding arises because freedom is changed into something else, into an object of thought. But freedom is never *in abstracto*. If freedom is given a moment to choose between good and evil, a moment when freedom itself is neither one nor the other, then in that very moment freedom is not freedom, but a meaningless reflection. So for what purpose is the imaginary construction except to confuse?” (6:196)

The polemic in this passage is directed against the *moral-philosophical tradition*, which identifies human freedom with an ability to regulate the conduct of life in agreement with moral concepts, which in turn are established as universally valid by means of an abstraction from the concrete, “as knowledge” (6:196). It is not denied that this is a possible and necessary aspect in ethical self-realization; but SK disputes the suggestion that this provides an adequate concept of freedom, since it is merely presupposed as a “force” (6:194) or “*liberum arbitrium*” (6:197), without making clear how this possibility of moral self-regulation comes into existence.

Haufniensis has done this by demonstrating the necessary basis for freedom in the consciousness of the existential totality. As consciousness of guilt, this is as such an obligation vis-à-vis moral demand, and *eo ipso* in relation to individual facticity. *Moral consciousness* is constituted in a decisive sense only in this consciousness of the concrete, “consciousness of oneself”, which thus is not “contemplation”, but “action” (6:224). The moral concepts internalized in the naive consciousness can receive their concrete personal meaning and modification here. In the words of the Assessor, “The good is because I will it, and otherwise it is not at all. [...] The good is the being-in-and-for-itself, posited by the being-in-and-for-itself, and this is freedom” (3:208). Or, in other words: “The individual, then, becomes conscious as this specific individual with all these capacities, these inclinations, these drives, these passions, influenced by this specific social milieu, as this specific product of a specific environment. But as he becomes aware of this, he takes upon himself responsibility for it all. [...] He chooses himself as product. And this choice is freedom’s choice in such a way that in choosing himself as product he can just as well be said to produce himself” (3:232).

As for the question of the manner in which sexuality is assimilated in this process of self-determination, Haufniensis (as I have mentioned) has virtually nothing to say; all we have to go on are hints and implications. The Assessor gives no explanation of the specific problematic of sexuality as a constitutional phenomenon, but his concept of “romantic love” must be seen as relevant to the assimilation of sexuality as instinct. His main viewpoint is the following: “Although this love is based essentially on the sensuous, it nevertheless is noble by virtue of the consciousness of the eternal that it assimilates, for it is this that distinguishes all love [*Kjerlighed*] from lust [*Vellyst*]: that it bears a stamp of eternity” (3:25).

The anthropological implication of this poetic description is that falling in love represents a total existential determination, a balance between mind and body, or a freedom of the mind (cf. 3:61), which neutralizes the *instinct* by assigning it a place in a *teleology* that surpasses the telos of propagation. Thus, through its “analogy to the moral [*Sædelige*]” (3:26) it anticipates the ethical control of the instinct. In the morally sanctioned relationship, marriage, it is therefore “the real constituting element, the substance” that prevents degeneration back into “merely a satisfaction of sensuous appetite” (3:35). In *Stages on Life’s Way*, the Assessor speaks in a similar manner of “the sensate, which in well-disposed harmony with the spiritual is a supporting staff” (7:161), when seen in the light of the “Faustian” catastrophe which will be the result of suppressing it (cf. IV A 223).

The idea that falling in love is a control of the instinct by the mind making possible the integration of the instinct in an ethical self-determination may seem trivial. But this view is meant as something taken as a matter of course: precisely as such, it holds the balance against interpretations, which find in SK an anthropologically justified (sic) denial of sexuality as instinct. The ontic conflicts, which the erotic situation in life can bring, are a separate matter, which even an “ethical optimist” like the Assessor sees clearly (cf. 7:90 f).

The very idea of integration, which is the essence in SK’s concept of freedom, is overlooked by *Hansen* when he defines “Kierkegaard’s ideal” as “a freedom to will all things and do nothing, a freedom that lies dreaming with all possibilities but does not seize any of them, a freedom that is occupied only with it self”.³⁷⁷ Hansen first of all misunderstands the constitutional meaning of the concept of “that which is proper to the self”, and goes on to present this as SK’s specific “view on life”: “Freedom’s task is [...] to be the true blessedness of the lonely individual”.³⁷⁸ The concept of “being shaped by possibility” in the concluding chapter of *The Concept of Anxiety* is interpreted in the same way: “There is only one view of finitude in *The Concept of Anxiety*, namely that it must be annihilated”.³⁷⁹ This is to identify an anthropological function with a concrete ideal for life. What Hansen does not see is that there is an essential difference between “conquering” and “annihilating” finitude. To be shaped by possibility means that one distances oneself from concrete existence, not in order to substitute an abstract inwardness for it, but in order to determine it through the negation of the objective determination. Finitude is to be “idealized” “in the form of infinity” through the reflexive-ethical development of the individual (6:236), and it is this “idealization” which functions as the defining contents in relationship to the concrete point of departure in the

“return”, the second part of the double movement. Without this movement of transcendence, the individual would not be the determining authority, but would be determined by the biological-cultural basis and thus “sink in the wretchedness of the finite” (6:239). In the clear words of Anti-Climacus: “Consequently, the progress of becoming must be an infinite moving away from oneself in the infinitizing of the self, and an infinite coming back to oneself in the finitizing process” (15:88).

A much more congenial yet somewhat misleading presentation of the concept of freedom is given by *Fahrenbach*. The basic text is *The Sickness Unto Death*, which with its program of an analysis of “the constituents of which the self as synthesis is composed” (15:87) gives a certain basis for the interpretation of freedom as a “transcendental” function. “For freedom (like the self) is not an element in the synthesis, but the origin of the elements, out of which they are drawn into the synthesis.³⁸⁰ Understood in this way, freedom becomes identical with consciousness as the essentially practical relationship to oneself. The ultimate meaning of freedom, however, is the realization of this as a possibility, the fully achieved relationship to oneself, *i.e.*, the concrete, total unity with oneself: hence, not merely that which constitutes the relationship, but the whole relationship itself. As “origin”, freedom is also the basis of the concrete lack of freedom, the “demonic” personality. Here one can say that “freedom [...] defect to the party of the rebels” (6:218; cf. 6:224).

Taylor is guilty of a similar one-sidedness when he says that “the self is that in the system which accomplishes these relationships”.³⁸¹ This expression appears compatible with the specification in the main definition: “the relation’s relating itself to itself in the relation”, but not with the main definition itself, “a relation that relates itself to itself” (15:73), which refers to the existential totality, and not only to “a dynamic activity” or “purposive activity”.³⁸² Only this broad sense gives meaning to the statement about “the complete dependence of the relation (of the self)” (15:73), which stands for the creaturely status of the entire human person; it covers both the facticity and the “transcendentality” of the human person.

G. Historicity

Self-consciousness, as a primitive consciousness of responsibility in relationship to the existential totality, is constituted in virtue of the consciousness of corporeality as a basic condition of existence. Guided by the dogmatic problematic about the growth of original sin and by the corresponding psychological problematic about the accumulation of anxiety in the historical process, Haufniensis points to the onto-genetic coincidence of consciousness of the body and consciousness of *time as a condition of existence* by introducing “the moment” as an equivalent to fear: “In the individual life, anxiety is the moment” (6:170). It is characteristic of the priority given to the problem of guilt in *The Concept of Anxiety* that this theme is taken up only as an introductory excursus in the treatment of the problem: “Anxiety as the consequence of that sin which is absence of the consciousness of sin” (6:170). However, it has fundamental interest as an approach to a theory about human historicity or

the constitution of the consciousness of time in an anthropological context. In the naive or *sensual-receptive consciousness*, the consciousness of time is a reflection of the objective passage of time, “an infinite succession” (6:174), just as the contents of the consciousness are the succession of events and experiences (cf. V B 55:9). “Time is, then, infinite succession; the life that is in time and is only of time has no present. In order to define the sensuous life, it is usually said that it is in the moment and only in the moment. By the moment, then, is understood that abstraction from the eternal that, if it is to be the present, is a parody of it” (6:175). To the extent that consciousness is handed over to the objective course of events, it is swallowed up by the moments, the individual events, of this sequence. According to A, one can reproduce the extreme form of this experience of time in *the musical medium*. This gives the impression of abstract or inauthentic time (cf. 2:56) through a “negation of the feelings dependent upon the senses [*det Sandselige*]” (2:66), *i.e.*, through alteration of the sensuous contents.

The *qualitative modification of the consciousness of time*, which is the result of a consciousness of the existential totality as an antithesis between bodiliness and intentionality, and the given primacy of intentionality, which comes immediately from this, can be characterized in general terms as the becoming aware of time as a condition of existence. Haufniensis expresses this situation with the help of the traditional metaphysical opposition between time and eternity: “The synthesis of the psychical and the physical is to be posited by spirit; but spirit is eternal, and the synthesis is, therefore, only when spirit posits the first synthesis along with the second synthesis of the temporal and the eternal” (6:178).

The situation of immanence, *i.e.*, the fact that “spirit” or self-determination is an actualization of an immanent potentiality, is expressed not only in the identification of the two forms of synthesis. It becomes particularly clear through the fact that “*the eternal*” is both an *element* in the ontological duality (and is hence a differentiating factor) and is the *authority, which unites* this differentiation. “The eternal” as self-determination or intentional control of the facticity of mind and body is present in a rudimentary fashion in this mode of existence, *viz.* as mental-receptive control. Self-determination is an intensification of this factual stability so that it becomes active-totalitarian self-control. Just as naivety or pre-moral consciousness is “dreaming” spirit, so it is a synthesis of “time” and “eternity”. The relationship between these authorities is however essentially undefined, in keeping with the fact that the totality of mind and body develops in an essentially passive or receptive interchange. According to Haufniensis, the phyllo-genetic counterpart to this ontogenetic stage is the Greek understanding of time: “Time and eternity were conceived equally abstractly, because the concept of temporality was lacking, and this again was due to the lack of the concept of spirit” (6:176).

This comprehensive and functional significance of *the concept of eternity* is suppressed in Taylor’s presentation: “But the self cannot be the means by which the temporal and the eternal components of the self system are synthesized, for Kierkegaard identifies the self with one of these two components (the eternal) [...] Kierkegaard solves this problem by the use of

the category *Øieblikket* - the moment or the instant. In this context, the moment refers to the situation in which the individual is confronted with a choice - it is the moment of decision".³⁸³ The antithesis designated here as a problem is an expression of the constitutional logic, and it is only a terminological problem that is resolved by the category of the "moment". The category of choice has too strong ontic overtones to be appropriate here. What is involved is the constitution of the existential position where self-realization, through the choice of possibilities of existence, becomes possible.

The foundation for the experience of time as the general shifting of reality lies in the individual's assimilation to the objective course of events, thanks to the automatism in the interaction between mind and body. This means that time takes on a different significance when the relationship of interchange is *transcended* in the awareness of the elements that constitute it. It is indeed true that, to the extent that naivety's mental control - as a situation of consciousness - is already an asymmetrical relationship or an intentional reality, time as *shifting* will here too be modified in the direction of *moments of time*. But in Haufniensis' ideal-typical perspective, it is the "transition", the constitutional alteration, not "the approximation" which stands in focus. "The moment is that ambiguity in which time and eternity touch each other, and with this the concept of *temporality* is posited, whereby time constantly intersects eternity and eternity constantly pervades time. As a result, the above-mentioned division acquires its significance: the present time, the past time, the future time" (6:177).

"*Temporality*" is the embodiment of the individual's experience of himself, *i.e.*, as consciousness of ontological heterogeneity. "As freedom's possibility manifests itself for freedom, freedom succumbs, and temporality emerges in the same way as sensuousness in its significance as sinfulness" (6:179). In being overwhelmed by the sexual impulse, the individual becomes attentive to his own bodiliness and, with this, in a structural sense his own transitoriness, the reality of death, which is unavoidably linked to his bodily existence. "The moment sin is posited, temporality is sinfulness. [...] From the determination of the temporal as sinfulness death in turn follows as punishment" (6:180). Thus, what described mythologically as an historical causal connection between sexuality and death is thus the structural coincidence of sexuality and the awareness of death. The decisive modification of the consciousness of time, which this involves, can be expressed in *Schäfer's* words: "One relates to oneself as to someone who has nothing other than time, limited time".³⁸⁴

The structure of the consciousness of time is reflected in its genesis. In naivety's fear, the individual becomes detached from the contemporaneity of the senses: for by being confronted with the moral imperative, "the infinite possibility of being able" (6:139), he is pointed towards the future. "The possible corresponds exactly to the future. For freedom, the possible is the future, and the future is for time the possible. To both corresponds anxiety in the individual life" (6:179). Further, when the anticipated sexuality expresses itself, the overarching logic here is that "the future [...] reappears as the past" (6:178). The realization of a specific possibility or intention constitutes consciousness of the past.

What is involved here, however, is a more fundamental *consciousness of the past* than that generated by the direct transition from possibility to reality. Sexuality, the reality that is present in the first instance, is not the full bursting forth of the anticipated possibility as this was expressed in the moral imperative, but the negation of this, just as it is structurally the negation of intentionality as a whole. In positive terms, that which is realized is only the empirical reference for the imperative. The general logic, with reference to the modification of the consciousness of time, is that the awareness of the past is constituted in and through the defeat of the intention, reality's negation of the possibility. But consciousness of the past derives its radicalness from the fact that this defeat is experienced not as the result of unfavorable empirical circumstances, *i.e.*, the result of historical contingency, but as a constitutional necessity.

As has been shown, this happens when the individual becomes aware through sexuality (as an intensification of the general automatism in the interaction between mind and body) of this specific regularity as the constitutional basis for the defeat of intentionality. The consciousness of the past, which is thereby constituted relates, accordingly, to the past as a product of this interaction. In a structural sense, the individual becomes attentive to *the facticity, which governs the whole of his reality*, just as he experiences the ultimate reason for this finitude and transitoriness in the consciousness of bodiliness. It is this aspect of the consciousness of time, which is accentuated in the concept of "temporality", even if this is not made particularly explicit by Haufniensis.

The fundamental relationship between *consciousness of the past and consciousness of the present* can be expressed simply as follows: because of the primacy of intentionality in the restored or authentic self-determination, the existential primacy of the future is also instituted. But if this is to have an integrative function, it must presuppose a consciousness of finitude and determination as well as a corresponding will to "submit to the necessity in one's life, to what may be called one's limitations" (15:94).

Only in this conscious constellation of facticity and intentionality, *i.e.*, the unity of reflection and action in awareness of the concrete determination and limitation, does the human person realize himself as an historical being. "Only with the moment does history begin" (6:177). Haufniensis applies a religious term to characterize this modification of facticity: the category of "providence". This is without any doubt a reflection of the basis of his anthropological views in a theology of creation. The individual who suppresses the moral intentionality and self-activity hypostasizes his historical contingency and makes it a necessity; he "walks forward blindly, (...) as much by necessity as by accident" (6:184). Here intentionality lets itself be swallowed up by "destiny". The self-relationship of "providence", on the other hand, experiences this contingency as a task to be managed, something the Assessor expresses in the words: "I posit the absolute, that posits me" (3:198).

An example *par excellence* of this experience of facticity within the framework of the modified consciousness of time is precisely the integration (discussed above) of erotic immediacy into the ethical-intentional project for life: "The historical consists in the

emergence of this something else and the acquiring of its validity, but precisely in its validity is seen as something that should not to have validity. Thus love, tested and purified, issues from this movement and assimilates what is experienced. How this something else emerges, does not lie within the power of the individual” (3:95). The ontological formula for this “in the stricter sense, is the historical” is provided by Climacus in the concept of “coming into existence within its own coming into existence” (6:70).

The dialectic between facticity and intentionality is common, in a broad sense, to the forms of consciousness, which have been presented from the threefold perspectives of “corporeality”, “consciousness” and “self consciousness”. As structure, this is a decisive “idealistic remnant” in SK’s way of thinking (cf. §11). This view has shaped my interpretation, but I have not made a more concrete comparison between SK’s analyses of existence and, for example, Hegel’s “philosophy of spirit”. I content myself with a few simple examples here, which can make this general view more concrete.

The fundamental anthropological view in both Hegel and SK is that consciousness and self-determination have their origin in the basic dynamic of mind and body. Hegel’s disciple *Erdmann* gives a simple formula for this (correcting Hegel’s mode of expression) when he says that “spirit” manifests itself originally “in the antithesis of body and soul”.³⁸⁵ According to Hegel, this “separation of the soul from its bodiliness” is already actualized at a pre-conscious stage. To this extent then the body is made into a mere a sign of the “ideality” of the soul.³⁸⁶ This primitive being for oneself forms the transition to the proper consciousness of the ego, where the dynamic between mind and body is “objectified” into an “external world”, which in turn is a “mirror” for the individual; the individual sees himself in his own “product” (Fichte).³⁸⁷ The general structure of self-determination is the development of a latent inner antithesis to become “subject” and “object”, and the further development of the subjective component by the relationship of interchange between these two. Since the division (“the self-division of the spirit”)³⁸⁸ takes place from within, the “return” or the unity is guaranteed with structural necessity. The object will always reveal itself sooner or later to be “something with the mere appearance of autonomous existence”.³⁸⁹

This idea of the structurally necessary “return” to the subject is found also, as I have attempted to show, in SK, but without the metaphysical foundation which is characteristic for Hegel, *i.e.*, that existence in its totality constitutes the development of a subject, the absolute subject. For SK, it is precisely the “superiority” of this subjectivity that becomes a problem, since it reveals an “abyss” in subjectivity. The “return” is the “repetition” as a problem.

Chapter V

CONSCIOUSNESS AND RELIGION

In the previous chapters, I have sketched some chief traits of the constitutional history of self-consciousness. This forms the basis of the concrete interpretations of existence or established forms of self-understanding. The chief emphasis of SK's writings lies in practice on the portrayal of these forms, at least in that part of his writings, which is customarily included under the category of the concept of the "stages" in human life. Since this aspect has been central in Kierkegaard-research, there is little reason to discuss it in detail here. On the other hand, an explication of the constitutional basis of this ontic-concrete dialectic of existence belongs to a total presentation of SK's anthropological conception. In other words, the problem I shall investigate in the following analysis is the question of how the dialectic between psychosomatic facticity and intentionality, which constitutes the problematic of self-determination, develops in the forms of self-understanding, *i.e.*, as concrete realizations of the task of self-determination.

1. The Aesthetic-Reflective Project of Integration**A. Reflection as an Element of Self-Constitution**

Basic self-consciousness, consciousness of ontological heterogeneity, is constituted by means of linguistic competence, which is an absolute precondition for consciousness. As I have shown, language communicates the moral imperative, which actualizes the existential division and the possibility of self-determination. "Innocence can indeed speak, inasmuch as in language it possesses the expression for everything spiritual" (6:139). The general foundation of the "spiritual" character of speech is that it coincides, anthropologically speaking, with "reflection". A says, "In speech lies reflection" (2:68). This means, to begin with, transcendence in relation to, and identification of, the datum of the senses.

In the naive mode of consciousness, language is the fundamental element in the mental control, which maintains this mode's basic harmony, and thus reflection too is present here in rudimentary fashion as what Anti-Climacus calls "a quantitative reflection" (15:106). As consciousness, naivety does not form any massive-homogeneous unity with the sensuous-social context, but is characterized by a relative division, namely, the division which constitutes the poles for the existential balance. However, in an anthropological perspective this is an inauthentic form of reflection, and this is why Anti-Climacus can deny the truth of what he himself has said when he states that "the self has no reflection" (15:107). One can speak only of a consciousness of a general difference between the ego and the context in which it lives, a reflection of the psychosomatic cycle of interchange. Genuine reflection, and thereby the essential possibility of speech, emerge only when reflection turns to its point of departure, the ego, *i.e.*, when it constitutes itself as self-reflection. Consequently, the decisive

irruption of self-reflection takes place where the individual experiences a break in his assimilation to the environment in which he lives, turning from conflict with this environment to the conflict in himself. This consciousness of the internal conflict is created, as has been shown, through the emancipation of bodiliness in sexuality.

The consciousness of ontological heterogeneity thus immediately creates a place for self-reflection as the overarching authority in the existential dynamic. And this means that the conflict, which unleashes reflection is not submerged but, on the contrary, is intensified. Self-reflection posits a division between intentionality and psychosomatic facticity. But this in turn is a precondition for the integration of self-determination, since it is, or can become, a means to activate the resources necessary to carry out this task. On a general or “categorical” level, one can speak here of a transition from the indistinct self-portrait drawn by the imagination to the realistic self-portrait drawn by reflection, or, to use Anti-Climacus’ ambiguous formula, “The self is reflection, and the imagination is reflection, it is the rendition of the self as the self’s possibility” (15:89).

The prototype of this possibility of being is Socrates, since he forms the overture to philosophical reflection, *i.e.*, as he is portrayed in *The Concept of Irony*. Irony is idealized self-reflection and the abstract expression of the anthropological significance of reflection as a whole.

The positive counterpart to the Socratic *epoché*, *i.e.*, the noetic “infinite negativity” in relationship to psychological-cultural facticity, is subjectivity as an authority with absolute validity. “[S]ubjectivity feels its power, its validity and meaning. [...]. Irony is namely subjectivity’s first and most abstract qualification of subjectivity” (1:278). Thus the *telos* of negation is not the *ataraxia* of skepticism, but a new restoration by ideality of the negated reality. Subjectivity represents “the elasticity that is the condition for ideal positivity” (1:234), just as Socratic skepticism too is replaced by Plato’s speculative idealism or world-view. The concept for the teleological negation is dialectic, the continuous tension between ideality and reality, language and reality, part and whole, that is, “the whole that all knowledge is supposed to form [...] the infinite self-consistency of the ideal” (1:244).

This reflective negativity and dialectic is actualized in one or other form and degree in every ontogenesis. In this sense, as the postlegomena to SK’s Master’s dissertation says, “no genuinely human life is possible without irony”. Irony “rescues the soul from having its life in finitude” (1:328). The self-transcendence of self-reflection is a necessary element in freedom or “the self”, as “the dialectical aspect of the categories of possibility and necessity” (15:87).

The basic anthropological function of self-reflection is to expose existential heterogeneity as the context of self-determination’s resistance and realization. The ontic expressions for the dialectic of the relationship to oneself are varied and qualitatively different, in keeping with the variation in the forms of self-understanding. The immediate or “psychical love” (2:89) already contains “the dialectical in two ways” (2:90), because it has “doubt and disquietude, about whether it will be happy, see its desire fulfilled, and be loved” (2:90). In the experience

of the empirical negation of the erotic expectation, the individual is impelled back into himself in a rudimentary self-reflection. The duality inherent in immediacy itself becomes crystallized in an experience of ambivalence as something that swallows up the self, “a continual fluctuation” (2:165). The existence of the reflective aesthete “immersed in reflection” (3:57) to the extent that it – to employ A’s own words about the mental *habitus* of the spirit of the age – “has not only reflected him out of every immediate relation to state, kindred, and fate but often has even reflected him out of his own past life [...] no immediacy is left at all” (2:133). The fundamental dialectical character of the situation is revealed in the dependence on the facticity that is denied: ultimately, one “expects everything from the outside”, as the Assessor’s critical interpretation says (3:233).

From the Assessor’s ethical standpoint, emphasis is laid on the significance of reflection as something exposing a situation of choice. It identifies one’s own psychosomatic reality as the area where ethical intentionality is to be realized (cf. 7:140). Quidam’s religious boundary-existence is determined by reflection on himself as absolute intentionality: “But immediacy is not actually over until the immediate infinity is grasped by an equally infinite reflection. At the same moment, all tasks are transformed and made dialectical in themselves; no immediacy is allowed to stand by itself or to be exposed to struggle only with something else, since it must struggle with itself” (8:212). On this basis, the pathetic religiosity becomes intensified to an awareness of the permanent antithesis between the ideal and reality, a “dialectical” self-consciousness” which must assert that “also for an existing person the existence-relation to the absolute good can be defined only by the negative” (10:139).

The genesis of self-reflection in self-constitution is formulated most pregnantly in *The Sickness Unto Death*, which presents a kind of ontological-genetic counterpart to the phyllogenetic category of the abstract subjectivity in *The Concept of Irony*. “Despair”, or the defective relationship to oneself, is a process of awareness, like the relationship to oneself. It is the individual’s experience of himself as powerlessness vis-à-vis the task of self-determination. Reflection is defined as the executive authority in this experience of self.

What is described as the quantitative development of reflection is properly the gradual qualitative transformation of reflection from its status as a reflex in the awareness of the objectivity of the world in the psychosomatic interplay, to its own proper function as awareness of this interdependence. The decisive transition is the negation of the reflective passivity. “The advance over pure immediacy manifests itself at once in the fact that despair is not always occasioned by a blow, by something happening, but can be brought on by one’s capacity for reflection, so that despair, when it is present, is not a merely suffering, a succumbing to an external circumstance, but is to a certain degree self-activity. A certain degree of reflection is indeed present here, consequently a certain degree of pondering over one’s self. With this certain degree of reflection begins the act of separation whereby the self becomes aware of itself as essentially different from the environment and external events and from their influence upon it. But this is only so to a certain extent. When the self with a

certain degree of reflection in itself wills to be responsible for the self, it may come up against some difficulty or other in the structure of the self, in the self's necessity" (15:110).

Since Anti-Climacus' program is to show how the individual puts up resistance to the imperative of taking over the self, the question of the constitutional foundation of the reflective introversion itself recedes into the background. While Haufniensis identifies the consciousness of ontological heterogeneity with the genesis of self-reflection, Anti-Climacus emphasizes the ontic modifications of reflection, e.g. "some difficulty or other in the structure of the self", which stimulates facticity to act in accordance with its own laws. This leads to regression, the neutralization of personal activity in naively blind confidence in the favorable development of objective circumstances. "He turns away completely from the inward way along which he should have advanced in order truly to become a self. In a deeper sense the whole question of the self becomes a kind of false door with nothing behind it in the background of his soul" (15:111).

But in a constitutional perspective, the two analyses complement each other. This regression to immediacy, assimilation to "the active life" (15:112), is an ontic aberration in relation to what is ontologically possible, the situation where facticity's opposition to self-determination accentuates precisely its possibility: "reflection helps him to understand that there is much he can lose without losing the self" (15:110). This corresponds to the fact that sexuality, as the negation of intentionality on a structural level, sets up the task of self-determination. This is why it is precisely with "the relative reflection that he has" (15:110) that the individual attempts to keep genuine self-reflection at a distance, to the extent that he can "realize that he is working this way in order to sink his soul in darkness and does it with a certain keen discernment and shrewd calculation, with psychological insight; but he is not, in a deeper sense, clearly conscious of what he is doing, how despairingly he is conducting himself, etc." (15:104).

Self-reflection is a formal or transcendental function in relation to self-determination as personal-ethical integration in the sense that it, as "possible", is also "real", so that it reveals itself to be necessary even when this unavoidable imperative is suppressed. However, in keeping with this, it is also a necessary condition in the self-therapy that can dissolve the complex of suppression. "The person in despair himself understands that it is weakness to make the earthly so important, that it is weakness to despair. [...] The progression is as follows. First, the consciousness of the self comes, for to despair of the eternal is impossible without having a conception of the self [...] Furthermore, there is a greater consciousness here of what despair is, because despair is indeed the loss of the eternal and of oneself. Of course, there is also a greater consciousness that one's state is despair. Then, too, despair here is not merely a suffering but an act" (15:117).

Self-reflection frees the individual from the self-created illusion that he is identical with his social-cultural activity. He becomes conscious of the task of self-determination, but as yet only in an indistinct form, because the will to identify himself with this task is lacking, with the result that the implicit self-knowledge is crippled thanks to "a dialectical interplay

between knowing and willing” (15:104). Self-reflection is prevented from carrying out its task by the essential correlate of self-determination, namely, the psychosomatic autonomy which expresses itself as an unconscious resistance, which casts darkness over one’s own self. Under this pressure, it takes on an essentially reactive-passive form.

This halved self-reflection is the constitutional basis for the split, “demonic” personality. Defined in categorical terms, this is an intermediate state between extravert self-unfolding and total self-acceptance. In this form of existence, existential heterogeneity has become systematized. Self-reflection has gone off the track and has stuck fast in an endless circling around it self. The individual reflects on himself in a false manner, in the form of a “reflection on reflection” or insight into himself. The hypostatized self-reflection is described thus: “The self-inclosing despairing person goes on living *horis successivis* [hour after hour]; even if not lived for eternity, his hours have something to do with the eternal and are concerned with the relation of his self to itself – but he never really gets beyond that” (15:119).

Løgstrup’s phrase about a “circulation of self-observation”³⁹⁰ is an appropriate description at this point in self-constitution, or about this form of existence. But it is correspondingly inadequate for SK’s concept of the restored reality of the self.

In its boundlessness, however, self-reflection can also transcend this form of reflective hypertrophy, and this means, in keeping with the constitutional necessity, an actualization or intensification of the aspect of the will in this state: “But if the person in despair goes one single dialectical step further, if he realizes why he does not will to be himself, then there is a shift, then there is defiance, and this is the case precisely because in despair he wills to be himself. [...] In this form of despair, there is a rise in the consciousness of the self, and therefore a greater consciousness of what despair is and that one’s state is despair. Here despair is conscious of itself as an act; it does not come from the outside as a suffering under the pressure of externalities but comes directly from the self” (15:122). In this unity of reflection and will, the individual grasps the task of self-determination, but holds onto it in an abstract way, by confusing himself with his “transcendental” ego: “With the help of this infinite form, the self in despair wants to be master of itself or to create itself, to make his self into the self he wants to be, to determine what he will have or not have in his concrete self” (15:122).

This apparently extreme form of existence or self-understanding is, however, anthropologically representative. It is an expression of the basic logic of self-constitution, for it is an ontic realization of what has earlier been defined as “the first form of the infinite self”, which is “won by infinite abstraction from every externality”, and which, in keeping with its immanent *telos*, should have the result that the individual “becomes responsible for its actual self with all its difficulties and advantages” (15:111).

The reflected defiance is the ontic abstraction from this teleology. In the final analysis, it can also be seen that this form of self-understanding taken by it self, will be able to emerge as a self-illusion, in virtue of its own dialectic, since it is necessarily referred, in its project of

self-determination, to its concrete historical reality. It is this that supplies the contents in the “sovereign” shaping of self. “Insofar as the self in its despairing striving to be itself works itself into the very opposite, it really becomes no self. In the whole dialectic within which it acts there is nothing steadfast; at no moment the self is steadfast, that is, eternally steadfast. [...] The self is so far from successfully becoming more and more itself, that it merely becomes increasingly obvious that it is a hypothetical self” (15:123). This formula covers what emerges in the teaching about the stages as the self-negation of the aesthetic self-understanding through the experience of the superior power of facticity: “his position, his sovereignty is subordinate to the dialectic that rebellion is legitimate at any moment” (15:123).

Seen in a constitutional perspective, Anti-Climacus’ presentation of the pathological forms of the relation to self is the expression of a normal pathology. It shows how self-reflection forms the basis of an authentic or integrative relationship to the self. A progression is indicated from a thing-oriented reflectivity to the relative self-reflection in the repression, by compromise, of the imperative of self-determination. This situation is transcended in turn through the actualization of the absolute or self-positing ego. The entire sequence of development expresses the fundamental function of reflection in self-constitution, namely that it gives the individual transcendence in relation to his psychosomatic reality, by deepening the essential conflict between facticity and intentionality. The “sickness unto death”, the defective relationship to oneself, is not a product of self-reflection as such, but is constituted in the arbitrary act of breaking out from self-reflection’s teleology. Seen from this angle, Anti-Climacus joins Haufniensis in giving a fundamental presentation of the constitutional basis for the Assessor’s “axiomatic immanent” presentation of the ethical process of taking over one’s own self.

Since Fahrenbach links his interpretation of “the genesis of ethical existence” exclusively to the Assessor’s exposition of himself in *Either/Or*, he does not wholly do justice to the significance of self-reflection, nor (consequently) to the principle of aesthetic self-realization as the basis for the ethical relationship to the self. He says about aesthetic existence that “the element of self-determination, which is decisive for the human person’s mode of being, is here immediately determined, and hence is not expounded as itself original, but merely as an element of reflection within immediacy”.³⁹¹ This is, however, an ontic consequence of the fact that the exposure of the absolute foundation of oneself in self-reflection is “preserved” in this medium, and is not followed up by a corresponding act of will. It must be maintained that “aesthetic” emancipation through self-reflection is a condition of the possibility of ethical self-determination. This nexus is expressed in the juxtaposition of the “aesthetic” and the “ethical” in *Either/Or*, something that is not sufficiently cleared up by the Assessor’s monologue vis-à-vis the aesthete.

Shmuëli completely fails to see the significance of the “aesthetic as the exponent of the foundation of the self when claiming that “the mind of the aesthete is no more than the tension between consciousness as background and a particular phenomenon, both of which

seek to express themselves at the same time”.³⁹² On the contrary, the aesthete himself becomes aware of this antithesis in the project of a reflective communication of consciousness and reality through his own experience of the autonomy of facticity.

B. Reflective Self-Construction and Existential Dichotomy

Self-reflection is transcendence in relation to psychosomatic facticity. It is thanks to this self-transcendence that the consolidated “aesthetic” form of existence or self-understanding constitutes itself. Its ideal is absolute self-construction, *i.e.*, an “eclectic” actualization of the existential totality. Structurally this neglect of the totalitarian relationship to one’s self means that the individual is ultimately caught by facticity.

The ontic control involved in reflective self-transcendence does however give space for modification of this basic determination. The various aesthetic types exemplify forms of this modification. They are projects for a reflective “mediation” of reality and consciousness, e.g., in the form of a reproduction of psychosomatic immediacy by means of (self)-manipulation (Johannes the seducer) or as “skeptical” ataraxia (e.g., the young person in “*In vino veritas*”). The aesthetic consciousness seeks to overcome or tone down the actualization of the ontological heterogeneity, which the primacy of intentionality brings with it, by means of the authority, which brings about this actualization, namely, reflection. This means that the aesthetic mode of existence is ontologically a vicious circle. In an ethical-religious perspective, this means that the individual “is working this way in order to sink the soul in darkness and does it with a certain keen discernment and shrewd calculation, with psychological insight; but he is not, in a deeper sense, clearly conscious of what he is doing, how despairingly he is conducting himself, etc.” (15:104).

The legendary figure of Faust is a prototypical-mythological expression of this pretension of self-control by means of “making himself opaque”. According to an early memorandum, he is “the personified doubt” (I A 72), a synthesis of Don Giovanni and the eternal Jew (II C 58), *i.e.*, of a sensual way of living and of despairing skepticism. This means that he is located outside cultural inter-subjectivity; he is “the individual after the abrogation of the Church, severed from its guidance and abandoned to him self” (II A 53). As *Fear and Trembling* puts it, he has “the mandate of thought”, but “the skeptic hungers just as much for the daily bread of life as for the nourishment of the spirit” (5:98). Faust is the incarnation of the duality between corporeality and intentionality, which has become the moral essence in culture through its Christianization (cf. 2:60), and thereby an ideal-typical expression of the primitive form of reconciliation of this antithesis.

The model of reconciliation is compensation; the reflective hypertrophy is toned down through regression to psychosomatic immediacy. But he finds this only outside himself, in a female-erotic counterpart “and therefore he seeks in the sensuous not so much pleasure as distraction. His doubting soul finds nothing in which it can rest, and now he grasps at erotic love [Elskov], not because he believes in it but because it has an element of presentness in

which there is a momentary rest and a striving that diverts and draws attention away from the nothingness of doubt” (2:190). In Margrete’s “adorable innocence” (5:99) he finds the fullness of life, which for the moment balances and thereby neutralizes his reflective emptiness. To put it in formulate terms, he is exemplary for “aesthetic indifference” (2:86), the “both-and” of the existential tautology (cf. 2:40).

This is aesthetic self-productivity in its most primitive form. It is forced on the individual by the inherent necessity of existence, viz. the demand for a concrete unity of life. The productivity or self-control is minimal, since it is nothing more than a break in the reflective infinity and negativity. “He lacks the point of conclusion, and thereby all the elements become negative. She, however, has the point of conclusion, has childlikeness and innocence” (2:193). The intensification of the aesthetic productivity consists in making effective the control of the psychosomatic mechanism, in keeping with the increase in “psychological insight”. This means that the control develops in the direction of self-manipulation. The aesthetical types represent degrees and variations within this pattern. In what follows, I shall draw on the rich material on this subject found in SK’s writings: my selection may illustrate this logic in aesthetical self-constitution, *i.e.*, its particular character as self-construction.

While Faust negates his reflective subjectivity in the experience of a psychosomatic harmony that lays outside his own self, the aesthete of “*Vexeldriften*” (Rotation Method) perceives the unfruitfulness of such an “eccentric diversion” (2:268). His project is a system for self-manipulation as a bulwark against reflective introversion and emptiness, what he calls “demonic pantheism” (2:267). This means an assertion of the ontic self-sufficiency of subjectivity. This constitutional anomaly seeks to confirm itself by denying its factual-historical basis. “The boundless infinity of change, its extensive dimension” is to be eliminated in favor of the equally infinite, but uncontrolled self-transformation: “changing the method of cultivation and the kinds of crops. Here at once is the principle of limitation, the sole saving principle in the world. The more a person limits himself, the more resourceful he becomes” (2:269). In formulate terms intentionality makes its formal primacy concrete by means of an eclectic-controlled relationship to the stream of experience in the psychosomatic interchange.

On this basis there is also established a “secondary” control in relation to the established contents of the experience, since this becomes the basis for the receptive aspect of the experience. This intensified control is not only meant to stipulate the area of expertise, but will at the same time modify the quality of experience within this area: “No part of life ought to have so much meaning for a person that he cannot forget any moment he wants to; on the other hand, every single part of life ought to have so much meaning for a person that he can remember it at any moment. [...] The more poetically one remembers, the more easily one forgets, for to remember poetically is actually only an expression for forgetting. [...] Indeed, forgetting is the right expression for the proper assimilation that reduces experience to a sounding board” (2:270).

In terms anthropological structure, one can speak here of a reproduction of the naive consciousness's mode of experiencing itself and reality. The consciousness lets itself be marked by the illusory forms of the imagination. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the individual hands himself over to the imagination's idealization of reality – for in such a case one would not come any further than the flight from reality one finds in daydreams. The starting-point for this experience is an insight into the mental (s.86) mechanisms, which make possible such a “reproduced” naivety. Thus the aesthete accepts the boundary conditions that govern his existential eclecticism, viz. that it involves a balance in relation to suppression and its consequence, the attack mounted by the unconscious against control by consciousness. “But if someone behaves as many do who dabble in the art of forgetting, who brush the unpleasant away entirely, he will soon see what good that is. In an unguarded moment it [the unconscious] often surprises a person with the full force of the sudden” (2:271).

The aesthete has his own good reasons for not mentioning that this reflective self-transparency implies another form of suppression than the obscuring of the contents of experience. But his projector A has at least no illusions about the possibility of competing with the unconscious when melancholy gains the upper hand. It is only in a formal sense that the aesthete satisfies the essential demand for self-transparency, because he is not acquainted with the full meaning of the demand, but relates to it as the “transcendental” background to his pretended control of consciousness.

This existential technology or self-manipulation is given its most concrete expression in Johannes the Seducer. He is a combination of Faust and the aesthete of “*Vexeldriften*” (Rotation Method): like the former, he relates to the psychosomatic immediacy in an alter ego, but at the same time he has the latter's high degree of personal activity. The foreign subjectivity becomes a fluctuating mirror image of its own existential dynamic. A coins a pregnant expression for this asymmetrical relationship between receptivity and productivity in his description of the logic of the history of seduction: “The point in the first case was that he egotistically enjoyed personally that which in part reality has given to him and which in part he himself had used to fertilize reality; in the second case, his personality was volatilized, and he then enjoyed the situation and himself in the situation. In the first case, he continually needed reality as the occasion, as an element; in the second case, reality was drowned in the poetic” (2:283). The structure in his project of existence is as follows: imagination and reflection are coordinated with the goal of objectifying and creating an ideal image of his own psychosomatic dynamic. The progression from an objective starting-point to self-productivity reflects the genetic form of self-reflection as a whole, which is constituted in the emancipation from the objective life cycle.

The confrontation with an immediate mode of life, like Cordelia's substantial naivety, unleashes in the aesthete, at one and the same time, erotic passion and reflective imagination, *i.e.*, the ability to reproduce the impression in the concrete symbol (the poetic). This last element controls the first as its own amorphous impetus. This happens, however, not directly but through an act of emancipation. Initially, the aesthete is totally moved by the immediate

erotic undercurrents, which, however, precisely through their autonomy, call forth intentionality or the control of consciousness. “I scarcely know myself. My mind roars like a turbulent sea in the storms of passion. If someone else could see my soul in this state, it would seem to him that it, like a skiff, plunged prow-first down into the ocean, as if in its dreadful momentum it would have to steer down the into the depths of the abyss. He does not see that high on the mast a sailor is on the lookout. Roar away, you wild forces, roar away, you powers of passion; even if your waves hurl foam toward the clouds, you still are not able to pile yourselves up over my head – I am sitting as calmly as the king of the mountain” (2:301).

The initial form of the image created by the imagination is an idealizing reconstruction of the empirical erotic impression (cf. 2:300). In this way, empirical reality stimulates the imagination more strongly. Finally, it forms the ideal-typical image, “a visionary picture [...] a picture that is not seen” (2:306), which lights up and ennobles the empirical reality, the renewed impression. “The image I have of her hovers indefinitely, somewhere between her actual and her ideal form” (2:309, cf. 2:340, 357, 401). This tension between the idea of immediacy and an empirical counterpart is the first stage in the process that is to end in the reproduction of immediacy in one’s own subjectivity. This subjectivity is continuously involved, not only as the reflection, which creates the ideal, but also in the created tension, *i.e.*, in the internal antithesis between immediacy and reflection. Like the Assessor’s reflection, Johannes’ reflection is both concrete and abstract, *i.e.*, personal. It is “the reflected passion” (2:380) where the idea “is present in motion” (2:403) as that which governs the behavior.

The idea is realized in Johannes himself, in that he can yield himself up under the control of his consciousness to the psychosomatic automatism, which is the essence of eroticism, in him. Self-reflection and immediacy coincide in the moment. This is the aesthetic form of the unity of life. “Everything is a metaphor; I myself am a myth about myself, [...] everything finite and temporal is forgotten, only the eternal remains, the power of erotic love, its longing, its bliss” (2:409). Since this unity of life is not permanent, it has an essentially compensatory character, as with Faust. It is expressing the lack of an integrative relationship to one’s own self, which makes necessary a system of defense in relation to the potential rebellion in the psychosomatic autonomy against control by consciousness. This is not merely a compensation for reflective hypertrophy; at the same time, this hypertrophy is to be maintained in relation to facticity’s claim to sovereignty.

The Assessor’s description of aesthetic-reflective productivity is more comprehensive than the self-descriptions we find in the first part of *Either/Or*, and thus gives clearer expression to the ontological structure. The general formula here is: a dialectic between rationality and emotion, a combination of “a regal outlook on everything” (3:182) and “eccentric behavior” (3:12; cf. 3:214). This description is critical, because it implies that the latter is the negation of the former, with the consequence that the existential totality bears the stamp of fundamental ambivalence; the stability and unity of life, which are aimed at are an illusion.

Self-reflection does indeed involve, ontically speaking, a relative control of psychosomatic facticity. But this control is negative, in the sense that it aims to raise the individual above facticity, in order to employ it only as a “substratum” for self-creation. The general ontological expression for this relation to facticity is that it fulfills itself in possibility. The aesthete is an “epitome of any and every possibility” (3:21), since he reduces facticity to a point of departure for the reflective imagination, reproducing naivety’s openness to the variety of reality on an introvert level. This is why the Assessor can say to A: “You relish being in the situation children are in when they are waiting in the dark room for the revealing of the Christmas tree” (3:73). “You love the accidental. A smile from a pretty girl in an interesting situation, a stolen glance, that is what you are hunting for, a motif for your aimless fantasy” (3:13). Reality’s transformation into possibility thus constitutes the “poetic intellectual” form of consciousness (cf. 10:24).

The aesthetic self-construction is, however, essentially different from the real flight from reality, or what Anti-Climacus describes as “a fantasized existence in abstract infinitizing” (15:90). It implies awareness of contingency or the individual’s dependence on facticity. According to A, this consciousness of dependence is a stimulus to self-experience (cf. 3:219). The Assessor, however, sees it as a disintegration, which can be expressed in an oscillation from receptivity to reflective introversion, resulting in anxiety (cf. 3:41, 58 and 98). “You are outside yourself and therefore cannot do without the other as opposition” (3:136). The aesthete’s “total control” or unity of life is limited to the moment, to the ultimately chance coincidence of anticipation and contact with reality in the action. Self-reflection is absorbed into the strategic shaping of receptivity, *i.e.*, into the experiential ability connected to the psychosomatic mechanism. It seeks its own “destruction” in immediacy, in the emotional experience of one’s own self. “The person who lives aesthetically tries as far as possible to be engrossed completely by the mood. He tries to bury himself completely in it so that nothing remains in him that cannot be modulated into it. [...] The dimmer the presence of the personality in the mood, the more the individual is in the moment, and this in turn is the most adequate expression for aesthetic existence – it is in the moment. This accounts for the enormous fluctuations to which one who lives aesthetically is exposed” (3:213).

This form of aesthetic-reflective self-constitution is formally in agreement with, and thereby a “structural” anticipation of, ethical self-integration. The final point in both cases is “a higher, concentric immediacy” (3:33). The “genetic” formula for this formal affinity is that “the personality is present [...] but it is dimly present” (3:213). The chief structural difference has to do with the significance of the phenomenon of time, since the aesthetic “contemporaneity” of the elements of the personality is destroyed in the temporal succession, to which it has an essentially receptive relationship (despite the productivity), just like the naivety that it reproduces (cf. IV A 213, 9:250).

One example of this unity of the personality in a mood, created through self-reflection, is Constantius’ self-manipulative treatment of the image of the naive experience of reality. The control of consciousness is applied here to give the unbridled imagination free play in the

total openness to the impression, the experience of reality in childhood's "enormous categories" (5:138). The goal is the freest possible interchange between subjectivity and impression; the aim is to reach "perfection in mood and to maintain oneself in the state in which not one single mood is present but the possibility of all" (5:141). This form of experience of oneself corresponds to what SK defines in *The Concept of Irony* as the "poetic position" of romance. Intentionality is fundamentally at conflict with itself here. On this minimal level, it is merely a point of transition for facticity. It is not the basis of determination in relation to, but ultimately a function of, "difference" (3:268). This undermines the control of consciousness and the aesthetic project of existence itself.

The gallery of solidly established aesthetic types in "*In vino veritas*" gives programmatic expression to the variety possible within this structure of existence (cf. 9:248). The accent is laid here on the category for aesthetic self-construction: ontic self-sufficiency. Or, to use an expression authorized by SK, what is involved is a form of perverted "recollection", *i.e.*, a self-projected eternity. The concept of recollection also expresses the regressive logic in this self-sufficiency. It also points beyond the elementary regression to the psychosomatic immediacy, however, referring primarily to the fact that self-identity is won through the accumulation of experiential content, which is idealized through a quasi-rational (poetic) experience of universal validity (the aesthetic idea).

A defines "recollection" as the highest *telos* of aesthetic existence: "To live in recollection is the most perfect life imaginable; recollection is more richly satisfying than all actuality, and it has a security that no actuality possesses. A recollected life-relationship has already passed into eternity and has no temporal interest anymore" (2:35). This accumulated experience or aesthetic ideality is however not self-reproductive: precisely as an "aesthetic" reality it requires the empirical impression, which is the obstacle (*Anstoss*) that keeps it alive. Through the "categorical" (cf. 3:122) anticipation of "interesting contacts with life" (3:186) the "moments of reproduction" (3:122), the empirical confirmation of the idea, are prepared. This idea takes the form of a specific mood, integrating on the level of feelings the elements of the personality, which consequently negates the latent reflective introversion. In this mood, past and present coalesce to the exclusion of the future perspective. This is the aesthetic form of "repetition": the quasi-historical coinciding of an experiential identity with an accidental empirical reality.

In Wilhelm Afham's "proleptic recollection" in "*In vino veritas*", the anticipatory character of recollection recedes into the background, apparently swallowed up here by the self-sufficiency of reflective introversion. Recollection is made into a "methodology" for this self-sufficiency, an instrument for the construction of a universe of aesthetic ideas: "That is, recollection is ideality, but as such it is strenuous and conscientious in a way completely different from indiscriminate memory. Recollection wants to maintain for a person the eternal continuity in life and assure him that his earthly existence remains *uno tenore* [uninterrupted], one breath, and expressible in one breath" (7:16). Instead of experience, the aesthetic-empirical confirmation, reflection on experience, the aesthetic abstraction, comes in as the

concluding point of the movement of life. Here we have a compensation for the lost psychosomatic immediacy, not through a return to it in a moment of the mood, but through a reflection on the possibilities of experience in this mode of consciousness. This variant of the aesthetic form of consciousness can be defined as aesthetic rationalism, since it is in principle the immanent or inherent tendency of the understanding “to admire the idea” (V A 35).

Psychosomatic immediacy is nevertheless necessary as the empirical starting-point for reflection. The aesthete lowers himself for one moment at a time into the stream of experience, to get raw material for the aesthetic idea, e.g., “to arrange a new love affair merely in order to recollect it”, or by “seeming to confide in someone else only in order to conceal behind this confidence a new reflection in which the recollection comes into existence for oneself” (7:19).

The fundamental existential structure is the specific aesthetic variant of the essential self-integration: the external contemporaneity of psychosomatic facticity and intentionality. This means that the division is accentuated: “to reflect oneself into an illusion, plus being able to let it work on oneself with the full force of illusion even though one is fully aware” (7:18). This self-manipulation, with the goal of crystallizing out the ethical ideality, ideas about the possibilities of experience, is an ontic realization of the category: reflective self-construction: “to create itself, to make his self into the self he wants to be, to determine what he will have or not have in his concrete self” (15:122). In recollection’s self-transparency, the individual is the pretended manifestation of the transcendental ego. This is self-determination in its negative form. Emancipation from the psychosomatic determination occurs when this is made the material for reflection. Thus, aesthetic reflection is an alternative to the ethical or “synthesizing” will.

The table-speeches express various concretizations of this paradigm. Various possibilities of relating to a woman are proposed, since woman is the embodiment of the psychosomatic immediacy or the aesthetic idea par excellence. One possibility is the reflective hypertrophy of the young person, who exemplifies skepticism about the ideal of aesthetic communication; for this reason, according to Climacus, he has not yet excluded the ethic form of self-determination (cf. 9:250). Another possibility is Victor Eremita’s reduction of immediacy to an impulse for “an intensified ideality” (7:60) where ontological heterogeneity is fixed in a fundamental philosophical-ironical attitude (cf. 7:62). He represents the confirmation of the young person’s skepticism. Johannes the Seducer, on the other hand, has an optimistic faith in the possibility of a reproducing of immediacy and its unity of life, viz. in the reflective control of the erotic relationship. The narrower the path taken by reflection on and about immediacy, the greater does the possibility of integration appear; but it is correspondingly powerless vis-à-vis the course of time. Self-reflection’s answer to this challenge is aesthetic rationalism, what the Assessor calls “the idolization of intellectuality” (7:152), and which Haufniensis defines as follows: “Some bend eternity into time for the imagination” (6:232).

The aesthetic-reflective self-construction is a formal recognition of the task of self-determination. But it is precisely this formal character that constitutes it as an existential

dichotomy or disintegration. A consequence of this formal character is that the personality is to receive its contents from the production of aesthetic ideas, since this formal character means that reflection, as intentionality, does not receive its contents in and from itself, but finds this only in psychosomatic facticity, the immediate possibility of experience. The hypostatization of self-reflection into a principle of existence involves a systematic limitation of the sphere and function of intentionality, which becomes merely the passageway to the facticity of experience. The ontological concluding point in this simple constellation of facticity and intentionality is the superiority of facticity. A corresponding mobilization of reflection is necessary to keep it at bay and prevent it from realizing its dictatorial aspirations.

The defensive function of reflection is already clear within the aesthetic self-presentation. Thus, the affirmative structure of experience in "*Vexeldriften*" is structurally speaking the consistent capitulation to autonomous contingency in the sphere of experience. Conscious of its powerlessness, subjectivity seeks to retain a rudiment of it self, by developing in and through itself a formal conformity to the contingency of the stream of experience. The activity of the subject finds its complement in the forming of receptivity, by "continually varying oneself" (2:275). The defensive strategy is the art of adaptation: "Something accidental is made into the absolute and as such into an object of absolute admiration. [...] The accidental outside of a person corresponds to the arbitrariness within him" (2:276).

The minimal shaping of subjectivity to become receptivity means in general ontological terms that, despite the high degree of self-reflection and psychological self-insight involved here, the subjectivity does not function as a determinative authority in relation to the facticity of experience. It is essentially non-teleological, in the sense that experience is not made subordinate to a goal that logically transcends the sphere of experience, and thus is not derived from this. One can speak of such a derivation when experience is related to aesthetic ideas, *i.e.*, concepts of the possibilities of experience or the abstractions of experience. We can discern this line of thought as the anthropological view in Eremita's redactional observation on A's papers, where these are said to contain "a multiplicity of approaches to an aesthetic view of life. A coherent aesthetic view of life can hardly be presented" (2:19). The aesthetic mode of existence is constituted as a "perspective on life" by the fact that, thanks to self-reflection, it is a systematic unfolding of life on the basis of a principle, namely, reflection on experience. Its contingent and fragmentary character is created by the fact that the concrete contents of the unfolding of life are determined in principle by experience qua psychosomatic immediacy. No intentional criteria exist to make axiological distinctions within the reality of experience. The only modification of this automatism, *i.e.*, the only teleological element, is that immediacy is meant to unfold under the greatest possible reflective control (cf. 2:140).

The Assessor expresses this in a pregnant way in the following description: "When an individual considers himself aesthetically, he becomes conscious of this self as a complex concretion intrinsically qualified in many ways; but despite all internal variety, all these together are nevertheless his nature, have equal right to emerge, equal right to demand

satisfaction. His soul is like soil out of which grow all sorts of herbs, all with equal claim to flourish; his self consists of this multiplicity, and he has no self that is higher than this” (3:209). The ontological formula for the aesthetic existence is therefore: “that by which he spontaneously and immediately is what he is” (3:167), even if facticity’s superiority does exist in a mediated way, *i.e.*, is instituted through reflection.

This ontological coincidence of reflective self-constitution and naivety depends on the lowering of intentionality to the level of reflection in a strict sense. Its authority is concerned only with identification, anticipatory or retrospective, in relation to what finds expression in the field of experience, without modifying the contents of this in any way, thanks to what the Assessor calls a “true apriority” (3:95). Reflection and its ideality stand in an abstract relationship to its particular counterpart, in such a way that the particularity makes itself particularly valid. What is involved is “a reflection that places the particular outside the universal” (3:88).

This structural primacy of facticity makes possible the significance of reflection as a defensive function. It establishes a defense in relation to the power which it itself continuously liberates and to which it must give free play in order to acquire contents at all, *i.e.*, something on which to reflect. The concrete course of this process, *i.e.*, the possibility of maintaining this aesthetic-reflective equilibrium, cannot be decided *a priori*. It will naturally depend on the “proportion of strength” between the two “powers” (both conditioned by the individual’s history), meeting on the one hand, specific challenges stemming from his factual or “unconscious” history of self-formation, on the other harboring at present the sovereignty of reflective competence. In the case of constant or anthropological conditions for this “model of reconciliation”, it is, however, clear that the basic goal in the presentation of the aesthetic-reflective existence-dialectic is to show its “ontological defeat”, the defection from the human person’s possibilities of existence. This is why, alongside the ethical-religious considerations (cf. 9:248 ff.), we find a number of ontic expressions for the defeat, indirect and direct descriptions of the disintegration in the aesthetic personality, the sum of which is melancholy, *i.e.*, a negative mood in life which was not aimed at.

We find the most primitive expression for the loss of control of reality on the part of reflection, or of the aesthetic idea, *i.e.*, facticity’s resistance to the challenges of the aesthetic ideal, in C. Constantius’ humorous-ironical description of his journey to Berlin. Instead of the aesthetic “repetition”, the coincidence of the idea or anticipation of the experience with experience itself, all that he experiences is the doubling of empirical objectivity: “It was just the same, [...] in short, the same sameness. [...] What an appalling thought – here a repetition was possible” (5:149). The essential identity of the objective-empirical point of departure for the experience does not guarantee the identity or reproduction of the total experience which, under pressure from anticipation, becomes a paralyzing pressure projected back onto the aesthetic productivity, which makes it emerge in its naked facticity, *i.e.*, only as the starting point for the experience, and the subjectivity on its side exposes ontically its formal ontological character. “My home had become dismal to me simply because it was a repetition

of the wrong kind. My mind was sterile, my troubled imagination constantly conjured up tantalizingly attractive recollections of how the ideas had presented themselves the last time, and the tares of these recollections choked out every thought at birth” (5:148).

The disintegration of the control over reality is provoked by an aesthetic arrogance that attempts to bring subjectivity out of its defensive position, and to establish a total control of the experience. The defeat comes with structural necessity. Constantius here breaks clearly with the aesthetic self-limitation or realism, which was set out in the program for living in “*Vexeldriften*”, with its two chief rules of varying both oneself (*i.e.*, the anticipation of experience) and the field of the empirical confirmation.

This fragility of reflective self-control, which stems from its defensive character, is without a doubt a chief aspect in, or indeed the general foundation for, the pessimistic-ironic self-understanding expressed in the “*Diapsalmata*”. Here it is the reflective self-control itself that has lost its balance; it has lost its anticipatory function in relation to reality or experience, and has hypostatized itself into an endless “reflection on reflection”, *i.e.*, the consciousness of reflection as a basic condition of existence. Reflection itself is experienced as the objectifying negation of the relationship to reality in the immediate experience. “I am as timorous as a *sheva* [Hebr.], as weak and muted as a *dagesh len* [Hebr.], I feel like a letter printed backward in the line, and yet as uncomfortable as a pasha with three horse tails, as solicitous for myself and my thoughts as a bank for its banknotes, indeed, as reflected into myself as any *pronomem reflexivum* [reflexive pronoun]. [...] So it is with me; before me is continually an empty space, and I am propelled by a consequence that lies behind me” (2:26).

The structure of this reflective hypertrophy can be defined simply as a double determination. On one side reigns the reflective automatism. Reflection has become a quasi-nature; since it supplements itself in the negation of the immediate unfolding of life, and thus as it were transfers the latter’s own proper regularity to itself. This transfer is a structurally necessary “compensation”, when reflection lacks a higher *telos*. On the other side reigns the autonomy in the immediacy, which has been separated out and therefore, qua separated out, makes its power felt all the more intensely. Here we do not have the conscious balance between reflection and immediacy, the coincidence of idea with experience, which Johannes the Seducer exemplifies, but the unconscious or uncontrolled balance between these dimensions of the personality. “The doubter is ‘one who is whipped’ [Greek]; like a spinning top, he remains on the point for a shorter or longer period depending on the strokes of the whip; he is not able to remain on the point any more than the top is” (2:28).

Thus, when the reality of experience is separated out or suppressed, it asserts itself under, and independently of, reflective consciousness, as “a consequence that lies behind” (2:27). Reflection’s clarity finds itself darkened by the opacity of feeling. “Over my inner being broods an oppressiveness, an anxiety, that forebodes an earthquake. [...] I seem destined to have to suffer through all possible moods, [...] I have a swimming belt around my waist, but I do not see the support that is supposed to hold me up” (2:32, 34).

The aphorisms of “*Diapsalmata*” are an unsystematic expression of the boundary for the aesthetic-reflective self-construction. The ultimate loss of self-control and the radical disintegration of the personality, which are revealed in constant melancholy, are in the process of development even where self-construction has a life affirming and inter-subjective form. Esthetic rationalism’s unity of life, *i.e.*, in the pretended coincidence of the idea of experience with the reality of experience, is a retreat in defense against this inherent necessity: the superiority of facticity and the existential dichotomy.

The logic in this necessity is that reflection, even where it formally establishes a positive-integrative relationship to psychosomatic facticity, as an anticipation of experience, is nevertheless in principle arbitrary in this relationship. Esthetic reflection is related to the psychosomatic totality, the space where life is to unfold, only as an arsenal of possible experiences, not to this totality as part of its own reality in the strict sense.

The Assessor’s critique of aestheticism contains only hints at this point. His chief interest is the axiological problematic, *viz.* that the reduction of intentionality to reflection signifies in structural terms, irrespective of the form of reflection and the psychological contents, the surrender of intentionality to facticity, “an infinite relativity” (3:297), and melancholy is the psychological outcome (cf. 3:28 f.). Thus we are told that this ontic formation is determined, on the one hand, by a conscious eclectic realization of psychological-historical possibilities (cf. 3:209) and, on the other hand, that this defective totality in the self-determination implies a concession to “obscure forces” (3:155) in the personality. This is why the aesthete, despite his reflection, is “cognizant (of these obscure forces) only in a certain relativity, within a certain limitation. [...] and is lacking transparency” (3:168).

Irrespective of the variety in the potential for experience, which is actualized, self-determination as reflection on experience is thus included in personal aesthetical activity, a mode of existence in which the contents of consciousness are determined by the objective-contingent stream of experience. Reflective control is limited to a forming of receptivity for the stream of experience. This contingency is the general logic of melancholy. Melancholy is the experience that one is unavoidably determined by the stream of consciousness. It is the immediate and emotional expression of experiencing a limit to reflective control. Self-reflection puts an end to the massive impregnation of consciousness in its naive form by the stream of experience, in the sense that consciousness reflects, becomes aware of itself and of this dependence. But all that it has done thereby is to give the dependence a new form, since – as formal subjectivity or essential receptiveness – it lacks a superior *telos* for the dependence as a whole. “A certain case-hardening of the understanding now teaches a way out; it teaches: Enjoy yourself by continually discarding the conditions. But it obviously follows that he who enjoys himself by discarding the conditions is just as dependent on them as one who enjoys them” (3:179).

What can be called the suppression of the contents of experience is the psychological expression for the ontological-structural necessity in this form of consciousness, *i.e.*, the ontic superiority of facticity. There is no basis in the reflected consciousness allowing it to

“preserve” the experience in its concrete form, thus establishing continuity among the cases of factual experience. In that they are factual, they exist only to be “used and thrown away”, and if they are preserved, it is only as aesthetic ideas, *i.e.*, possibilities of experience, as the individual thinks fit. The Assessor formulates this in a pregnant manner when he points out to his aesthetic friend that “the capacity of soul that is actually wanting in you is memory [...] memory of your own life, of what you have experienced in it” (3:184).

This suppression-mechanism creates a dimension in the superiority of facticity, which is not present to the aesthetic-reflective consciousness itself, namely, the unconscious foundation of melancholy, which the Assessor describes in his sketch of Nero as “the immediacy that in being repressed is the main constituent of the actual depression” (3:176). The contingency in the psychosomatic immediacy is indeed the fundamental existential situation, which reveals itself to self-reflection. It is precisely the threat to self-control or to the unity of life, which the aesthetic project of existence attempts to come to terms with by institutionalizing a form of life that can balance immediacy and reflection. Up to this point, the aesthetic-reflective consciousness accepts in principle the foundation for the melancholy undertone in the unfolding of life, just as the intensified self-reflection within this framework signifies resignation in relation to the aesthetic “model of reconciliation”, as this finds expression in A’s ironic-pessimistic self understanding (cf. 3:181 f.). The fundamental psychological mechanism, which is a factor at work in this aesthetic self-negation is, however, not present to consciousness, at least not in the form of an affirmative acknowledgment of one’s own self.

Since the aesthete identifies himself with experience only in the single moment, and refuses to acknowledge its permanent right to form a part of his personality, he continually undermines the reflective control of immediacy at which he aims. Through the logic of his very strategy, he strengthens the potential for resistance. If the contents of experience are preserved only as an idea of experience, they will of necessity enter as an element into the psychosomatic automatism, which mediates reflection’s contact with reality. When the contents of experience are stored up in this way, with consequent historical modification of the psychological structure, there is a proportionally greater determination of the individual by experience, prior to and independent of reflection or anticipation.

It is precisely the specific regularity of this process that makes the conscious despair an end-station for aesthetic-reflective self-construction. One becomes aware of the inner antithesis in the attempt to free oneself from immediacy or the stream of experience on which one lives parasitically. But consciousness of existential heterogeneity is not sufficient on its own to create “reconciliation”. The greater the degree of ironic-reflective distance, the more contingently and autonomously will the reality of experience assert itself. It is experienced more strongly as an unavoidable irruption on the part of alien forces. The Assessor formulates it as follows: “your thought has taken everything away from you, but it has provided you with nothing in its place. At the next moment a mere trifle fascinates you” (3:189 f.).

The Assessor discusses this problematic of suppression more explicitly in *Stages on Life's Way*. However, there is less clarity here about the principles involved. What is discussed more specifically is the way in which the individual encounters the psychological consequences of suppressed experiences, namely, by means of new suppression. We are told in *Either/Or* as well that melancholy itself can be the object of suppression, with the result that it is intensified: "it will still break out at certain moments, more terrible than ever" (3:193). The anthropological logic of the method of neutralization is that the actualization of suppressed contents of experience is met by reducing the contents of experience to an idea of experience; this reduction is characteristic of the aesthetic-reflective self-construction as a whole. In other words, what the Assessor calls Goethe's "distance theory" means that "every time a human relationship is about to overwhelm him, he must distance it from himself by poetizing it" which means to "give it a false stamp as an event and an intellectual pursuit" (7:138). In this way, self-reflection, as reflection on experience, will always retain a defensive base, even where the experience is so contingent that it negates any anticipation and is thus an utterance of the unconscious.

Irrespective of the psychological course of events, *i.e.*, reflection's competence to keep facticity at bay, the total existential movement is and remains a negative and external balancing-act between "possibility" and "necessity"; and necessity increasingly limits possibility. Reflection must continually beat a retreat, and assumes a reactive form. If we apply categories from the scheme of "despair" in *The Sickness Unto Death*, we can define the position in existential ontological terms both as the "despair of possibility" and the "despair of necessity". Reflection does indeed transform all contents of experience into possibilities of experience, and in this way the aesthete's form of life is in principle "an epitome of any and every possibility" (3:21). But this autarchy of the possibility exists only for consciousness. It is constituted by means of an abstraction from the factual stream of experience, and it is continually exposed to threat, with structural necessity, by that which does not exist for consciousness, is concerned, *viz.* the substratum of abstraction, the strength of which is proportional to the degree of abstraction or to the territorial claims of the possibility. Anti-Climacus formulates this dialectic in poetic phrases when he says that the self "flounders around in possibility until it is exhausted", "becomes lost in possibility", and that the individual "is a victim of anxiety or a victim of that about which he was anxious lest he be overcome" (15:93 f.). In the light of *The Concept of Anxiety*, this must mean that facticity, the psychosomatic dynamism, negates reflection. This is expressed most clearly in the following analogy: "Therefore, the question is how the necessity of this particular self defines it more specifically. Possibility is like a child's invitation to a party; the child is willing at once, but the question is now whether the parents will give permission – and as it is with the parents, so it is with necessity" (15:94).

Structurally speaking, reflective existence thus moves towards a form of self-understanding that perceives reality under the sign of necessity. The general form of this self-understanding is reflective resignation in relation to determination in the sphere of

experience. The possibility is transformed into its opposite: “to despair of possibility” (15:98). An ontic expression of this ontological consequence is the mode of aesthetic-reflective self-construction that encounters an element in its facticity, which it cannot transform into a possibility or an idea of experience, because this factor is experienced as a permanent aspect in the subjectivity which constitutes the reality of experience. “In a Promethean way, the infinite, negative self feels itself nailed to this servitude” (15:124). If the individual holds fast to self-construction as the principle of his existence in this confrontation with necessity, this makes him conform himself to necessity. Thus he identifies himself with his destiny, but in the sense that, like the aesthete in *Either/Or*, he wants to “play Fate” or he “simultaneously want to be Fate and our Lord” (3:18 f.). The individual “takes over” his historical facticity, but this occurs with aesthetic arbitrariness: “So now he makes precisely this torment the object of all his passion, and finally it becomes a demonic rage” (15:126).

Ultimately, this means a denial of the necessity of necessity, since this is changed into the product of reflective self-construction: the price of this denial is introversion. Reflection is withdrawn from the exterior front line of experience, where it functions as an anticipation of experience, to a “a concentration-existence “ in subjectivity, where it becomes totally involved in the reflective control of facticity in the reflective subjectivity, thereby constituting “the demonic” or “an inwardness with a jammed lock” (15:126). If it opens itself essentially to the stream of experience, the factual modification of subjectivity will be given a free scope that threatens reflective self-control, which is the *raison d'être* of this form of existence.

The fundamental structure in this form of existence is that which marks aesthetic-reflective consciousness in all its formations, although it has here lost its characteristic form of reflected receptivity for experience. For here too the principle for reflective control is that subjectivity develops in conformity with facticity or to the object of control. Just as aesthete in *Vexeldriften* “varies himself” in order to come to terms with the contingency of the experiential correlative, here the subject encounters a limitation in the form of a “basic defect” (15:124), with a claim to self-limitation, *i.e.*, with an objective limitation as its contents. The chief characteristic of subjectivity is its passive-reactive form, caused by the limitation of intentionality to reflection on experience, and the consequent lack of a teleology that determines experience by giving it a place within a totality. This totalitarian (self)-determination is the form of freedom. Esthetic self-construction is thus essentially an escape from freedom’s task, and belongs in all its elaborations to the category of “the demonic”, to existential disintegration.

What Haufniensis takes up under this category has a further reference, since it embraces in principle all the forms of division of the personality. Because of this breadth of perspective, the analysis of the concept of demonism itself is not “psychologically” representative of the aesthetic-personal form of reality I have sketched. For the point of orientation here is the extreme level of disintegration expressed in the specifically “demonic” symptom, *i.e.*, “involuntary disclosure” (6:211). The deficit in the control of consciousness discloses itself in

the manifest expression of the factual substratum in the consciousness, *i.e.*, the contents of experience, which is suppressed or more correctly, is continually isolated from the sphere of consciousness. The effect of such suppression is met with a new suppression. “What determines whether the phenomenon is demonic is the individual’s attitude towards disclosure, whether he will interpenetrate that fact with freedom and accept it in freedom. When ever he will not do this the phenomenon is demonic” (6:211).

The contents of experience involved here are of such a kind that the individual experiences himself as incompetent to maintain his awareness of it: accordingly, this is a more radical or “pathological” form of suppression than occurs in the aesthetic indifference to the experience “emptied out”. But if we look at this from an anthropological-structural point of view, *i.e.*, on the basis of the concept of freedom as totalitarian self-identification, what we find is nevertheless a process of slippage from “normal-pathological” to “pathological” phenomena of the same essence. In the aesthetic-reflective consciousness, the unconscious expresses itself essentially in an “internal” manner, in attacks of dissatisfaction and the experience of alienation in relation to the reality of experience, which provide inter-subjectivity. This control, e.g., in the form of manipulation of others, becomes a compensation for a lost primary control, while at the same time also giving protection against uncontrolled expressions of the latter. It is this intensified self-control that Anti-Climacus describes as follows: “with demonic cleverness to keeping despair closed up in inclosing reserve” (15:127). The more the genesis of the introversion is determined by reflection, the more does it seem possible to defend oneself against “involuntary disclosure”. On the other hand, the uncontrolled or unconscious expression is a consequence of the introversion, and signifies that the unavoidable stream of experience continues to be stored within the consciousness, since it does not enter (in its totality) into a teleological-communicative reality.

The effect of this is that introversion continually strengthens its antithesis, the factual substratum in consciousness. Thus aesthetic-reflective self-construction is not in principle removed from the path that leads to the “pathological” forms of division of the personality, the obvious collapse of control by consciousness. If this extreme point is avoided, consciousness is made to produce a form of compensation for the lost unity of life. This happens in reflection over one’s life-situation, *i.e.*, by means of ideas that express the situation and perhaps anticipate a miraculous abolition of it, just as Quidam consoles himself with his “eclectic ideas”, the high point of which is “a religious fulfillment” (8:180). But in this position the individual has come to the boundary of aesthetic-reflective self-construction. Through “the condensed anticipation of religious subjectivity” (8:225), the individual has, precisely thanks to its isolation from inter-subjectivity, in principle opened himself for “the power that established” him (15:74).

In the case of the concept of suppression as an element in SK’s existential dialectic (s.105), I would claim that the interpretation offered here – that suppression is primarily an existential structural phenomenon, typologically represented in the aesthetic-reflective form of life – is more adequate than Nordentoft’s “psychological” explanation within the

framework of psychoanalysis. Nordentoft's approach prevents him from seizing the primary point, viz. that the neglect of self-determination as comprehensive self-identification coincides, with structural necessity, with the suppression of the contents of experience. This means that he posits a wider gulf between Freud and SK (or the Assessor) than is the case. It can indeed be affirmed that they are "in disagreement about what is excluded",³⁹³ but not in the exclusive sense that "while the object of the retrogressive propulsion is the 'spirit' or the potential future of the individual himself, the object of suppression is certain conflicts and traumas of the past, specifically of a sexual nature".³⁹⁴ On the basis of this misunderstanding, he reduces the Assessor's absolutely essential position with regard to the negated immediacy, which strikes back in the consciousness as a blow against control by the consciousness, to a purely analytical understanding: "in this specific context, immediacy means merely a childlike joy in things".³⁹⁵ This description covers only the psychological contents of immediacy in Nero's psyche, the case under discussion, and deviates from the structural logic expressed in that it is "the child's total immediacy that manifests itself unaltered and unclarified" (3:176). The joy of the childlike state is not only the psychological opposite to the dark one-roomed dwelling of melancholy; they are also of a piece, viz. manifestations of the emancipated immediacy or the defective control by consciousness.

This emancipation is generated by the suppression of the "spirit", just as the original immediacy of the child expresses the fact that the possibility of self-determination has not been developed in a decisive sense. Anxiety, as life's fundamental feeling, corresponds to the equally original possibility of emancipation and intentional control in the naive consciousness, while emancipated immediacy strikes back as melancholy at the level of self-reflection (cf. 6:137) and is thus an experience of the lack of control by consciousness against the background of the intentional immediacy of such control. This means, in the last case, that the emotional correlative is unambiguously negative in relation to the absolute ambivalence of anxiety. On the basis of the concept of self-determination, not to be oneself through being oneself (in one's immediacy) is identical with being oneself through not wanting to be oneself (cf. 15:79). The formula for the superiority of facticity, or the existential dichotomy, is the "unity" of the two structures: to be oneself in self-reflection through being oneself in one's immediacy. This expresses the fluctuation between controlled and uncontrolled regression, reflection on the experience and the reflection of the experience in consciousness.

2. The Process of Integration in Ethical-Religious Subjectivity

The structural reason for the defeat, which the aesthetic-reflective self-constitution suffers at the hands of the immanent demand for unity of life, is the reduction of intentionality to an entry-point for psychosomatic immediacy or the reality of experience. Reflection on the experience, in the form of a negation of the contingency in the stream of experience through the aesthetic idea, is initially – *i.e.*, consciousness – a balancing between experience and reflection. But in keeping with its structure, this form of consciousness leads to an increase in potential for resistance against the reflexive control. This means that the situation can be transcended only through a logical expansion of the intentional sphere, which must be set free from the passive-reactive form and developed into an active-determinative function in relation to experiential reality. This development is the general anthropological logic in what SK defines as the ethicalstate. The aesthete himself gives a primitive expression, in the following passage from *Shadowgraphs*, to the way in which this modification of subjectivity takes place: “This path of thinking is infinite and does not end until the individual arbitrarily breaks it off by affirming something else, by a determination of the will; but the individual thereby enters into ethical qualifications and does not engage us aesthetically” (2:166). The break in reflection can scarcely be called arbitrary from a constitutional point of view, since reflection gives maximum exposure to self-determination by the will as a “necessary” task; and besides this, the logic of the transition is the dethronement of reflection to become an instrument for the will, which is thereby qualified as a teleological reality.

In reflective existence, the will is the repressed reason for reflection (cf. 8:75). The reflection serves the immanent will to personal autonomy and unity of life: “in despair to will to be oneself” (15:121). But to the extent that this will to reflection aims at emancipating itself from its necessary presupposition in the psychosomatic dynamics, it undermines its own goal. The immediacy, which is separated out becomes an “underground will” which takes the form of an unconscious modification of reflective self-experience. The teleologically determined will is the fundamental overcoming of this schizophrenia in the will. Since the reality of experience is sustained by the fundamental will to unfold one’s own life and to maintain one’s life, the central structure in this form of mediation is that consciousness encounters this basic reality of life on its own ontic level. Will stands over against will, and consciousness and reality are commensurable in the sense that it becomes possible, as Haufniensis puts it, “to imprint the idea in one’s life” (V B 53:29, p. 120). The idea is an imperative here, unlike the aesthetic idea, which liberates from the factual-individual totality in favor of a general experiential reality.

A. Volitional-Teleological Integration

In the Assessor's account of the relationship between eroticism and marriage, the structure of the ethical subjectivity is exposed indirectly, since this ontic element is structurally representative. Erotic experience constitutes, on the one hand, a maximum of psychosomatic harmony; but, on the other hand, it is precisely the sexual component that threatens such harmony, thanks to the laws, which the body follows. Against this background, erotic immediacy emerges as a challenge to competence in the "teleologically expanded" intentionality, as a fundamental test of its ability to establish a counterweight to the contingency in the stream of experience. This is the problematic in the first dissertation in *Either/Or* and in the Assessor's revised critique of the aesthetic self-understanding in *Stages*.

The ethical paradigm is that the validity of experience shall transcend its abstract or historical level, *i.e.*, the "factual" validity, which experience possesses as an element in the contingent stream of experience. This happens when experience is maintained by "resolution" and is thus inserted as a substantial motivation in a historical-teleological process. "In the intention, something else is also posited as something surmounted; in the intention, this something else is posited as an internal something else, inasmuch as even the external is seen in its reflection in the internal. The historical consists in the emergence of this something else and the acquiring of its validity, but precisely in its validity it is seen as something that should not have validity. Thus love, tested and purified, issues from this movement and assimilates what is experienced" (3:95; cf. 3:26, 62). Whereas aesthetic subjectivity attempts to come to terms with the contingency of experience through conforming to this, by allowing the experience to unfold as an object for reflection, what is involved here is a negation of this autonomy. The ethical subject "resigns" (cf. 3:62, 94) vis-à-vis the totalitarian character of the experience, in that the experience is limited by the moral intention which specifies the sphere within which it may unfold legitimately.

Thanks to this intentional limitation, *i.e.*, through its heteronomous status, the ethical paradigm is however given a possibility of unfolding which guarantees its historical continuity. From the perspective of the dialectic of existence, this means that ethical consciousness has in principle overcome the fluctuation in experience of reality which characterizes the aesthetic-reflective existence and which ultimately abolishes reflective self-control through the effect of the emancipated experiential substance in consciousness. The experience is maintained here not only an idea, but in its concrete form, in that it is experienced as the abiding basis or fundamental motivation for individual self-development. The consciousness or intentionality "assimilates what is experienced" (3:95):

This idea of integration is examined in greater depth by the "assessor" in *Stages*, against the background of the attack against it in the schism, which the aesthetic self-understanding posits between experience and self-reflection. The problem identified here is that "the most immediate of all immediacies must also be the freest resolution" (7:93). Although, we can be told in *Either/Or* that this synthesis "occurs with immediacy" (3:58), *i.e.*, without reflection on the experience (cf. 3:19), it is here emphasized that reflection is a constitutive element, as

the explication of the task of decision: “If deliberation has not exhausted thought, then I make no resolution; I act either on inspiration or on the basis of a whim (7:93).

This shift of emphasis is not a substantial contradiction but a transfer of the perspective on the problem from an ontic element of the ethical subjectivity to the basic logic of its constitution. In this perspective, reflection is the quintessence of general self-transcendence, the “critical” distance to the whole range of the factual situation of the personality, what Anti-Climacus calls “infinite abstraction from every externality” (15:111). This is the necessary noetic basis for a self-identification, which is active precisely in the teleological determination of the elements of experience. In *Stages*, the Assessor only hints at this broader context for the ethical integration of the erotic experience when he says that “through the purely ideally exhausted reflection the resolution has gained a new immediacy that corresponds exactly to the immediacy of falling in love”, signifies “a religious view of life constructed upon ethical presuppositions” (7:145). This consolidation of the personality in a particular attitude to life takes place in order that the reflection may not express itself in its aesthetic-negative form, as reflection on experience (cf. 7:141 f.), and also in order to make possible the unity of intentionality and erotic immediacy: for this consolidation means that the subject is *a priori* in a position such that “resolution is present from the very beginning” (7:94), *i.e.*, “that the resolution is contemporary with the genius” (7:133). This “principle of contemporaneity” is made concrete in *Either/Or*’s portrait of the “elaboration of the personality”. The structurally necessary concluding point for the “aesthetic” self-reflection is becoming aware of the ontic powerlessness of reflection vis-à-vis the stream of experience. The assessor therefore presents this admission as the best possible starting-point for ethical self-constitution, *i.e.*, the expansion of intentionality so that it becomes an authority for teleological determination. This implies that “the true point of departure for finding the absolute is not doubt, but despair. [...] When I choose absolutely, I choose despair, and in despair I choose the absolute, for I myself am the absolute; I posit the absolute, and I myself am the absolute. But in other words with exactly the same meaning I may say: I choose the absolute that chooses me; I posit the absolute that posits me” (3:198).

This is a kind of formula for the logic of self-determination in general, and as such it gives only an outline of ethical subjectivity. The contents of this formula may be spelled out in the following principles: (1) the acknowledgment of the ontic powerlessness in the reflective control of facticity is, by that very fact, an acknowledgment of the possibility leading out of this disintegration, namely, a negation of reflection as the basic form of subjectivity. (2) This negation institutes subjectivity as a willed modification of facticity, unlike aesthetic receptivity. (3) This regulatory principle is to operate in relationship with the totality of the individual’s historical reality: “This self that he chooses in this way is infinitely concrete, for it is he himself, and yet it is absolutely different from his former self, for he has chosen it absolutely” (3:200). (4) This relationship to oneself as to a given reality is, qua relationship, also an actualization of something given, namely a given possibility or essential possibility.

This is expressed in the passage, which says, “I posit the absolute that posits me”. This is the shape of self-constitution in any case (cf. VIII 2 B 81-89).

This categorical expression for the receptive basis for self-realization does not provide any reason to mention favorably Anz’ interpretation of Kierkegaard, which can be said to neglect both the literal meaning and the line of thought in this text. The text shows that a concept of “the absolute act of existing, in which all previous essentiality is negated”,³⁹⁶ is a *contradictio in adjecto* on SK’s own premises. And as we shall see, this criticism would not touch SK even if one, like Anz, includes in this concept of “essentiality” (*Wesenheit*) “what Hegel calls the objective spirit”.³⁹⁷

The actualization of subjectivity, as the essence-determined possibility for a teleological determination of the total facticity by the will, is a dialectical process. This means that the subject, in agreement with the general structure of consciousness as a whole, relates to itself as a basis for determination, and relates by means of this self-development to the object that is to be determined, which is in fact the subject itself as experience and activity in concrete historical space. In other words, the subject relates to itself both as activity and as product. The structure in this dialectic is expressed generally in the following description of ethical subjectivity as a totality: “In this way his movement becomes a movement from himself through the world to himself” (3:253). The dialectic point in this constitutional structure, put in negative terms, is that the subjectivity, as intentional basis, is not developed in isolation from the experience which communicates its object, *i.e.*, the task of providing a foundation; it is constituted in and through the very process of grounding. The ethical subjectivity is, to an eminent degree, a “practical” reality.

We see only hints of what this means in the theses formulated by the Assessor about the unity of the abstract and the concrete ego, of isolation and continuity, of the internal dimension and inter-subjective activity, etc. If we are to understand all the essential implications of this dialectic, we must hold fast to the link between these formulae and the concrete moral imperatives, which surround them, since this interweaving of anthropological structural concepts and “moral positivism” has a fundamental significance. Generally speaking, one may express this relationship as follows: the formal dialectic between intentionality and facticity includes a concrete dialectic between elements in facticity.

The necessity of this last dialectic comes from the “formal” character of the return to oneself as the intentional foundation; this return does not directly equip the subject with an apparatus of intentional concepts. In other words, it does not give any access to a transcendental ego as an eternal primal basis of ideality, in analogy to the Greek-Platonic model of “recollection”. It is exclusively the choice of oneself in one’s “eternal validity” (3:199), which constitutes the will to intentional-teleological activity in the factual-historical situation, and since this is a transcendental act, it has no concrete moral contents. The act constitutes only the abstract good, “the choice between good and evil” (3:203). This choice receives its necessary contents from the very situation it is to determine, *i.e.*, the moral tradition: “Therefore, at the first moment of choice the personality seemingly emerges as

naked as the infant from the mother's womb; at the next moment it is concrete in itself, and a person can remain at this point only through an arbitrary abstraction" (3:207).

Moral self-constitution identifies the individual with his factual situation in such a way that a dialectic is instituted between elements in this situation, a concrete dialectic between norms of moral tradition, on the one hand, and the reality of experience on the other. This dialectic in turn provides the motivation for the intentionality, which constitutes history (cf. 3:268). Thus transcendental subjectivity takes on its form in a synthesis of "ideal" and "real" factors in a concrete historical situation. This corresponds to the general structure in human freedom as a whole, as has been expounded above: emancipation within the framework of a complex process of determination.

The comprehensive (and thereby systematically ambiguous) expression for this double or "dialectical" dialectic is the concept of "the universal human being" (3:236), which is identical with the claim that "the individual is simultaneously the universal and the particular" (3:243). This formula states that the "formal" self-identification, through negation of aesthetic conformity to the stream of experience, is referred with structural necessity to conventional morality as the framework for teleological modification of the experience posited as a principle for life's unfolding. If this framework is given on the basis of a principle of self-determination, this nonetheless automatically sets the individual into a "critical" relationship to it. Accordingly, aesthetic conformity to experience is not simply replaced by a corresponding conformity to a culturally-established pattern of behavior, which is merely a mode of aesthetic self-understanding, "an external relation to duty" (3:235), the extreme point of which is the "philistine-bourgeois mentality" which "spiritlessly triumphs" thanks to "the parrot-wisdom of routine experience" (15:97 f.; cf. 6:181 f.).

The "critique" of moral facticity is not, however, in the first instance a reflection in the direction of moral knowledge, setting up a universally valid imperative in opposition to the historically contingent expressions of this. Reflection goes in the opposite direction, from "the universal" as "the abstract" (3:236) to the concrete historical situation to which the individual has placed himself in a relationship of absolute responsibility. Thus the "critical" authority is this situation, as the sphere where the norm is applied. Since "the task is to work the accidental and the universal together" (3:237), the latter takes on its definitive or concrete meaning in relation to the former, *i.e.*, taking into consideration "an individual who has these capacities, these passions, these inclinations, these habits, who is subject to these external influences, who is influenced in one direction thus and in another thus" (3:242). When priority is given to the situation, the tendency is towards what we can call a pragmatic-therapeutic ethics.

The significance of pragmatism is that a concrete moral goal can be constituted only in self-reflection and personal decision that "the dialectic of duty resides within me" (3:244). What may be expressed as universally valid moral or as a categorical imperative is the communicative integration of subjectivity in moral inter-subjectivity, *i.e.*, the obligation to a verification in principle of one's personal-moral goals in a social context, in discourse and in

action. The category for this agreement is “to become open” (3:296; cf. 5:75). This is why the teleological qualification of the erotic immediacy in marriage, the paradigmatic basis for the cultural collective, is supported by “honesty, frankness, openness, understanding” (3:111) or “the shared consciousness” (3:105).

It is this pragmatic synthesis, and the necessity of it, which are expressed indirectly in the apparently trivial opinion about adapting oneself to “the order of things” (3:240, 242). The accent in the concept lies upon the social system in its supra-individual objectivity, but it is implied that this fulfills its essential function only when it becomes a catalyst and a sphere of activity for the individual possibilities of experience, as aesthetic-factual potential. “The ethical thesis that every human being has a calling expresses, then, that there is a rational order of things, in which every human being, if he so wills, fills his place in such a way that he simultaneously expresses the universally human and the individual” (3:269). “Ethics explains [*forklarer*] to him the universal in the differences, and he transfigures [*forklarer*] the differences in the universal” (3:280).

This mediation of aesthetic-reflective experience of oneself and conventional morality, thanks to self-identification in terms of the will or the transcendental-practical ego, corresponds formally to Hegel’s anthropological scheme of the necessary assimilation of “the subjective spirit”, *i.e.*, reflective subjectivity, into cultural inter-subjectivity: “If someone says that he is acting in this way on the grounds of his conscience, he is speaking truly, for his conscience is the self as it knows and wills. But he must essentially say this, for this self must at the same time be the universal self”.³⁹⁸ Here, however, the pragmatic-historical openness in moral consciousness is limited *a priori* by the absolute as a conceptual process, and this qualifies the dialectic of existence in the last analysis as an “appearance” which is seen through by philosophical familiarity with the absolute as idea.

Pragmatically established ethics has of itself a therapeutic effect, constitutive of the personality. It activates the psychological historical *habitus* of the individual. By being played off against an abstract universal validity in the conventional system of behavior, when the concrete shape of personal duty is discerned clearly, this *habitus* is regulated teleologically. It is allowed to operate as a motivating basis, but without asserting its own self or its inherent autonomy. It is only an element in the material supplementing of formal subjectivity, and not (as in the aesthetic-reflective self-constitution) the totality of these contents. “Here he then possesses himself as task in such a way that it is chiefly to order, shape, temper, inflame, control – in short, to produce an evenness in the soul, a harmony, which is the fruit of the personal virtues” (3:242).

Like the aesthetic subject, the ethical subject sets limits in relation to the stream and the possibility of experience, but this “eclecticism” is fundamentally different from the aesthetic reflection on experience, since it is based not only in the sphere of experience, in an idea about experience, but in a goal that transcends experience. This means that even the possibility that cannot be actualized is retained in principle as part of one’s own reality: “he makes a distinction, but in such a manner that he takes an essential responsibility for

excluding what he excludes as accidental” (3:241). The negation of a possibility of experience and behavior – which would in any case be constitutive of the personality – is here an element in the personal identity through awareness of it. In this conscious “repression”, it is only a “possibility”, not a “reality”, which is negated. The experience is preserved through remembering the act of negation, in order to avoid that this element of the stream of experience becomes a self-actualizing possibility in the psychosomatic automatism. The embodiment of this self-regulation is the conscious doubling of the self into “the actual self and the ideal self, which the individual has outside himself as the image in whose likeness he is to form himself, and which on the other hand he has within himself, since it is he himself” (3:239).

What is involved in this conception is not primarily an “ideal of personality” in the narrow sense, an “existentialistic” ethos about the autonomous individuality that is to be created in a private sphere. In light of the constitutional unity between subjectivity and inter-subjectivity, such a direct and exclusive relationship to oneself is an abstraction, which logically leads the individual in the direction of what Anti-Climacus defines categorically as “a fantasized existence in abstract infinitizing or in abstract isolation” (15:90). The basic dimension in “the ideal self” is, on the contrary, social integration and activity. The Assessor expresses this briefly but pregnantly, when he says that the dialectical movement of existence is “from himself through the world to himself” (3:253). Or, more concretely: “when he turns back into his personality through civic life, the personal life appears in a higher form. Personality appears as the absolute that has its teleology in itself” (3:243).

When Climacus speaks in *Postscript* about “the subjective individual [...] existing in the isolation of inwardness”, a situation “in which all sociality and companionship are inconceivable” (9:63), this cannot simply be taken as a break with this line of thought and a concession to an “individualistic” ethics, because the problem posed is different, viz., to guard against the idea that self-constitution is an objective-rational insight into oneself. This delimitation is also, indirectly, one chief aspect in the Assessor’s theory about ethic self-constitution thanks to a “pragmatic-voluntaristic” integration into the moral fellowship.

The “personal life in a higher form” (cf. 7:145) is the counterpart to the aesthetic-reflective and essentially passive assimilation of the stream of experience. A teleological receptivity for this stream is formed, a personal consistency or immediacy, a “sovereignty over himself” (3:233) which means the *a priori* neutralization of the automatism in it. The “inner” consistency, subjectivity as the established basis of experience, coincides with an “outer” consistency, unity and consistency in the total movement of life, since the former is created in and through the unifying activity. The categorical expression for the “outer” or comprehensive unity is the qualification of the succession of time as (genuine) history. Historical continuity is created when the individual perceives the totality of his experiences, in the spectrum from passive receptive influence to the transforming activity upon himself, as his “personal deed” (3:231). In this way, the individual will “be simultaneously in continuity with the past and the future” (3:243; cf. 3:113, 128). “Transparency” is the psychological

habitus, which creates this historical continuity. This is not primarily a case of psychological insight into oneself, *i.e.*, knowledge of the psychological mechanisms, which constitute the experiential reality. The aesthete's high level of knowledge on this point does not prevent his lack of self-transparency (cf. 3:168 and 15:104). Haufniensis makes conceptually explicit what the Assessor weaves into a sequence of imperatives, when he identifies transparency with "the good" (6:210). This is acceptance of the concrete situation in the awareness of "the distinction between good and evil" (6:196). The basic meaning is thus the acknowledgment of the total facticity which conditions ethical self-constitution at all, in other words primarily an act of the will. The semantic meaning expresses the consequence of this self-identification for the significance of the intellect in the self-relationship: "that he becomes conscious of himself, so thoroughly that no accidental element escapes him" (3:234). "The person who lives ethically has seen himself, knows himself, penetrates his whole concretion with his consciousness, does not allow vague thoughts to rustle around inside him or let tempting possibilities distract him with their juggling" (3:239).

As the unity of will and knowledge, transparency is the embodiment of what I have called, with a quasi-anthropological expression, the "inner" consistency. Subjectivity or the personality is equipped to meet the stream of experience, which ensures continuity of life unfolding with history taken as the teleologically established past. It makes possible a total openness to the stream of experience, which is in turn a precondition for the individual's possibility of having an eclectic relationship to this stream as a basic motivation, but in such a way that the excluded elements do not emancipate themselves to become self-actualizing blows against the control by consciousness.

This control by consciousness is a regulative ideal, a "prophecy" (3:239) about the real subject, which it can approach only in keeping with the personal involvement and the conditions of the concrete situation. The assessor hints at this "Kantian-like" view when SK himself seems to break through in the passage stating, "that no human being can become transparent to himself" (3:178). The point is "psychological"; it is maintained that this cannot take place to such an extent that the effect of the unconscious in the form of melancholy can be eliminated. Control by consciousness is meant to function precisely as a defense against the unavoidable "surplus" of experiences and possibilities of experience, "indeterminate thoughts" and "tempting possibilities", by retaining them as things excluded.

It is in principle the same structural logic that constitutes intentional control over the sexual instinct: it "is forgotten, and recollected only in forgetfulness" (6:169). The same defensive function has also an apparently opposite strategy, namely, the creation of a space for the non-teleological experience, a "territory of inconsequence". This sets up a barrier against the supra moral sidetrack, "quibbling anxiety about this or that" (3:237). The Assessor does not go into details about the optic specification of this ethical subjectivity, because his chief aim is to display the fundamental possibility for the integration of the personality as pragmatic self-therapy. A new starting-point in the empirical anthropological field would be

required to explore the possible development of this project in the direction of individual therapy.

The particular character of this presentation of ethical subjectivity in relation to the traditional or moral-philosophical treatment of the theme lies in that the epistemological problematic is neglected. Neither the conditions for moral reflection (e.g., as Kant's "fundamental principles of the pure practical reason" or as Fichte's "systematic presentation of the formal conditions of the morality of our actions") nor the "cashing" of these in the form of a theory of obligation or human behavior (e.g., Hegel's "*Sittlichkeit*") are discussed. This break with tradition is indeed constitutive of SK's "existential-philosophical" position, but cannot be interpreted to mean a denial, in principle, of the possibility and necessity of a moral reflection, which institutes a universal validity that transcends positive morality and, thereby, carries out a critical task in relation to it. Such an implicit concession to a "reflective-moral" consciousness is present in a pointed manner in the concepts of irony and humor as functions constitutive of the personality. More generally, this form of thought is confirmed in the basic anthropological idea of the dialectic between phyllo-genesis and ontogenesis, which implies for SK – as this is expressed especially in the critique of the speculative idea of mediation – a permanent tension between essential possibility and historical reality (cf., e.g., 10:180).

Ethical subjectivity represents in the Assessor's presentation also a form of critical-moral consciousness. The moral tradition is criticized by being transformed through self-reflection into a personal pragmatic ethics. It is the very mode of constitution, *i.e.*, the personal decision that shifts the problem of discursively established moral principles into the background. To the extent that there is here an acknowledgment in principle of this form of moral reflection, however, it is possible to understand the relationship in such a way that personal identification with the moral tradition or the conventional system of behavior is a precondition for this discourse. Moral-critical discourse has no meaning without the obligation in principle to such conformity. It is only such a unity with inter-subjectivity that constitutes the moral subjectivity, which spells itself out in the discourse.

In this perspective, it is relevant to expound SK's presentation of ethical subjectivity as a deepening of the Kantian moral philosophy, *i.e.*, as a demonstration of the conditions for moral-philosophical discourse, as Fahrenbach hints when he says that "This presence" (of "the absolute principle of ethical action [...] in the consciousness of obligation") "remains nevertheless unexplained in concrete terms (seen from Kierkegaard's standpoint); it is fundamentally presupposed by Kantian moral philosophy, and is only reduced to its principle. The concrete question about ethical existence cannot make this presupposition, but must clarify how the consciousness of obligation constitutes itself".³⁹⁹

When one attempts, however, like Kirbach, to widen this anthropological basis for moral reflection into a "theory of ethical knowledge",⁴⁰⁰ the interpretation has lost its object, and runs contrary to the fundamental intention of the analysis of its constitution, which breaks for reasons of principle with the traditional moral-philosophical schematic. The profound

inappropriateness of such an interpretation becomes especially clear in his “demythologizing” attempt to convert SK’s version of the Christian idea of reconciliation into a theory about the restitution of an original “capacity to assess value”⁴⁰¹ in the I-Thou relationship of love.⁴⁰²

The systematic meaning to be found in this abstraction from the moral philosophical problematic is however something more than this implicit deepening. The “existential-philosophical” break with idealistic tradition goes deeper. What is involved here is a new solution to the problem of the unity of reality and consciousness, which is expressed programmatically in the concept of “repetition”, *i.e.*, in a contradiction of “recollection”.

In general terms, this reevaluation implies the following main positions: the problem of unity cannot be resolved adequately by means of rational discourse, by abstracting from reality’s manifoldness and contingency in favor of the universality of the idea. This is true even if the idea is freed from its Platonic-mythical form and has the status of a constitutional concept. The form of the solution is the integration of the personality. This becomes the fundamental problem against the background of “powerlessness” in the philosophical reflection, with the consequence that the analysis of its conditions and forms of development, the dialectic of existence, will not give priority to the question of the universal rational validity, in this case, the development of a theory of duty or conduct, which can have a critical and clarifying effect on the internalized moral consciousness. The decisive precondition for integration of the personality is not the level of moral reflection, the reflected relationship to positive morality, but the will to moral obligation, which alone gives this reflection the effect of creating the personality. Consequently, the constitutional analysis of ethical subjectivity emphasizes this aspect, the structure in this basic ethical will.

One can put this in another way: for the integration of the personality within the framework of the ethical subjectivity, it is a necessary and sufficient condition that the individual actualizes conventional morality in relationship to the totality of his experience of himself. A moral-critical position that may exist on a philosophical discursive level, *i.e.*, as a critique of culture, is in any case a byproduct, even if it can appear as a necessary consequence for a particular individual in a particular situation as, e.g., for SK himself. The unity of reality as “repetition” is not developed in the philosophical insight into “the order of things that maintains the whole of existence”, which is only “the relative mediation” (3:164), nor in the knowledge of the conditions necessary for this unity, but through a historical teleological continuity in the personal course of life, which means “saving one’s personality from being volatilized and, so to speak, in pawn to events” (IV B 117, p. 296; cf. 5:131).

The campaign against the idealistic-rational ideal of mediation is in the fact a main thrust of SK’s anthropology. This is supported by the ideal of mediation also appearing as a concrete element in the dialectic of existence. The aesthetic-reflective self-constitution is in fact this ideal realized in the form of a personality. This form of life takes the shape of a rational reproduction or “recollection” of the contents of the experience of oneself in the form of ideas of experience, *i.e.*, an aprioristic system. In the collapse of this project of mediation

in the disintegration of the personality lies an indirect reference to the boundaries for philosophical reflection in relation to the problem of the unity of reality.

It is likewise clear that this problematic of integration – in a general sense – is the *norma normata* for the entire spectrum of positions taken with regard to the dialectic of existence, including the religious subjectivity. This means that “repetition progresses along this path until it signifies atonement, which is the most profound expression of repetition” (IV B 117, p. 293), further, that the essence of faith is a “double-movement” (5:34) which ensures the individual’s identity with his historical facticity, that this ultimate relationship to oneself is a relationship to God, etc. Naturally, SK’s concretization of such Christian subjectivity is marked – because of his maieutic intention – by the contemporary psychological-cultural context, and therefore attaches importance to the point that “then existence becomes exceedingly strenuous because a double movement is continually being made” (10:101). But this does not change the fundamental view regarding integration.

The presentation given here of ethical self-determination as a dialectic between subjectivity and inter-subjectivity, and hence between elements in facticity, is a main point in my general dispute with the tradition of interpretation which expounds SK’s concept of subjectivity in the direction of an absolute spontaneity or “objectless inwardness” (Adorno). But even interpretations, which attempt in principle to guard against this error and assert the integrative significance of self-determination, have a tendency to do less than full justice to the structural totality of this conception. This is the case, e.g., with *Sløk*, whose exposition of the “existential-philosophical” constitutive element in SK’s thinking is correct in many ways: his main thesis on self-determination is that it is a total “qualification of a given content. [...] a determined position that the individual can adopt vis-à-vis his own individual contents”,⁴⁰³ and that it consequently “lies, not in an act of reflection, but in an action: an action without any determined contents”.⁴⁰⁴ This definition covers the formal autonomy of ethical subjectivity, something that *Sløk* expresses with greater precision when he says that “this attitude [...] must necessarily be without contents, if one understands ‘contents’ to mean contents that are special for this attitude”,⁴⁰⁵ but it goes wrong precisely because it remains fixed at this point. We are not given any conceptual explanation of what it means to “relate consciously in a determinate manner to what one is”.⁴⁰⁶ The “determinate manner” itself remains an indeterminate or inadequate concept, and thereby becomes a false concept when it is taken consistently, when it is only “a distinction between the qualifications of a given totality, and not between elements”.⁴⁰⁷ As has been shown, the former implies the latter with structural necessity. Without this concrete dialectic within facticity, the autonomy in self-determination remains an empty pretence, or a regression into the aesthetic assimilation to the stream of experience.

The inadequate account of the concept of self-determination reduces the strength of *Sløk*’s argument against the “diastatic” version of it,⁴⁰⁸ since ultimately he himself approaches this position, *i.e.*, the understanding of self-determination as “pure inwardness”. Its essential character as teleologically active integration into the social process becomes neutralized in a

dualism (akin to the Kantian “ethics of disposition”) between “goal” and “motive”- between a “development towards a goal” and a “development that is itself the goal”. It is wrong to assert that “One can affirm that it is essentially identical to do one’s work and develop one’s talents, and that the moral philosopher and the bourgeois are accordingly identical”.⁴⁰⁹ This concept of ethical subjectivity imprisons it in a preliminary, negative self-transcendence. Sløk’s attempt to justify this interpretation through positions taken in the *Postscript* gives an appearance of having support, because he neglects the problem, which is the context for the statements, *i.e.*, the didactic-polemical intention, which undergirds them. This systematically limits the general validity of the statements. While the Assessor’s argumentation is directed against the dissolution of the social dimension in the formal subjectivity’s reflective-manipulative dealings with it, Climacus’ antithesis is another mode of absolutizing reflection, the negation of subjectivity or of personal freedom by its identification with the historical collective as an objective-rational process.

When Climacus asserts that “true ethical enthusiasm consists in willing to the utmost of one’s capability, but also, uplifted in divine jest, in never thinking whether or not one thereby achieves something” (9:112; cf. 9:249 N), but this is understood as an exaggerated way of expressing the negation of the idea in the philosophy of identity that the ethical action, or human reality as a whole, is an element in a universal teleological process. Thus the polemic point here is not made in favor of the absorption of the ethical subject into an introvert self-reflection that concentrates on the motive or the purity of the will: what is carried out here is a demarcation against the opposite extreme, *viz.*, the obscuring of the ethical obligation in the compromise with the favor of “world history”, the advantage of being in conformity with the particular demands made by the idea to present time. This amounts to a popular-philosophical watering down of Hegel’s thinking; but apart from the question of the interpretation of Hegel, it gives meaning to Climacus’ thesis, which has little to do with the schism in the “ethics of disposition” between motive and effect.

The un-dialectic relationship between form and content, which characterizes Sløk’s presentation of ethical subjectivity brings his interpretation of SK’s anthropology close to *Løgstrup*, from which he wishes to distance himself. A chief point, and a critical-polemical center in Løgstrup’s understanding of SK, is precisely the claim that ethics is compromised egocentrically to refer only to the disposition, that “obedience [...] becomes the only thing that is good in itself”.⁴¹⁰ In both cases, the ethical will is understood as an identity of subject and object; it is its own object, and the reality of life that accompanies it exists only as a necessary contrary impulse from which it must free itself. The difference is that whereas Sløk defines this encounter as a synthesis, Løgstrup sees it as a process of division, as a negation of the immediate lived reality. Neither conception is tenable. The premises of the first interpretation are wrong: Sløk misunderstands the nature and structure of the synthesis. The second interpretation - Løgstrup’s - is wrong in its conclusion, reducing lived reality to a springboard for introversion. Such an interpretation is based ultimately on a false version of

the concept of anthropological synthesis, viz. the theory (discussed in 2 and 14) of “the two syntheses”.⁴¹¹

Nor does *Fahrenbach*’s analysis – despite its dominant orientation on the question of the existential-philosophical clarification of idealism’s “practical” philosophy⁴¹² – explicitly bring out the systematic significance of the fact that the ethical subject is referred to conventional morality as a necessary material complement to the formal or pure will to self-determination, *i.e.*, the significance of the concrete dialectic within facticity which is thereby constituted. This dialectic goes unrecognized when “that which is universally human” is identified with “the way in which the human person [...] relates to his concrete existence”⁴¹³ or “unconditional relationship to one’s self”.⁴¹⁴

This intentionality is posited as a pure formality, in an exclusive antithetical relationship to “any kind of aesthetic differentiation” or “content”.⁴¹⁵ This formula for the antithesis between the basis of determination and the object of determination is false because it presupposes that determination can take the form of a purely transcendental act without any content. Determination is, however, possible only in the confrontation of content with content, and the content of the basis for determination must be acquired through the dialectical interplay of this basis with the object of the determination.

Holl overlooks this constitutional significance of historical-concrete inter-subjectivity, and this through an explicit misunderstanding. Ethical self-constitution is here described as transcendental self-production when *Holl* is stating that “its own idea is the totality of its truth”.⁴¹⁶ This results in the logically necessary reduction of the alter ego to “essentially only a representation”⁴¹⁷ which is precisely the false (aesthetic) form of inter-subjectivity that the ethical subject must overcome. It is the communicative openness that gives historical-teleological unity. The chief result of this erroneous interpretation is the concept of a “double” synthesis, analogous to *Løgstrup*’s non-dialectical version of the relation to the self, when *Holl* says that “on the one hand, the self has its teleology in itself, but on the other hand the self is to be enriched through life in community”⁴¹⁸ – as if the former were possible without the latter. *Holl*’s problem in distinguishing between the aesthetic fixation upon oneself and ethical self-determination is an illusory problem generated by this false dualism, and the attempt to resolve it by attributing constitutive primacy to the religious aspect supplies a decisive premise for the understanding of inter-subjectivity as something “derived” from the relationship to God. In other words, inter-subjectivity is not seen as constitutive for the relationship to one’s self. “The ethical self relates positively to the Thou and to the world, but this does not lie in the concept of the self. It must come to the self either from an idea or from God”.⁴¹⁹ This is to interpret *SK*’s thinking *ad absurdum*.

Since the constitutional structure here can be recognized in an essentially indirect manner, in loosely connected sequences of epic polemical statements, it is not surprising that it is covered over and watered down both in “productive” and in more “lexical” interpretations. An example of the first type is *Fischer*’s presentation of ethical subjectivity. The link with conventional moral inter-subjectivity is suppressed here in favor of a poetic-metaphysical

postulate of “participation in [...] the inner world of ideality, which remains an eternal mystery”;⁴²⁰ through the individual’s contemplation of himself, this becomes established as a “criterion of the absolute”,⁴²¹ thereby raising the individual above “his existence which is merely conditioned by time and space”.⁴²² This is a construction for which some support can be found in the text, but it effectively wipes out SK’s fundamental concession to human historicity, with the fight this involves against every form of transfer back into an eternally valid ideal sphere, as a paradigm for the formation of personal identity or the unity of reality. Fischer’s cardinal error is to confuse the universality of self-determination as form or structure with a material-ethical universality.

In a lexical reduction of the line of thought to a “perception”, as for example in *Bohlin’s* presentation of SK’s “ethical view”, the constitutive relationship between subjectivity and inter-subjectivity is not understood as the actualization of an essential possibility, and the significance of the social relationship as integration, *i.e.*, that the moral consensus itself is constituted in a relationship, is overlooked. “Despite ethical man’s endeavor to reach a positive relationship to the social and bourgeois dimensions, the ethical view which is the basis of the presentation of the ethical stage remains in reality a purely individualistic ethic. [...] Thus the ethical stage operates in principle in two spheres which are separated from one another”.⁴²³

Lindstrøm takes the same line (the theory of individualism) when he argues from the overarching theological-ethical concept of “God’s individually-determined creative will in relation to each human being” to stipulate “the individual’s conscience”⁴²⁴ as a critical authority in relation to conventional morality, although he distances himself from *Bohlin’s* thesis of an individualistic ethics by reading into the Assessor’s line of thought a theological legitimation of “the forms of the social and bourgeois life”.⁴²⁵ Anthropologically speaking, however, such justification is unnecessary, since the link here is generated by the way in which morality is constituted, although the idea of the divine-individual ordering can be demonstrated to be central in the theological framework of the anthropological reflection. Taken in this meta-anthropological sense, *Lindstrøm’s* position is correct. The view could be formulated in full as follows: the divine ordering manifests itself in constitutional structures. And theological views and “vocational perceptions” may reflect this immanent teleology at a secondary stage.

B. The consolidation and the crisis of integration in the religious consciousness

SK’s anthropology and concept of self-determination is developed against the background of a philosophical systemic conception in which religious consciousness, *i.e.*, the ultimate foundation of the unity of life in a comprehensive or “metaphysical” ground of reality, has its place as a matter of course. Because of this systematic totality, we shall touch here on the question of the religious dimension of the integration of the personality, and the deepening and modification of this dimension within the same sphere. This does not mean that I may take up in all its fullness something that is a dominant goal of SK’s writings, the

reinterpretation of Christianity against the background of its status as “cultural Christianity”. All I attempt to do is to identify (in an essentially hypothetical way) the fundamental anthropological significance of the religious (Christian) concept of personality. The primary question here, especially in view of contradictory evaluations in the history of interpretation, is the extent to which this implies disintegration, a “dualistic-eschatological” private religiosity, or a fundamental affirmation of the continuity with the human or universal task of self-development, *i.e.*, the ethical-social subjectivity.

Within the framework of willed-teleological self-constitution, the presence of the religious dimension is conceived of only at an essentially transcendental level. The divine is understood here as legitimation of the synthesis of aesthetic experiential reality and the conventional-cultural pattern of behavior. God is ultimately the “metaphysical” guarantee for the correspondence between this individualized universal validity, intentionality, and empirical social action, analogous to the Kantian softening of the antinomy in the system of experience with the help of the overarching idea. The fact that the Assessor expresses this religious-metaphysical optimism in personal-poetic phrases does not essentially alter its logical status – rather, it amounts almost to a popular-philosophical version of the transcendental-philosophical idea (cf., e.g. 3:49, 46, 57, 87, 91, 94, 117, 192, 201 and 7:85, 90 f., 106, 109, 145). Against the background of the accentuation of the personal-irrational character of the relationship to God in the later writings, however, the existential form of expression can be understood as anticipating such a deepening: the collapse of the belief in providence, in the pathetic-introverted religiosity.

From an anthropological perspective, what constitutes this breaking out from the ethical-teleological integration of reality, if at all possible to understand it from this perspective? The impression of a break with the overall way of posing the anthropological problem is that religious subjectivity is portrayed, both conceptually and in concrete ontic terms, in a clear confrontation precisely with the ideal of integration, *i.e.*, with social-cultural functionality. This impression is strengthened in turn by the epic concretization of this religious transcendence. Here there appear figures of existence that belong to the category of exceptional persons, individuals who live in the boundary-land of the cultural fellowship, thanks only to their psychic constitution; and this fellowship is a necessary medium for the integration of personality which is brought about by ethical intentionality.

Such situations must however be located primarily on the level of expression in relation to the governing anthropological line of thought. The mode of expression is conditioned in part by a fight against the idealistic concept of mediation, the cultural synthesis as the unity of reality, and in part by the poetic reproduction of personal destiny in life. The didactic-polemical intention, which is determined to an increasing degree by the knowledge of a personal task (cf., e.g., IX A 213), casts a veil over the implied anthropological-structural significance of the religious stage, *i.e.*, its relevance to the problem of unity. The general anthropological logic in religious transcendence, namely, a special negation of social-ethical harmony, is nevertheless clear enough. It makes manifest an underlying incompetence, a lack

of unity, in the subjectivity, which is to carry out the unifying activity. This is the problem posed in the poetic paraphrase of Christian theology of the incarnation in *Philosophical Fragments*. But it is expressed most clearly as an anthropological point in Climacus' critical commentary on the writings in *Postscript*, although the conceptual clarity is limited by the link to ontic particularity in the interpretations of existence. The description of the incompetence in the following passage, for example, is fundamental, yet only metaphorical: "In despairing, I use myself to despair, and therefore I can indeed despair of everything by myself, but if I do this I cannot come back by myself" (9:215 f.). The lack of anthropological explanation here comes from the fact that the thinking here is "dogmatic", based on the Christian concept of sin: that "the dreadful exemption from doing the ethical, the individual's heterogeneity with the ethical, this suspension from the ethical, is sin as a state in a human being" (9:224).

In the epic account given of religious transcendence, which is autobiographically determined, the concept of defective ethical subjectivity is expressed indirectly or quasi anthropologically. The abolition of faith in providence, thanks to the idea of divine irrationality, is already introduced in "Ultimatum". This point is deepened in poetic-legendary form in *Fear and Trembling*, which exemplifies a new kind of conformity to the social order. The unity is created precisely through a confirmation of this divine irrationality, viz., the belief "that all things are possible for God" (5:44). This view appears in the form of a "philosophical" paradox in *Philosophical Fragments*, as the point at which the rational competence for the understanding of reality, the "metaphysical" pretension, necessarily experiences an absolute boundary (cf. 6:38 ff.). This idea also underlies the presentation of the incongruence of personal particularity with moral-cultural fellowship in the description of the young person, and in Quidam's story of suffering, where the reflective genius creates an incongruence that provokes openness towards a divine sanction of it; the divine irrationality constitutes a private universe of meaning. To the extent that these expressions are understood as epic paraphrases of an anthropologically necessary process, they illustrate the powerlessness of subjectivity vis-à-vis the task of concrete self-identification.

The specific religious subjectivity is constituted when "regulative" religiosity is deepened to become a personal-irrational relationship to God (cf. 5:63, 75) in virtue of the experience of ethical incompetence (the fact that the description of this process is colored by SK's particular psychological situation does not affect its general validity without further ado). A constructive goal is established in it: the restitution of defective subjectivity. The religious subjectivity is ethical, in the sense that its goal is the same as for ethical self-constitution: "With regard to the religious, the point is that this has passed through the ethical" (10:83). "Either all of existence [*Tilværelsen*] comes to an end in the demand of ethics, or the condition is provided and the whole of life and of existence begins anew, not through an immanent continuity with former existence, which is a contradiction, but through transcendence. This transcendence separates repetition from former existence [*Tilværelse*]" (6:116).

If this restituted personality does not take concrete form in SK, at least not in the pseudonymous writings, this is due to a practical-didactic concentration on the pathetic-problematic religiosity, since the main existential problem is to open oneself for the possibility of restitution. This way of posing the problem also leads to a corresponding “compression” of the religiosity qualified as Christian (as in principle restituted). The portrayal of this is essentially negative, as an attack on a form of Christianity, which SK perceived as neutralizing the radicalness precisely in the demand for restitution. When this polemical situation seems to elicit not only forms of expression, but also lines of thought, which seem to belie the very goal of restitution, namely, the integration of the personality, this must be registered as a break or an inconsistency in the process of thought. To it cannot simply be attributed a “retroactive” effect on the analysis of existence, for this would be to confuse “logical” and “psychological” consistencies.⁴²⁶ This ambivalence is a problem in the study of SK in the broadest sense (as a study of SK’s “*Spätwerk*”, e.g. Deuser 1980), but need not be a problem for the philosophical study of SK’s thought. To make a plausible explanation for the “inconsistencies” of the Church struggle into the ultimate interpretative criterion is to demand too much, including a completely “unhistorical” correspondence between idea and action in SK himself.

In *Postscript*, the pathetic religiosity abolishes the ethical integration. Its formal continuity with the aesthetic duplicity is expressed in the concept of “hidden inwardness” (10:156), *i.e.*, to “live in the relative ends just in order to practice the absolute relation in renunciation” (10:97). This must not however be understood as a displacement of the line of thought, as a general abandonment of the anthropological principle of unity. What is involved here is an element in the process of restitution of subjectivity, *viz.*, the radical openness to restitution in “the totality of guilt-consciousness” (10:205), *i.e.*, an intensified ethical consideration of oneself (cf. 10:250). It is equally clear – if we keep to the texts which have the greatest fundamental clarity and weight – that the ultimate meaning of religiosity or the relationship to God is the restitution of a defective relationship to one’s own self, as the unity of the ontological heterogeneity of the personality: “in relating itself to itself and in willing to be itself, the self rests transparently in the power that established it” (15:180; cf. 16:155 f.). This implies a form of retrieval of the pretended unity of life in ethical-teleological subjectivity, as we also witness in the definition of faith as a new or higher form of immediacy, *i.e.*, as a restitution of the constant maintenance of consciousness vis-à-vis the stream of experience (cf., e.g., XI A 360). A poetic-maieutic expression of this religious unity of life is the imperative regarding the unity of the will, as a defense against the variety of reality and the consequent possibility of ambivalence in matters concerning the will (cf. 11:31 ff.), and similarly the description of this unity of will and life as absolute obedience in one’s relationship to God. The ethical consciousness of duty is personified in the consciousness of God (cf. 14:145 ff.).

3. Conclusion

I will in conclusion attempt to connect back to the introduction of my interpretation of SK, where “hypothetically” was described the basic structure of SK’s concept of the subject in relation to Heidegger’s attempt to overcome a “metaphysics of the subject”. In this perspective, SK’s anthropology emerges precisely as an example of a way of thinking that can be “overcome”, taking his point of departure in the “dualism” of body and mind.

The experience of finitude and mediation

I have attempted to demonstrate that SK’s thinking contains a systematic anthropology, with the concept of self-determination as a fundamental supporting idea and center of the problem. I believe this makes it possible to bring out the constitutive main traits of his “existential-philosophical” position, when the idealistic problematic of mediation is interpreted within the framework of a “philosophy of personality”. The problem of the unity of reality in rational discourse becomes a question of the conditions and forms of development in the integration of the personality. It is this unity in difference with the idealistic idea of unity, the unity of reality as an historical process, that gives the decisively specific character to SK’s version of the “existential-philosophical” schism between reflection and reality, *i.e.*, reflection’s self-abolition in the form of an “irrational” transcending of its own boundaries.

Since this transcending of one’s own boundaries is determined by the task of mediation, it points towards ethical freedom, the willed self-identification, *i.e.*, as a necessary form or condition for the unity of life. In this way the possibility is excluded that negative self-reflection, the experience of reflection’s finitude, is hypostatized to become infinite self-transcendence, a kind of speculative substitute for a lost total rationality. As a kind of “anti-speculative” speculation seems to be the tendency of a number of later variants within existential philosophy, this point provides a potential criterion to distinguish SK’s thinking from the broader context of existential philosophical thinking, to the extent that the latter experiences as an absolute philosophical imperative “to go beyond the particular point that has been grasped, in order to discover the truth as that which becomes luminous in the act of going beyond, and emerges from hiddenness”.⁴²⁷

The decisive question is the way in which the boundary for reflective self-experience is crossed: reflection can be retained even in the act of going beyond – namely in a formal-negative sense, or as quasi-reflection – as a medium for the experience of reality, *e.g.*, in the form of a “going beyond all objectivity in the objective thinking which always remains unavoidable”.⁴²⁸ Or reflection can let its powerlessness be replaced by a new form of contact with reality: the confirmation of the experience of finitude in the willed self-confirmation. In a schematic sense, this is a question of whether the experience of finitude leads to a form of “skeptical individualism” or opens the door to action in the concrete situation, thanks to the

ethical acceptance of oneself. If one takes SK, his person and all his writings, as a whole, one sees that he demonstrates precisely this tension, but the “skeptical” element, the critique of contemporary culture, has in principle a constructive-cultural goal: the restitution of the ethical-cultural subject. If the “critique” is separated from its goal, the usual picture of SK as representative of “heroic individualism” will be the result. It is also easy to find biographical support for this image.

The comprehensive task of juxtaposition and comparison, which results from posing the problem in this way, cannot here be carried out. This theme, a transposition in the way of coming to terms with the fundamental “existential-philosophical” knowledge, the experience of finitude, belongs primarily to the retrospective study of the history of philosophy and ideas: my study of SK’s thought, orientated towards the texts, can be only a small contribution to this.

I shall content myself here with an indication, by way of example, of this change, viz., the detachment of the experience of finitude from the idealistic problematic of mediation. This may mean that this change leads over into a new form of thinking about the totality, as we see most markedly in Heidegger. As in the case of SK, it is a question precisely of the totality in relation to human “existence”. But as I have mentioned, the genuinely anthropological problematic falls away in the existential analysis, along with its necessary link to the subject-object scheme. The decisive expression for this is that the human person’s corporeality has no systemic status in such a perspective; the natural side of the human person is reduced to “the way in which natural things appear in the historical world of existence”,⁴²⁹ *i.e.*, to “understanding”. This is no doubt connected to the fact that Heidegger’s starting-point is Husserl’s analysis of “constitution of the world” as “intentional” activity.⁴³⁰ It is against this background we must understand the different significance that self-determination has in Heidegger and in SK.

The general connecting line going back to SK’s concept of self-determination is however clear in the basic definition of the human person’s mode of existence as a relationship to oneself or self-understanding: “But in that case, this is a constitutive state of Dasein’s Being, and this implies that Dasein, in its Being, has a relationship towards that Being – a relationship which itself is one of Being. And this means further that there is some way in which Dasein understands itself in its Being, and that to some degree it does so explicitly”.⁴³¹ They share also the concept of the fundamentally dialectical character of the relationship to oneself, which is constituted in the tension between possibility and reality, between “existentiality [*Existenzialität*]”, “the ability to be [*Sein-können*]”, “the sketch [*Entwurf*]” on the one hand and “facticity [*Faktizität*]”, “decline [*Verfallen*]”, “‘thrown-ness’ [*Geworfenheit*]” on the other hand: “Dasein has, in the first instance, fallen away from itself as an authentic potentiality for Being its self, and has fallen into the ‘world’ [*an die ‘Welt’ verfallen*]”. It follows that “existing is always factual. Existentiality is essentially determined by facticity”.⁴³² The critical point is the more precise understanding of the ontic realization of the relationship to oneself, the emancipation of “existence” from the “decline”, *i.e.*, the

concept of “genuinely being one self”. What form of reality or mode of existence constitutes this ultimate mode of relationship to oneself?

The pregnant expression for this emancipatory constituted self-identity is “decisiveness”, which denotes the final specification of, or “transcendental” unity in, existence’s “state of being opened up”, *i.e.*, the fundamental openness to oneself as existence in understanding: “‘Resoluteness’ [*Entschlossenheit*] signifies letting oneself be summoned out of one’s status of being lost in the ‘they’. [...] In resoluteness the issue for Dasein is its most own potentiality-for-Being, which, as something thrown, can project itself only upon definite factual possibilities”.⁴³³ The decisive point is not however the concrete “activity” as effect of the decision in the social context, but the existential “background” for it, the unifying openness to one’s own reality in its totality. “Decisiveness about oneself” is essentially the experience of oneself as an existential totality in the light of the fact of finitude, “death reveals itself as that possibility which is one’s most own, which is non-relational, and which is not to be outstripped”.⁴³⁴ “Since anticipation of the possibility which is not to be outstripped discloses also all possibilities lying ahead of that possibility, this anticipation includes the possibility of taking the whole of Dasein in advance in an existential manner [in terms of structure]; that is to say, it includes the possibility of existing as a whole potentiality-for-Being”.⁴³⁵ This possibility is the meaning of the decision about oneself and its “unifying” contents, not a system of culturally mediated moral imperatives, since these, as “law” or “ought”, on the contrary bind “Dasein” to “presence-at-hand” that makes it inauthentic.⁴³⁶

That which constitutes existential wholeness or self-identity, is ultimately an “inner” detachment from social-cultural involvement, “day-to-day-ness”. The experience of finitude becomes “self-sufficient” and creates a radical eschatological or “existing” openness for the underlying or “coming” existence.⁴³⁷ The historical-concrete facticity is no longer the immediate area of working, but an arsenal of possibilities for authentic decisions, ennobling the knowledge of finitude so that it attains this freedom or transcendence. Openness to existence is conditional on reconciliation with one’s destiny, the “powerlessness of abandonment to itself”.⁴³⁸

Self-determination thus accomplish a “mediation” to reality which is neither the ethical acceptance of oneself, as SK understands it, nor the rational “deduction” of the world from absolute consciousness as Husserl understands it. One can say in schematic terms that SK’s concept of existence, with the human being as “factual subject”, is a counterpart to Husserl’s concept of the subject as constitutive authority. In other words, the problem is Husserl’s: under which conditions does the world “exist” for the understanding? Put in simple terms, Heidegger’s answer to this is that it is finitude, or existence as “nothing”. As Landgrebe says, “Heidegger’s facticity is the basis of all possible demonstration. The methodological point at which this appears in Heidegger is therefore the same point at which absolute subjectivity stands in Husserl”.⁴³⁹

Self-determination is self-negation in the sense that it does not point outside itself towards a positive infinity that can light up and explain historical-concrete reality in Hegel’s sense.

On the contrary, if finitude is the precondition for openness, *i.e.*, the understanding of reality or “mediation” with it, then every such mediation (*Entwurf*) must be finite-factual. Accordingly, the unity of reality is not created in this “progressive” way; this unity is, so to speak, given only in an unmediated manner, in the recognition of the precondition of openness, through anxiety’s “experience of finitude”. As Schulz puts it, “Thus existence can finally appear as what it is: empty existence, an empty existence in its totality and unity”.⁴⁴⁰

Bultmann finds in this eschatology of self-determination a philosophical-ontological basis for his interpretation of the New Testament’s “eschatological” message; its concepts are used to explain the “claim” that the New Testament makes, that each individual should develop a personal-eschatological decision and self-understanding. It is, of course, open to discussion whether this is possible on Heidegger’s premises; but in any case it makes the fight against the idealistic ideal of mediation more concrete and direct, because idealistic anthropology makes its contribution here in a more unmediated way. Bultmann’s concept of “*Entweltlichung*” (de-secularization) is conditioned by the idealistic antithesis between sensuousness and intelligibility,⁴⁴¹ and therefore pulls in the direction of a “spiritualistic individualism”.

This is why the system-critical confrontation with SK’s interpretative program is marked by an implicit and explicit renaissance of the idealistic problematic of mediation, the problem of the unity of experience of oneself and reality. When Kierkegaard is often located unambiguously on one side of the frontline, this can be based on a very eclectic use of “programmatic” texts. The tendency is to neglect the structure his thinking gives to the problem, by letting attention be sidetracked to the history of his influence, even if it is possible to give an historical “documentation” of this by means of a “canonization” of *Postscript*’s critique of idealism.

The manner in which “Kierkegaard’s inheritance” wins through in the understanding, depends on the breadth and independence in the philosophical commitment which regulates the reception. It is one thing to observe (with extremely divergent interpretations and evaluations as the result) the idealistic-Hegelian problem and conceptual horizon as an ambiguous historical influence on SK’s thinking (Anz, Bense, Struwe, Hirsch, Schulz et al.); it is something else to turn this dialectical unity of holistic thinking and existential philosophy into an historical-systematic element in an “immanent” breakthrough of “the boundaries of the philosophy of existence”. Bollnow’s reference to SK in this context does not have the precision of historical interpretation, but displays the sensitivity of philosophical genius to decisive partings of the ways or fundamental decisions in philosophical reflection. My interpretation of SK’s thought as anthropology makes it compatible precisely with a transcending of “the unique particularity of the moment” in “the stability of a continuous constitution of body and soul”, with “the necessity of arriving at new substantial determinations” and “the construction of a new existence [...] out of the strength of a newly acquired faith”.⁴⁴² It is indeed true that SK’s final point in “faith” is not a basis for philosophical knowledge. According to its problematic, the goal is the “critical” confirmation

of the “given” situation, so that this becomes an ethical task and sphere of activity in virtue of restored subjectivity: “Reduplication means to work against oneself while working [...] to the same degree that the established, consequently there where one’s striving begins, is corrupt, to the same degree it will become increasingly necessary dialectically to work against oneself” (X 2 A 560).

NOTES

Introduction

- ¹ Schulz 1975:8.
- ² Cf. Sponheim 1968, where the tension between these themes is the key to a holistic understanding of SK's thought.
- ³ Cf. Pannenberg 1967:36,101,131.
- ⁴ Moltmann 1968:65.
- ⁵ Moltmann 1969:51ff.
- ⁶ Cf. Moltmann 1969:290.
- ⁷ Moltmann 1969:59.
- ⁸ Bultmann 1964–65, vol. I:29.
- ⁹ Bultmann 1964–65, vol. I:32, cf. vol. III:120.
- ¹⁰ Bultmann 1964–65, vol. I:120.
- ¹¹ Heidegger 1972:45. Cf. 131, 183, 194, 200, 301. Cf. Jørgensen's claim that Bultmann misunderstands *Sein und Zeit* by viewing it as "anthropology" (Jørgensen 1967:212). Cf. also Steiger's criticism of Bultmann's understanding of the "formal" character of existential analysis (Steiger 1961:104).
- ¹² Heidegger 1972:5.
- ¹³ Heidegger 1972:194.
- ¹⁴ Bultmann 1964–65., vol. III:117.
- ¹⁵ Løgstrup 1970:16. Cf. Wind 1974, especially p. 172, which carries Løgstrup's critical analysis further.
- ¹⁶ Heidegger 1972:108.
- ¹⁷ Heidegger 1972:145.
- ¹⁸ Cf. Heidegger 1972:210. Cf. Becker 1963:272 for a critical evaluation of this outlook, which indeed limits itself to "the way nature appears within the historical world of Dasein".
- ¹⁹ Heidegger 1972:117.
- ²⁰ Cf. Heidegger 1972:428.
- ²¹ Heidegger 1972:334.
- ²² Heidegger 1972:366. Cf. Noller 1962:67.
- ²³ Schulz 1953–54:232. Cf. Schulz 1975:287.
- ²⁴ Cf. Gadamer 1965: 240.
- ²⁵ Cf. Pöggeler 1963:179.
- ²⁶ Cf. Jensen 1977:166.
- ²⁷ Cf. Hopland 1983.
- ²⁸ Litt 1961:321.
- ²⁹ Løgstrup 1950:25.
- ³⁰ Løgstrup 1950:25.
- ³¹ Løgstrup 1950:24.
- ³² Løgstrup 1950:26.
- ³³ Løgstrup 1950:27.
- ³⁴ Løgstrup 1950:64.

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- ³⁵ Anz 1962:57.
- ³⁶ Anz 1962:63.
- ³⁷ Anz 1962:73.
- ³⁸ Fahrenbach 1962:60.
- ³⁹ Fahrenbach 1962:60.
- ⁴⁰ Anz 1952:49. Cf. Anz 1971:199.
- ⁴¹ Anz 1952:50.
- ⁴² Anz 1956:75.
- ⁴³ Anz 1971:181.
- ⁴⁴ Anz 1956:64.
- ⁴⁵ Anz 1971:215.
- ⁴⁶ Anz 1982:482.
- ⁴⁷ Fahrenbach 1968:49.
- ⁴⁸ Cf. Heidegger 1972:13: “Existential analysis on its part, however, is ultimately rooted in [concrete] existence, *i.e.*, ontically”.
- ⁴⁹ Fahrenbach 1968:176.
- ⁵⁰ Blass 1962:236.
- ⁵¹ Cf. Heidegger 1972:192: “Pure existence [Existenzialität] is essentially facticity”, and 366: “The ‘problem of transcendence’ cannot be reduced to the question: how does the subject get hold of an object, thus identifying the idea of the world with the totality of objects”. By this view the conception of “transcendental subjectivity” in Husserl’s sense is denied.
- ⁵² Cf. Hegel 1970, vol. 10:229: “The truth which is known [wissende Wahrheit] is spirit”.
- ⁵³ For the question of “preparatory studies” cf. Fenger 1976:16ff.
- ⁵⁴ Cf. Fenger 1976: 98 and allusions in Pap X 1 A 36, X 6 B 236 and XI 2 A 21.
- ⁵⁵ Cf. Billeskov-Jansen 1951:21.
- ⁵⁶ Geismar 1926-28, vol. II:31.
- ⁵⁷ Cf. Bejerholm 1962 [Kierkegaardiana IV]: 28-42, and Bejerholm 1962 [*Meddelelsens Dialektik*]:192ff.
- ⁵⁸ This interpretive modus is natural in a Marxist-oriented interpretation of Kierkegaard. Cf. Adorno 1962.
- ⁵⁹ Malantschuk 1968:12.
- ⁶⁰ Malantschuk 1968: 271
- ⁶¹ Cf. Malantschuk 1968:168.
- ⁶² Malantschuk 1968:30.
- ⁶³ Malantschuk 1968:39, 271.
- ⁶⁴ Malantschuk 1968:39.
- ⁶⁵ Cf. Hegel 1970, vol. 10:377.
- ⁶⁶ Rosenkranz 1837:vii.
- ⁶⁷ Hegel 1970, vol.10:377.
- ⁶⁸ Nordentoft 1972:35.
- ⁶⁹ Nordentoft 1972:36.
- ⁷⁰ Cf. his “confession”, Nordentoft 1972:40
- ⁷¹ Nordentoft 1972:115f.

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- ⁷² Nordentoft 1972:117.
- ⁷³ Nordentoft 1972:118.
- ⁷⁴ Cf. Diem 1929: 91.
- ⁷⁵ Diem 1929:350; Cf. pp. vii.
- ⁷⁶ Diem 1929:344.
- ⁷⁷ Diem 1929:vii.
- ⁷⁸ Diem 1929 349.
- ⁷⁹ Diem 1929:349.
- ⁸⁰ Diem 1950:50.
- ⁸¹ Cf. Diem 1950:54.
- ⁸² Diem 1950:187.
- ⁸³ Cf. Diem 1950:188.
- ⁸⁴ Diem 1950:192.
- ⁸⁵ For criticism of Diem, cf. Fahrenbach 1962 28, and Holl 1972:7.
- ⁸⁶ Cf. Lønning,1954:13ff.
- ⁸⁷ Sløk 1954:19.
- ⁸⁸ Sløk 1954:17.
- ⁸⁹ Sløk 1954:29.
- ⁹⁰ Cf. Sløk 1954:33.
- ⁹¹ Sløk 1954:33, 27.
- ⁹² Sløk,1966:75.
- ⁹³ Fischer 1969:17.
- ⁹⁴ Fischer 1969:40.
- ⁹⁵ Fischer 1969:16.
- ⁹⁶ Fahrenbach 1968:1.
- ⁹⁷ Cf. Fahrenbach 1968:23,163.
- ⁹⁸ Fahrenbach 1962:42.
- ⁹⁹ Fahrenbach 1962:43.
- ¹⁰⁰ Fahrenbach 1968:5.
- ¹⁰¹ Holl 1972:1.
- ¹⁰² Cf. Holl 1972:5.
- ¹⁰³ Holl 1972:5, 27; Cf. p. 273.
- ¹⁰⁴ Holl 1972:10.
- ¹⁰⁵ Wilde 1969:10.
- ¹⁰⁶ Cf. Wilde 1969:7.
- ¹⁰⁷ Wilde 1969:162.
- ¹⁰⁸ Shmuëli 1971:7.
- ¹⁰⁹ Shmuëli 1971:7
- ¹¹⁰ Shmuëli 1971:11; Cf. p. 190.
- ¹¹¹ Shmuëli 1971:47.
- ¹¹² Fahrenbach 1962: 5; Cf. also the account of Diem's interpretive principle in Lønning 1954:10.

¹¹³ Fahrenbach 1962:28.

¹¹⁴ Holl 1972:1.

¹¹⁵ Thulstrup 1955:315.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Deuser 1980:79 and Nordentoft 1973.

¹¹⁷ Thulstrup 1954:76.

¹¹⁸ Thulstrup 1955:316.

¹¹⁹ Fahrenbach 1962:80, Nordentoft 1973.

¹²⁰ Schulz 1975:297.

¹²¹ Lønning 1954:10.

I. Anthropological Structure: Existence and Consciousness

¹²² Kant is here subsumed under the concept of “German idealism” despite Heimsoeth’s weighty expert opinion that the expression “is adapted in a very precise sense to post-Kantian thinking from Fichte to Hegel” (Heimsoeth 1929:105). I do this because of the importance in the present context to emphasize his philosophy as the point of origin for the conception of identity-philosophy.

¹²³ Cf. Henriksen 1954:57 on “the anthropology of the Seducer”, or virtually, Johannes’ “aesthetical” ideas of human life (p. 71) as a foundation for his “practice as a seducer” (p. 75).

¹²⁴ Cf. Lehmann 1953:4, Heimsoeth 1929:171, about SK in particular, cf. Löwith 1969:65, 125.

¹²⁵ Anz 1956

¹²⁶ Cf. Hirsch 1930–33:508, Thulstrup 1967:115, Schäfer 1968:155.

¹²⁷ Heimsoeth 1929:174.

¹²⁸ Fichte (d.y.) 1833–36, vol. I:46.

¹²⁹ Fichte (d.y.) 1833–36, vol. I:42,82.

¹³⁰ Fichte (d.y.) 1833–36, vol. I:XVII, 68.,76.

¹³¹ Fichte (d.y.) 1833–36, vol. I:80, 83.

¹³² Fichte (d.y.) 1833–36, vol. I:XVII, XXI, 53.

¹³³ Fichte (d.y.) 1833–36n vol. II:312.

¹³⁴ Fichte (d.y.) 1833–36, vol. I:80, 297.

¹³⁵ Fichte (d.y.) 1833–36, vol. I:XXVI.

¹³⁶ Fichte (d.y.) 1833–36, vol. I:19.

¹³⁷ Fichte (d.y.) 1833–36, vol. I:221.

¹³⁸ Cf. Høffding 1909:90, Himmelstrup 1934:17, 126, 148.

¹³⁹ Treschow 1812:5.

¹⁴⁰ Treschow 1966:85; Cf. Cristophersen 1977:179.

¹⁴¹ Treschow 1812:11,13,15,21,30.

¹⁴² Treschow 1966:184.

¹⁴³ Treschow 1812: 288f.

¹⁴⁴ Steffen 1905:3f.

¹⁴⁵ Sibbern 1819-28, vol. I:216; Cf. Himmelstrup 1934:88.

¹⁴⁶ Sibbern 1838:320,347.

¹⁴⁷ Sibbern 1819-28, vol.I :78

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- ¹⁴⁸ Sibbern 1838:349.
- ¹⁴⁹ Sibbern 1838:357,296,575.
- ¹⁵⁰ Sibbern 1838: 302,306,311,314, 341.
- ¹⁵¹ Sibbern 1838: 448, 555, 560.
- ¹⁵² Sibbern 1838:448, 454.
- ¹⁵³ Sibbern 1838:443f.
- ¹⁵⁴ Sibbern 1819-28, vol. I:34.
- ¹⁵⁵ Sibbern 1819-28, vol. I:85.
- ¹⁵⁶ Møller 1848:193, 88.
- ¹⁵⁷ Møller 1848:163.
- ¹⁵⁸ Møller 1837:27.
- ¹⁵⁹ Møller 1837:16.
- ¹⁶⁰ Møller 1837:31.
- ¹⁶¹ Møller 1837:41.
- ¹⁶² Møller 1837:51, 62.
- ¹⁶³ Struwe 1948:218.
- ¹⁶⁴ Page numbers in the works of Kant are taken from the original editions.
- ¹⁶⁵ For the relationship between critical epistemology and ontology cf. Kroner 1961:55.
- ¹⁶⁶ Cf. Heimsoeth 1929:82 and Kroner 1961: 164.
- ¹⁶⁷ Cf. Kroner 1961, vol.I:122.
- ¹⁶⁸ Kroner 1961, vol. I:153.
- ¹⁶⁹ For the critics of this concept cf. Kroner 1961:190.
- ¹⁷⁰ Cf. Kroner 1961, vol. I:193
- ¹⁷¹ Cf. White Beck 1966:48.
- ¹⁷² Kroner 1961:512.
- ¹⁷³ Cassirer 1971–73, vol III:139
- ¹⁷⁴ Schulz 1962:15.
- ¹⁷⁵ Kroner 1961, vol. I:451.
- ¹⁷⁶ Hartmann 1974: 64.
- ¹⁷⁷ Hegel 1970, vol. 10:203.
- ¹⁷⁸ Hegel 1970, vol. 10:110.
- ¹⁷⁹ Fahrenbach 1968:165.
- ¹⁸⁰ Fahrenbach 1968:164.
- ¹⁸¹ Cf. Holz 1975: 62
- ¹⁸² Kroner 1961:589.
- ¹⁸³ Cf. Baumgartner 1975:56.
- ¹⁸⁴ Cf. Kroner 1961, vol. I:109.
- ¹⁸⁵ Cf. Heimsoeth 1929:133.
- ¹⁸⁶ Hegel 1970 vol 4:61
- ¹⁸⁷ “Introduction” in Shröters’s edition of Schelling’s works 1957: XXXVIII
- ¹⁸⁸ Kroner 1961, vol. II:113.

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- ¹⁸⁹ Cf. Fichte 1966:95
- ¹⁹⁰ Hegel 1970, vol. 2:94.
- ¹⁹¹ Cf. Hegel 1970, vol. 2:404.
- ¹⁹² Hegel 1970, vol. 2:94
- ¹⁹³ Hartmann 1974:311.
- ¹⁹⁴ Jacobs 1975:39.
- ¹⁹⁵ Fichte 1956: 9.
- ¹⁹⁶ Heimsoeth 1929:156.
- ¹⁹⁷ Heimsoeth 1929:158.
- ¹⁹⁸ Litt 1961:7.
- ¹⁹⁹ Holl 1972:107.
- ²⁰⁰ Fahrenbach 1968: 6.
- ²⁰¹ Hegel 1970. vol. 10:229.
- ²⁰² Hegel 1970, vol. 16:176.
- ²⁰³ Cf. Hegel 1970, vol. 16:185.
- ²⁰⁴ Holl 1972:62.
- ²⁰⁵ Holl 1972:5.
- ²⁰⁶ Holl 1972:5
- ²⁰⁷ Cf. Hegel 1970, vol.10:10, vol. 3:545, vol. 16:45.
- ²⁰⁸ Holl 1972:93.
- ²⁰⁹ Holl 1972:1 28.
- ²¹⁰ Cf. Fahrenbach 1962:60.
- ²¹¹ Cf. Struwe 1948. For Anz' combination of SK and Descartes cf. Anz 1952:40, Anz 1956:56, 73 and Anz 1971:189.
- ²¹² Cf. Anz 1952:36, 42, Anz 62, 64, 66. and Anz 1971:188, 199, 204, 223, 237.
- ²¹³ Anz 1956:12.
- ²¹⁴ Cf. Anz 1956:48., 64.
- ²¹⁵ Cf. Anz 1971:181, 176, 191, 205, 231.
- ²¹⁶ Anz 1956:74.
- ²¹⁷ Anz 1956:28.
- ²¹⁸ Anz 1956:61.
- ²¹⁹ Anz 1956:73f. Cf. Anz 1952: 32, 35, 42 and Anz 1971:199, 201, 214.
- ²²⁰ Anz 1956:26.
- ²²¹ Anz 1956:58.
- ²²² Anz 1952:52.
- ²²³ Anz 1952:50.
- ²²⁴ Anz 1952:49.
- ²²⁵ Anz 1952: 50.
- ²²⁶ Anz 1971:186. Cf. 205.
- ²²⁷ Anz 1956:76.
- ²²⁸ Anz 1956:63.

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- ²²⁹ Anz 1971:199.
- ²³⁰ Anz 1952:39f. Cf. Anz 1956:75.
- ²³¹ Anz 1971:181 Cf. 202.
- ²³² Cf. Anz 1956:36, 73.
- ²³³ Løgstrup 1968:148.
- ²³⁴ Løgstrup 1942:79.
- ²³⁵ Løgstrup 1942:90.
- ²³⁶ Løgstrup 1968:148.
- ²³⁷ Løgstrup 1968:164.
- ²³⁸ Løgstrup 1968:158.
- ²³⁹ Løgstrup 1968:159.
- ²⁴⁰ Løgstrup 1968:163. Cf. 75.
- ²⁴¹ Cf. Løgstrup 1968:157f. Cf. Løgstrup 1950:81.
- ²⁴² Cf. Løgstrup 1968:170f.
- ²⁴³ Cf. Løgstrup 1968:128, 161.
- ²⁴⁴ Løgstrup 1968:161.
- ²⁴⁵ Løgstrup 1968:81.
- ²⁴⁶ Løgstrup 1968:07.
- ²⁴⁷ Løgstrup 1968:81.
- ²⁴⁸ Løgstrup 1968:83.
- ²⁴⁹ Løgstrup 1968:158.
- ²⁵⁰ Løgstrup 1968:158
- ²⁵¹ Sløk 1955 [Anthropologie]:96f. For the critics of Løgstrup's interpretation of Kierkegaard cf. also Malantschuk 1971 [*Kierkegardiana*]:163, Plougmann 1975:90.
- ²⁵² Taylor 1980:144.
- ²⁵³ Taylor 1980:179.
- ²⁵⁴ Taylor 1980:272.
- ²⁵⁵ Taylor 1980:178.
- ²⁵⁶ Taylor 1980:271,179.
- ²⁵⁷ Taylor 1980:152,160.
- ²⁵⁸ Taylor 1980:232.
- ²⁵⁹ Taylor 1980:232
- ²⁶⁰ Taylor 1980:233,264.
- ²⁶¹ Taylor 1980:180.
- ²⁶² Taylor 1980:169f.
- ²⁶³ Schulz 1975:279.
- ²⁶⁴ Schulz 1975:126.
- ²⁶⁵ Cf. Fahrenbach 1968:163ff.
- ²⁶⁶ Malantschuk 1968 [*Kierkegardiana*]:77.
- ²⁶⁷ Sibbern 1838:348ff.
- ²⁶⁸ Møller 1837:26f.

²⁶⁹ Anz 1956:37ff.

²⁷⁰ Løgstrup 1968:137.

²⁷¹ Cf. Rosenkranz 1837:7.

²⁷² Cf. Malantschuk 1968:162.

²⁷³ Malantschuk 1968:103.

²⁷⁴ Bense 1958:47.

²⁷⁵ Bense 1958:46.

²⁷⁶ Bense 1958:59.

²⁷⁷ Sløk 1954:16.

²⁷⁸ Sløk 1954:31.

²⁷⁹ Sløk 1955:104.

II. Corporeality

²⁸⁰ Cf. Bense 1948:54.

²⁸¹ Cf. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft B*: 33: “The ability to receive representations through the way we are affected by objects, is called sensuality”.

²⁸² Hegel 1970, vol. 12:404.

²⁸³ Taylor 1975:139.

²⁸⁴ Nordentoft 1972: 49, 79..

²⁸⁵ Cf. Schelling 1957:281ff.

²⁸⁶ Cf. for the importance of music and mythology, Kluckhohn, 1942:155, 161, and concerning mythology in particular, Schelling 1927–59, vol. 4:408.

²⁸⁷ Nordentoft 1972:50.

²⁸⁸ Nordentoft 1972:55.

²⁸⁹ Nordentoft 1972:52.

²⁹⁰ Nordentoft 1972:51.

²⁹¹ Sibbern 1819–28, vol. I:§24.

²⁹² Sibbern 1819–28, vol. II:§3.

²⁹³ Fichte [jr.] 1833–36, vol II:35.

²⁹⁴ Rosenkranz 1837:105, 314.

²⁹⁵ Nordentoft 1972:56.

²⁹⁶ Fichte 1970:218ff.

²⁹⁷ Nordentoft 1972:52.

²⁹⁸ Malantschuk 1971:81.

²⁹⁹ Anz 1971:201.

³⁰⁰ Anz 1971:202.

³⁰¹ Hegel 1970, vol. 5:187.

III. Consciousness

- ³⁰² Cf. Sibbern 1838:315, 333, 347., 351
- ³⁰³ Fichte 1970:80.
- ³⁰⁴ Fahrenbach 1968:26.
- ³⁰⁵ Fahrenbach 1968:24.
- ³⁰⁶ Blass 1962:48.
- ³⁰⁷ Blass 1962:38; Cf. 224 [note no. 24].
- ³⁰⁸ Blass 196:19.
- ³⁰⁹ Hegel 1970, vol. 3:91f.
- ³¹⁰ Hegel 1970, vol. 3:22.
- ³¹¹ Nordentoft 1972:126.
- ³¹² Malantschuk 1968:201.
- ³¹³ Cf. for instance Ritschl 1971:252.
- ³¹⁴ Malantschuk 1968:202.
- ³¹⁵ Cf. Struwe 1948, Reimer 1968.
- ³¹⁶ Fichte 1970:242.
- ³¹⁷ Fichte 1963:141.
- ³¹⁸ Shmueli 1971:11.
- ³¹⁹ Shmueli 1971:33.
- ³²⁰ Shmueli 1971:47.
- ³²¹ Cf. Sibbern 1838, Møller 1837: 26. Cf. Møller 1848, vol 3:196f.
- ³²² Holm 1952:27
- ³²³ Holm 1952:25.
- ³²⁴ For the critics of Holm; Cf. Fahrenbach 1962:11.
- ³²⁵ Holmer 1957:29.
- ³²⁶ Holmer 1957:41.
- ³²⁷ Holmer 1957:28.
- ³²⁸ Holmer 1957:32.
- ³²⁹ Hegel 1970, vol. 4:57, 60.
- ³³⁰ Schäfer 1971:434.
- ³³¹ Schäfer 1971:438.
- ³³² Hegel 1970, vol. 3:87.
- ³³³ Hegel 1970, vol. 5:215.
- ³³⁴ Schäfer 1968:124,280.
- ³³⁵ Schäfer 1968:161,167.
- ³³⁶ Schäfer 1968:164.
- ³³⁷ Schäfer 1968:167.
- ³³⁸ Schäfer 1968:167.

IV. Self-Consciousness

- ³³⁹ Nordentoft 1972:66.
- ³⁴⁰ Cf. Henriksen 1954:33ff.
- ³⁴¹ Fichte 1970:103.
- ³⁴² Fichte 1970:67.
- ³⁴³ Fichte 1970:58.
- ³⁴⁴ Fichte 1970:45; cf. p.87.
- ³⁴⁵ Fichte 1970:45.
- ³⁴⁶ Fichte 1970:87.
- ³⁴⁷ Cf. Sibbern 1819–28, vol. II: §25.
- ³⁴⁸ Nordentoft 1972:73.
- ³⁴⁹ Nordentoft 1972:47.
- ³⁵⁰ Cf. Malantschuk 1968:249,322.
- ³⁵¹ Malantschuk 1968:324.
- ³⁵² Hegel 1970, vol. 3:591.
- ³⁵³ Holl 1972:216f.
- ³⁵⁴ Nordentoft 1972:231.
- ³⁵⁵ Nordentoft 1972:235.
- ³⁵⁶ Lønning 1954:52.
- ³⁵⁷ Nordentoft 1972:102.
- ³⁵⁸ Malantschuk 1971 [*Frihedens Problem*]:45.
- ³⁵⁹ Christensen 1955:37.
- ³⁶⁰ Nordentoft 1972:93.
- ³⁶¹ Nordentoft 1972:92.
- ³⁶² Geismar 1926-28, vol I:115.
- ³⁶³ Henriksen 1954:71.
- ³⁶⁴ Malantschuk 1971 [*Frihedens Problem*]:39.
- ³⁶⁵ Sibbern 1819–28, vol. I:§16, vol. II:§6.
- ³⁶⁶ Malantschuk 1971 [*Frihedens Problem*]:39.
- ³⁶⁷ Hansen 1954:339.
- ³⁶⁸ Sibbern 1819–28, vol. I:99.
- ³⁶⁹ Nordentoft 1972: 86.
- ³⁷⁰ Nordentoft 1972:200.
- ³⁷¹ Malantschuk 1971 [*Frihedens Problem*]:45.
- ³⁷² Sløk 1954:87.
- ³⁷³ Sløk 1954:87
- ³⁷⁴ Sløk 1954:87
- ³⁷⁵ Sløk 1954:78.
- ³⁷⁶ Sløk 1954:83.

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- ³⁷⁷ Hansen 1954:348.
³⁷⁸ Hansen 1954:337.
³⁷⁹ Hansen 1954:356.
³⁸⁰ Fahrenbach 1968:35.
³⁸¹ Taylor 1974:95.
³⁸² Taylor 1974:95, 98.
³⁸³ Taylor 1974:100.
³⁸⁴ Schäfer 1968:191.
³⁸⁵ Erdmann 1837:70.
³⁸⁶ Hegel 1970, vol 10:§411:193.
³⁸⁷ Hegel 1970, vol 10:§412-413:197.
³⁸⁸ Hegel 1970, vol 10:§414:202.
³⁸⁹ Hegel 1970, vol 10:§426:216.

V. Consciousness and Religion

- ³⁹⁰ Løgstrup 1950:64.
³⁹¹ Fahrenbach 1968: 65; cf. also Fahrenbach 1970:8.
³⁹² Shmueli 1971:15.
³⁹³ Nordentoft 1972:182.
³⁹⁴ Nordentoft 1972:201.
³⁹⁵ Nordentoft 1972:182.
³⁹⁶ Anz 1956:74.
³⁹⁷ Anz 1956:75.
³⁹⁸ Hegel 1970, vol. 3:480; cf. Hegel 1970, vol.10:§ 476-486.
³⁹⁹ Fahrenbach 1968:162.
⁴⁰⁰ Kirbach 1927:9.
⁴⁰¹ Kirbach 1927:16.
⁴⁰² Cf. Kirbach 1927:24.
⁴⁰³ Sløk 1954:22.
⁴⁰⁴ Sløk 1954:32.
⁴⁰⁵ Sløk 1954:29.
⁴⁰⁶ Sløk 1954:32.
⁴⁰⁷ Sløk 1954:26.
⁴⁰⁸ Cf. Sløk 1955:96.
⁴⁰⁹ Sløk 1954:119ff.
⁴¹⁰ Løgstrup 1968:125.
⁴¹¹ Løgstrup 1968:158.
⁴¹² Cf. Fahrenbach 1970:207.
⁴¹³ Fahrenbach 1968:95.

- ⁴¹⁴ Fahrenbach 1970:25.
⁴¹⁵ Fahrenbach 1968:95.
⁴¹⁶ Holl 1972:18.
⁴¹⁷ Holl 1972:76.
⁴¹⁸ Holl 1972:250.
⁴¹⁹ Holl 1972:252.
⁴²⁰ Fischer 1969:187.
⁴²¹ Fischer 1969:195.
⁴²² Fischer 1969:188.
⁴²³ Bohlin 1918:169.
⁴²⁴ Lindstrøm 1943: 247.
⁴²⁵ Lindstrøm 1943:252.
⁴²⁶ Cf. Nordentoft 1973:243.
⁴²⁷ Knittermeyer 1952:14.
⁴²⁸ Jaspers 1962:22.
⁴²⁹ Becker 1970:272.
⁴³⁰ Cf. Landgrebe 1963:28ff.
⁴³¹ Heidegger 1972: 12; cf. Fahrenbach 1970:105.
⁴³² Heidegger 1972:175, 192.
⁴³³ Heidegger 1972:299.
⁴³⁴ Heidegger 1972:250.
⁴³⁵ Heidegger 1972:264.
⁴³⁶ Cf. Heidegger 1972:283; cf. Fahrenbach 1970:124.
⁴³⁷ Cf. Heidegger 1954:66f.
⁴³⁸ Heidegger 1972:384.
⁴³⁹ Landgrebe 1963:38; cf. Schulz 1953/54:87.
⁴⁴⁰ Schulz 1975:294.
⁴⁴¹ Cf. Jensen 1977:195.
⁴⁴² Bollnow 1949:112.

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INDEX

A

Abraham · 22

absolute, the · 1, 9, 19, 28, 45, 49, 50, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 80, 81, 82, 88, 93, 98, 100, 101, 109, 112, 125, 147, 149, 150, 152, 154, 155, 157, 163, 169, 170, 174, 176, 199, 216, 229, 235, 236, 239, 242, 250, 258, 261, 262, 264, 265, 267, 272, 275

absurd · 128, 132, 163, 177, 208

actuality · 8, 13, 15, 22, 23, 28, 40, 47, 50, 64, 77, 78, 81, 83, 85, 87, 91, 134, 136, 137, 138, 140, 142, 143, 144, 151, 154, 157, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 168, 169, 172, 174, 178, 179, 182, 185, 191, 195, 198, 199, 200, 207, 248

Adam · 188, 202, 203, 206, 208, 209, 210, 211, 213, 215, 216, 217, 221

Adorno T. W. · 43, 269

affectation · 48

alienation · 99, 193, 257

anthropology · 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, 32, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 50, 58, 63, 68, 75, 80, 83, 85, 86, 89, 91, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 103, 105, 106, 107, 111, 113, 119, 120, 122, 124, 126, 130, 133, 135, 136, 137, 138, 140, 144, 149, 151, 171, 194, 212, 219, 228, 229, 268, 270, 272, 276, 279

anxiety · 10, 13, 17, 19, 26, 27, 121, 141, 142, 143, 182, 197, 198, 199, 200, 202, 204, 205, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 228, 232, 234, 247, 252, 255, 258, 266, 279

Anz W. · 8, 9, 10, 44, 96, 97, 98, 99, 102, 103, 113, 149, 262, 279

appropriation · 40, 47, 97, 100, 131, 145, 171, 173, 174, 176, 177, 179, 180, 183

art · 24, 68, 71, 129, 130, 133, 228, 245, 250

authorship · 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 23, 24, 25, 26, 31, 32, 34, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 98, 106, 107, 108, 135, 148, 153, 171

B

being · 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 18, 19, 29, 33, 35, 36, 37, 41, 46, 49, 53, 54, 65, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77, 85, 86, 88, 93, 95, 98, 99, 102, 111, 117, 121, 122, 123, 132, 138, 150, 155, 157, 165, 167, 168, 170, 173, 174, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 183, 186, 187, 189, 191, 192, 193, 197, 200, 203, 206, 207, 208, 211, 214, 216, 217, 219, 222, 224, 227, 228, 235, 236, 238, 242, 249, 252, 263, 266, 272, 274, 278

belief · 42, 95, 96, 105, 273, 274

Bense M. · 118, 279

Blass J. · 18, 36, 157, 158, 159, 161

body · 5, 6, 7, 46, 76, 83, 84, 86, 102, 104, 106, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 129, 131, 132, 134, 140, 145, 188, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 200, 202, 204, 206, 207, 208, 211, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 229, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 260, 276, 279

Bohlin T. · 272

Bollnow O. F. · 279

Bultmann R. · 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 279

C

Cassirer E. · 60

Christendom · 11, 15, 33, 41
 Christensen A. · 220
 Christianity · 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 25, 31, 33, 34, 37, 39, 40, 41, 46, 47, 48, 91, 100, 101, 112, 121, 122, 128, 147, 152, 164, 171, 215, 224, 226, 273, 275
 collateral · 47
 comical · 10
 communication · 1, 12, 15, 19, 20, 22, 32, 39, 116, 119, 147, 192, 193, 198, 205, 208, 210, 243, 249
 corporeality · 5, 6, 9, 76, 99, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 130, 131, 132, 133, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 146, 147, 149, 186, 194, 197, 204, 207, 208, 209, 215, 216, 218, 220, 221, 222, 223, 225, 228, 230, 232, 236, 243, 277
 creation · 2, 10, 45, 89, 93, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 103, 111, 116, 171, 216, 235, 266

D

death · 234, 242, 278
 decision · 4, 93, 98, 101, 118, 152, 183, 214, 224, 234, 261, 263, 267, 278, 279
 Descartes R. · 49, 96
 despair · 8, 13, 14, 19, 28, 31, 85, 95, 98, 114, 186, 200, 211, 219, 225, 239, 240, 241, 254, 255, 256, 257, 259, 261, 274
 Deuser H. · 42, 275
 dialectic · 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 31, 32, 33, 36, 42, 62, 67, 68, 71, 75, 77, 81, 86, 95, 97, 117, 148, 156, 163, 164, 165, 169, 182, 183, 185, 190, 191, 192, 193, 198, 202, 205, 206, 210, 215, 220, 229, 236, 237, 238, 241, 246, 255, 257, 260, 262, 263, 264, 267, 268, 269, 271
 Diem H. · 31, 32, 33, 40
 Don Juan · 123, 125, 128, 129, 132, 138, 139, 142, 146, 147, 189, 197, 243

E

earnestness · 9, 107, 115, 137
 edifying · 14, 19, 39, 90
 empathy · 4, 115, 116, 117, 118, 125, 134
 enlightenment · 173, 214
 epistemology · 49, 50, 51, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73, 80, 91, 110, 111, 112, 119, 181
 Erdmann J. · 44, 171, 172, 236
 eternal · 7, 45, 46, 49, 74, 75, 81, 84, 90, 93, 100, 101, 110, 111, 139, 152, 166, 174, 175, 181, 182, 208, 211, 231, 233, 240, 241, 243, 246, 248, 262, 272
 Ethical · 267, 271
 evil · 28, 98, 114, 207, 223, 230, 262, 266
 existence · 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 80, 81, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 101, 102, 103, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 124, 126, 127, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 174, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 185, 186, 188, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 199, 200, 204, 206, 208, 213, 214, 216, 218, 223, 226, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 236, 237, 239, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 259, 260, 264, 265, 267, 268, 269, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 277, 278, 279

existentialism · 43, 45, 50, 119

F

facticity · 8, 10, 18, 29, 50, 52, 55, 56, 58, 61, 64, 66, 76, 84, 85, 87, 93, 107, 121, 137, 182, 185, 186, 198, 205, 206, 208, 213, 215, 227, 228, 230, 232, 233, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 242, 243, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 253, 254, 255, 256, 258, 261, 262, 263, 266, 269, 271, 277, 278

Fahrenbach H. · 9, 17, 18, 35, 36, 39, 43, 67, 157, 232, 242, 267, 271

faith · 1, 2, 6, 11, 12, 14, 22, 47, 57, 89, 94, 95, 167, 183, 188, 206, 249, 269, 274, 275, 279

fall, the · 113, 127, 203

feeling · 47, 55, 65, 79, 129, 136, 141, 143, 145, 165, 169, 193, 196, 204, 226, 252, 258

Fichte I. H. · 2, 4, 36, 44, 45, 46, 47, 50, 53, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 78, 80, 95, 106, 109, 110, 129, 133, 136, 139, 144, 154, 155, 157, 166, 170, 172, 193, 236, 267

finite, the · 28, 48, 54, 60, 62, 73, 84, 88, 89, 102, 135, 138, 167, 181, 206, 232

Fischer C. F. · 35, 271

freedom · 7, 10, 15, 23, 24, 27, 28, 31, 34, 36, 42, 44, 46, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 65, 66, 69, 70, 76, 77, 83, 84, 87, 89, 95, 96, 97, 98, 102, 113, 123, 127, 137, 142, 150, 159, 160, 161, 164, 165, 166, 167, 171, 186, 192, 193, 194, 197, 199, 200, 201, 208, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 219, 221, 224, 225, 226, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 234, 238, 256, 257, 263, 270, 276, 278

G

Geismar E. · 22, 24, 26, 40, 222

genius, the · 29

Goethe J. W. · 255

guilt · 28, 100, 101, 123, 168, 212, 221, 226, 229, 230, 232

H

Hansen K. · 225, 231

Hartmann · 64, 72

Hegel G. F. W. · 1, 10, 16, 17, 27, 28, 36, 38, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 59, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 80, 81, 84, 88, 89, 90, 91, 96, 97, 100, 103, 104, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 112, 113, 120, 121, 122, 127, 148, 150, 152, 154, 155, 157, 160, 163, 164, 170, 172, 173, 174, 175, 177, 178, 179, 181, 182, 183, 207, 212, 236, 262, 264, 267, 270, 278

Heidegger M. · 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 96, 102, 276, 277, 278, 279

Heimsoeth H. · 66, 73, 74

Henriksen Aa. · 224

hermeneutics · 14, 119, 178

Hirsch E. · 279

history · 1, 2, 3, 10, 40, 43, 44, 45, 49, 59, 61, 72, 73, 74, 75, 87, 91, 100, 109, 110, 112, 113, 122, 127, 128, 142, 148, 169, 170, 171, 172, 178, 186, 188, 189, 194, 200, 201, 204, 215, 216, 217, 219, 220, 221, 235, 237, 245, 251, 263, 265, 266, 270, 273, 277, 279

Holl J. · 36, 37, 40, 84, 95, 96, 214, 271

Holm S. · 175

Holmer P. L. · 176

humor · 21, 267

I

- idea · 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 19, 25, 27, 34, 42, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 60, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 73, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 94, 96, 98, 99, 100, 102, 103, 104, 106, 107, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 128, 129, 130, 132, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 141, 143, 147, 148, 149, 152, 155, 157, 158, 159, 161, 163, 165, 166, 167, 169, 171, 172, 174, 175, 176, 178, 180, 181, 183, 185, 186, 190, 195, 199, 203, 204, 207, 210, 216, 217, 219, 225, 229, 231, 236, 246, 248, 249, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 259, 260, 264, 265, 267, 268, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276
- idealism · 1, 2, 11, 28, 35, 36, 41, 43, 44, 45, 48, 49, 50, 51, 55, 59, 60, 61, 67, 68, 71, 72, 81, 87, 89, 94, 101, 107, 109, 111, 114, 115, 119, 120, 139, 152, 153, 156, 158, 163, 164, 166, 172, 181, 182, 186, 238, 271, 279
- identity · 1, 8, 24, 36, 38, 44, 51, 55, 56, 57, 60, 64, 65, 66, 68, 69, 71, 73, 76, 80, 81, 84, 85, 87, 88, 89, 91, 92, 94, 95, 97, 101, 102, 103, 108, 112, 113, 123, 125, 126, 137, 143, 145, 152, 153, 154, 157, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 168, 169, 170, 172, 173, 175, 176, 178, 182, 194, 202, 207, 208, 221, 248, 251, 265, 269, 270, 272
- imagination · 20, 56, 57, 62, 63, 84, 94, 116, 118, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 138, 142, 146, 157, 161, 195, 196, 198, 199, 202, 204, 205, 206, 207, 209, 210, 238, 245, 246, 247, 249, 252
- immediacy · 8, 9, 20, 21, 29, 74, 79, 94, 107, 120, 123, 124, 126, 130, 137, 140, 143, 156, 159, 160, 161, 162, 165, 178, 185, 186, 188, 190, 191, 193, 195, 196, 197, 203, 212, 228, 235, 239, 240, 242, 243, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 252, 254, 258, 259, 260, 261, 264, 265, 275
- incarnation · 17, 47, 95, 101, 243, 274
- indirect communication · 13, 15, 19, 24, 25, 32, 33, 39, 40, 192
- individual, the · 14, 45, 201, 259
- infinite, the · 1, 8, 9, 18, 47, 60, 62, 84, 86, 89, 97, 102, 107, 110, 122, 135, 138, 154, 168, 170, 182, 198, 234, 238, 241, 256
- interesting, the · 24, 118, 183, 190, 191, 194, 199, 200
- inwardness · 9, 76, 77, 85, 86, 108, 122, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 143, 180, 182, 231, 256, 265, 269, 275
- irony · 21, 48, 94, 107, 108, 109, 110, 113, 119, 120, 121, 135, 196, 197, 198, 238, 267

K

- Kant I. · 1, 2, 44, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 66, 67, 68, 71, 72, 73, 77, 80, 81, 91, 106, 119, 158, 160, 170, 172, 179, 184, 211, 267
- Kirbach E. H. · 267
- knowledge · 2, 18, 19, 23, 39, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73, 74, 78, 88, 90, 91, 92, 99, 100, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 124, 125, 126, 128, 129, 135, 140, 144, 147, 148, 150, 151, 153, 154, 155, 157, 158, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 169, 170, 174, 176, 177, 178, 181, 184, 186, 205, 207, 218, 222, 223, 230, 238, 263, 266, 267, 268, 273, 277, 278, 279
- Kroner R. · 53, 60, 62, 68, 71

L

- language · 1, 20, 32, 47, 81, 107, 110, 124, 125, 130, 132, 133, 141, 142, 143, 146, 156, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 168, 174, 175, 176, 178, 179, 180, 181, 183, 190, 194, 195, 203, 206, 207, 210, 212, 213, 222, 237, 238
- leap, the · 27, 98, 149, 150, 151, 156, 170, 183, 214, 225
- Leibniz C. W. · 49, 59
- Lindström V. · 272
- Litt Th. · 6, 81

logic · 7, 9, 15, 20, 21, 23, 39, 45, 53, 54, 56, 72, 86, 87, 90, 93, 98, 101, 104, 106, 107, 109, 111, 112, 114, 115, 120, 124, 128, 129, 130, 131, 137, 138, 140, 147, 148, 154, 155, 156, 164, 165, 166, 169, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 189, 192, 212, 225, 234, 235, 241, 244, 245, 248, 253, 254, 255, 258, 259, 261, 266, 273

Løgstrup K. E. · 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 96, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 113, 241, 270, 271

Lønning P. · 214

M

maieutic · 15, 32, 33, 39, 40, 99, 119, 153, 185, 186, 269

Malantschuk G. · 26, 27, 29, 31, 106, 116, 149, 162, 164, 211, 220, 224, 225, 228, 229

marriage · 123, 139, 231, 260, 264

Marx K. · 44

mediation · 2, 11, 32, 40, 45, 57, 59, 74, 79, 89, 92, 94, 100, 112, 124, 126, 147, 152, 156, 158, 159, 160, 164, 165, 205, 212, 243, 259, 264, 267, 268, 273, 276, 277, 278, 279

melancholy · 141, 142, 143, 195, 227, 245, 251, 253, 254, 255, 258, 266

metaphysics · 9, 34, 45, 46, 49, 51, 53, 59, 91, 154, 166, 184, 276

Moltmann J. · 3

music · 23, 124, 125, 126, 129, 130, 131, 133, 134, 137

Mynster J. P. · 136

N

Nero · 254, 258

Nordentoft K. · 29, 30, 31, 42, 127, 132, 140, 142, 148, 162, 189, 194, 202, 207, 208, 209, 214, 217, 221, 226, 227, 257

O

ontology · 1, 4, 5, 27, 28, 34, 38, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 56, 57, 59, 65, 89, 91, 98, 100, 101, 114, 120, 123, 134, 137, 153, 154, 157, 163, 166, 168, 170, 171, 173, 181, 182, 186

P

Pannenberg W. · 3

paradox · 2, 10, 11, 152, 178, 274

passion · 11, 85, 92, 94, 116, 133, 134, 135, 136, 138, 146, 191, 195, 196, 197, 198, 206, 245, 246, 256

pathos · 31, 81, 92, 197, 224

philosophy · 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, 16, 17, 28, 32, 34, 36, 37, 38, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 54, 58, 59, 61, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 80, 81, 83, 87, 88, 89, 91, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99, 100, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 109, 110, 112, 114, 118, 119, 120, 128, 129, 137, 148, 152, 154, 155, 157, 158, 159, 166, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 177, 178, 179, 181, 182, 184, 185, 186, 215, 236, 267, 270, 271, 276, 277, 279

Plato · 89, 107, 109, 111, 128, 176, 228, 238

Platonic · 89, 96, 100, 110, 111, 175, 262, 268

possibility · 5, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 28, 29, 30, 34, 37, 42, 49, 52, 57, 60, 63, 64, 65, 69, 73, 77, 81, 83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91, 93, 94, 95, 97, 98, 101, 106, 107, 108, 110, 111, 116, 118, 120, 124, 125, 127, 130, 132, 134, 135, 137, 138, 140,

141, 142, 145, 146, 151, 154, 156, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 165, 167, 168, 175, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 185, 186, 189, 190, 191, 193, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 203, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 221, 223, 224, 226, 227, 229, 230, 231, 232, 234, 235, 237, 238, 240, 242, 245, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 255, 256, 258, 260, 261, 262, 264, 266, 267, 272, 275, 276, 277, 278

psychology · 4, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 79, 114, 116, 123, 127, 136, 139, 140, 151, 160, 194, 213

R

reason · 1, 2, 10, 26, 29, 34, 38, 44, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 60, 62, 68, 70, 73, 74, 78, 79, 80, 81, 93, 96, 97, 98, 106, 112, 123, 124, 129, 137, 139, 150, 171, 177, 178, 181, 182, 185, 186, 187, 192, 202, 204, 211, 214, 218, 222, 235, 237, 249, 259, 262, 267

recollection · 73, 89, 90, 111, 122, 166, 183, 248, 249, 262, 268

redemption · 11

reflection · 2, 11, 15, 20, 21, 23, 24, 33, 36, 38, 43, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 52, 54, 55, 57, 58, 60, 63, 67, 68, 69, 70, 73, 74, 78, 79, 81, 89, 91, 92, 93, 94, 98, 100, 101, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 113, 115, 117, 118, 119, 124, 126, 127, 128, 130, 134, 135, 137, 138, 141, 142, 143, 146, 148, 153, 154, 155, 156, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 168, 171, 177, 181, 184, 186, 189, 190, 191, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 203, 204, 215, 217, 230, 233, 235, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 245, 246, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 263, 264, 267, 268, 269, 270, 272, 276, 279

religion · 1, 2, 8, 11, 15, 46, 59, 89, 91, 100, 122, 169

repetition · 21, 37, 50, 89, 93, 118, 153, 165, 166, 167, 183, 199, 236, 248, 251, 268, 269, 274

revelation · 1, 2, 11, 46, 121, 191, 195

romanticism · 128, 129, 130, 154

Rosenkranz · 27, 44, 114, 139

S

salvation · 12

Schäfer K. · 177, 184, 186, 234

Schelling F. W. J. · 2, 50, 59, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 78, 80, 81, 106, 129, 136, 170

Schleiermacher D. E. · 2, 169, 170

Schulz W. · 5, 38, 43, 60, 70, 104, 279

science · 15, 27, 28, 30, 48, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 69, 75, 106, 148, 151, 158, 177, 225

self · 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 26, 28, 30, 31, 36, 37, 38, 45, 60, 61, 64, 66, 68, 69, 74, 75, 81, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 106, 113, 114, 120, 121, 122, 123, 126, 134, 135, 138, 139, 142, 144, 147, 149, 157, 158, 159, 161, 179, 182, 186, 188, 191, 194, 195, 196, 197, 200, 206, 207, 208, 213, 223, 224, 226, 227, 232, 233, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 246, 247, 249, 250, 255, 256, 261, 264, 265, 271, 275, 277

self-reflection · 1, 9, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 34, 44, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 62, 65, 66, 67, 76, 82, 89, 90, 94, 96, 97, 98, 100, 102, 108, 109, 117, 120, 121, 122, 128, 133, 146, 152, 155, 160, 163, 178, 184, 186, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 204, 206, 207, 209, 220, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 245, 247, 250, 254, 255, 258, 260, 261, 263, 267, 270, 276

sensuality · 23, 122, 123, 125, 126, 134, 136, 138, 139, 140, 141, 143, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 152, 159, 162, 215, 217, 221, 228

sin · 11, 12, 13, 16, 27, 28, 31, 37, 100, 118, 147, 183, 203, 211, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 232, 234, 274

skepticism · 102, 104, 105, 108, 109, 111, 156, 166, 170, 238, 243, 249

Sløk J. · 34, 35, 36, 102, 119, 228, 229, 269, 270

society · 107, 135
 Socrates · 25, 93, 107, 108, 111, 230, 238
 soul · 5, 6, 9, 26, 46, 73, 76, 90, 102, 104, 106, 115, 116, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 130, 134, 135, 140, 145, 188, 189, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 198, 200, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 211, 219, 221, 226, 236, 238, 240, 243, 246, 251, 254, 264, 279
 speculation · 32, 44, 107, 111, 128, 181, 182, 217, 276
 Spinoza B. · 49, 59, 68, 148
 spirit · 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 27, 28, 46, 47, 61, 73, 75, 76, 77, 84, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 106, 108, 112, 113, 117, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125, 127, 128, 129, 135, 137, 139, 147, 151, 164, 176, 178, 192, 194, 195, 203, 204, 206, 207, 208, 211, 215, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 233, 236, 239, 243, 258, 262, 264
 Steffens · 46
 Struwe W. · 279
 subjectivity · 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 18, 19, 20, 26, 29, 39, 54, 55, 56, 57, 61, 63, 65, 71, 76, 78, 85, 86, 87, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 101, 102, 104, 107, 108, 109, 112, 117, 119, 136, 137, 143, 144, 149, 159, 160, 174, 180, 181, 182, 185, 186, 193, 196, 198, 202, 203, 224, 225, 228, 236, 238, 239, 243, 244, 245, 246, 248, 250, 251, 252, 253, 256, 257, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 278, 280
 suffering · 10, 100, 239, 240, 241, 274
 System, the · 12, 39, 59, 68, 90, 93, 164

T

Taylor M. · 38, 103, 104, 123, 232, 233
 temporality · 5, 7, 84, 138, 159, 165, 176, 226, 233, 234, 235
 thinking · 1, 2, 6, 9, 22, 32, 36, 40, 44, 46, 48, 49, 68, 83, 91, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 102, 103, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 122, 126, 127, 129, 135, 136, 139, 147, 148, 163, 169, 170, 172, 177, 179, 181, 182, 186, 190, 201, 219, 225, 236, 259, 269, 270, 271, 274, 276, 277, 279
 thought · 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 18, 21, 23, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 58, 59, 68, 77, 80, 83, 85, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, 98, 108, 110, 112, 114, 115, 119, 126, 130, 142, 144, 146, 147, 148, 158, 163, 165, 168, 170, 171, 172, 174, 175, 177, 178, 179, 184, 192, 197, 198, 199, 203, 214, 215, 216, 217, 225, 229, 230, 243, 251, 254, 261, 262, 265, 267, 272, 273, 275, 277, 279
 Thulstrup N. · 41, 42
 time · 5, 11, 40, 51, 58, 59, 71, 83, 84, 90, 101, 105, 106, 109, 110, 111, 115, 122, 125, 130, 133, 136, 137, 138, 141, 142, 145, 155, 160, 163, 166, 170, 185, 193, 199, 204, 219, 232, 233, 234, 235, 247, 249, 264, 265, 270, 272
 tragic · 23
 transcendence · 1, 5, 34, 61, 76, 84, 85, 93, 102, 134, 136, 137, 138, 139, 149, 182, 185, 213, 214, 225, 227, 232, 237, 242, 243, 273, 274, 278
 transcendental ego · 2, 51, 60, 70, 80, 106, 144, 154, 227, 249, 262
 transcendental philosophy · 49, 51, 52, 58, 68, 69, 70, 80, 99, 153, 164, 169, 171, 176, 182, 184, 185, 209
 transition · 11, 38, 45, 53, 54, 74, 77, 78, 81, 87, 111, 117, 148, 149, 150, 151, 160, 162, 165, 180, 190, 199, 214, 234, 235, 236, 238, 239, 248, 259
 Trendelenburg A. · 175
 Treschow N. · 46, 136
 truth · 2, 9, 10, 29, 47, 74, 75, 85, 87, 94, 100, 103, 105, 108, 109, 111, 119, 121, 156, 159, 160, 161, 163, 165, 170, 172, 175, 179, 182, 183, 198, 205, 217, 237, 271, 276

W

Wilde F. E. · 37

will · 5, 7, 23, 38, 53, 54, 55, 78, 79, 81, 87, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 96, 98, 101, 102, 109, 113, 120, 129, 134, 135, 137, 149, 164,
165, 167, 180, 187, 201, 204, 224, 228, 235, 241, 242, 259, 262, 264, 266, 270, 271, 275