Literary Paradoxes in The Philosophical Fragments of Soren Aabye Kierkegaard

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LITERARY PARADOXES IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL
FRAGMENTS OF SØREN AABYE KIERKEGAARD

being

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of the Fort Hays Kansas State College in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the writing "Literary Paradoxes in the Philosophical Fragments of Søren Aabye Kierkegaard," is to exhibit the paradoxes used in the Philosophical Fragments as well as to indicate techniques of deception employed by Kierkegaard for the purpose of shocking the reader into contemplation.

Philosophical Fragments was chosen to point out the use of paradoxes in Kierkegaard's authorship because it is indicative of the whole Kierkegaardian problem of what it means to become a Christian.

Data was gathered by reading the primary writings of the author as well as commentaries on his life and work by his translators and biographers.

Quotations from Kierkegaard's Point of View were used to establish instances in which Kierkegaard admitted of the technique of deception. It was assumed that, since he was capable of admitted deception, he was very likely to have used deception which was not admitted but indicated by the nature of his authorship and personal mode of existence.

In order to exhibit the paradoxes in a manner which would indicate to the reader the relationship of paradoxes, deception techniques used to attract attention, and the point of the authorship as a whole, Philosophical Fragments was summarized. Major paradoxes were quoted and apparent deceptions were pointed out as they appeared in context. A pattern was observed in the paradoxical relationships of three which Kierkegaard made use of in his discourse. The progression of the relationship pattern was indicated and found to be important in the
exhibition of the paradoxes and in the relationship of Kierkegaard to his reader.

In conclusion it was affirmed that Kierkegaard in approaching his reader used the method of shock by means other than those which he admitted being author to and that he was capable of deception as a deliberate technique. It was reiterated that the method of deceit was carried farther than his admission and remained for the reader to discover.

Diagrams which exhibit the pattern of Kierkegaard's paradoxical relationships were shown for the purpose of clarifying the relationships for the reader. Paramount in the conclusion is Kierkegaard's assertion that the learner is not asked to understand the paradox but only to recognize it.

As a final conclusion, Kierkegaard is named as the purveyor of truth in a paradoxical relationship involving his reader at the lower end of the scale, Christ at the top of the scale as superior, with Kierkegaard as the central figure in the relationship with the task of giving the contradictories a means of understanding.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard's authorship deals with the question of what it means to be a Christian. Kierkegaard, by his own admission, sought to attract attention to his writing by the system used in the whole authorship. The Philosophical Fragments exposes aesthetically the problem involved in Christianity through the use of paradoxes.

The purpose of this writing is to exhibit the Kierkegaardian paradoxes in the Philosophical Fragments. Intrinsic to the problem is the additional technique of deception for the purpose of shocking the reader into contemplation. The deception technique is also admitted by Kierkegaard.

It is not intended to establish that the paradoxes from the Kierkegaardian point of view are real. It is intended to show that the problem involved in Christianity is developed through paradoxes, that paradoxes are used as illustrations, and that the paradoxical quality of Kierkegaard's life is involved in the authorship.

The Philosophical Fragments is summarized to show the development of Kierkegaard's paradoxes and to indicate the evidences of the technique of deception in his interpretation of the problem of Christianity.

Philosophical Fragments was chosen to point out the use of paradoxes in Kierkegaard's authorship because it forms a basis for the whole Kierkegaardian problem of what it means to become a Christian. In addition, the relationship of the paradoxes to the Absolute Paradox is
made evident in *Philosophical Fragments*. The *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* enlarges on the *Philosophical Fragments* and is incorporated into this writing to show the relationship involved.
CHAPTER II

THE LIFE OF SØREN AABYE KIERKEGAARD

Søren Kierkegaard, who was born in Denmark in 1813, lived for forty-two years. During that time he became the forerunner of a form of philosophical thought which has been termed existentialism. His life appears to have influenced greatly the introspective thought processes which resulted in his writings. Kierkegaard's father, a wealthy man with extremely religious views, was responsible to a large extent for the moral and intellectual development of his son. As a boy, Kierkegaard was filled with the concept of duty which he never abandoned completely in spite of a later rebellion. He felt that his father had in his teaching given him a part of the load of melancholy which was a part of his character. Kierkegaard expressed ambivalent viewpoints concerning the melancholy against which he was powerless to protest at the time of its inception. By the time he realized it, the quality of despair was interwoven into his life and is possibly responsible in part for his thoughts and writings. Although it is apparent that Kierkegaard resented his father's influence intensely, it seems that he may have been thankful during his most creative years for the power that was exerted over him by his father.

The paradoxical character of Kierkegaard's relationship to 'his' reality is made evident from his reports of his early training. From this and later examples the question arises as to whether he planned that the evidence be interpreted as paradoxical to bear out the devices he
admits being author too. That is, in addition to his admitted deceptions, an over-all device developed from his whole life envelopes the whole authorship. From evidence gathered from his writings it appears that the device is not at all accidental.

The stress which Kierkegaard lays on his unhappy childhood must also be understood in the sense that it was unhappy in its consequences, though consciously it may have been relatively happy—and its happiness, again, lay in having received an immovable conviction that God is love. He was marked out for suffering from his earliest years. And when he wrote that 'everyone is essentially what they are to be when they are ten years old' he was speaking quite literally about himself. All the major factors in his life he traced back to his childhood...1

That Kierkegaard attempted for a time to escape the quality of inborn dread which he experienced is evidenced in this statement: "There was a time when, for fear of being proud of my suffering, I put forward the notion that at bottom all men suffered equally. Yet fundamentally that is only a kind of stoicism, which in its abstraction does away with the more concrete belief in providence."2

In addition to philosophy and theology, Kierkegaard was interested in art, literature and the theatre. He studied at the University of Copenhagen at a time when Hegelianism was popular. For a while during this period in his life he devoted himself to the pleasures of the world, but soon abandoned them in disgust and became even more studious.3


2 Ibid., p. 112 f.

When Kierkegaard was twenty-five an event occurred which was referred to by him as 'the great earthquake.'

... the great earthquake occurred, the terrible revolution which suddenly forced upon me a new and infallible law of interpretation of all the facts. Then I suspected that my father's great age was not a divine blessing but rather a curse; that the outstanding intellectual gifts of our family were only given to us in order that we should rend each other to pieces. ... There must be a guilt upon the whole family, the punishment of God must be on it; it was to disappear, wiped out by the powerful hand of God, obliterated like an unsuccessful attempt, and only at times did I find a little alleviation in the thought that my father had been allotted the heavy task of calming us with the consolation of religion, of ministering to us so that a better world should be open to us even though we lost everything in this world. ... what wonder then that in desperate despair I grasped at nought but the intellectual side in man and clung fast to it, so that the thought of my own considerable powers of mind was my only consolation, ideas my one joy, and mankind indifferent to me.

The year following Kierkegaard's 'great earthquake' was the turning point in his life. He became reconciled with his father, recorded the most profound religious experience in his life and his father died unexpectedly. Two years later he became engaged to Regine Olsen but he broke the engagement the next year. The stir of opposition which developed as a result overwhelmed Kierkegaard and he went to Berlin where he listened to the lectures of Schelling and became engrossed with the spirit of German philosophy.

Kierkegaard never forgot Regina. To him she became the symbol of loveliness, ... and yet he was happy to be free and not tied down by the obligations of marriage. Here we have a strange paradox in his character. ... He wanted Regina, and yet he wanted to be free; he wanted the security of marriage, and yet he desired the independence of the solitary philosopher.

4 The Journals of Søren Kierkegaard, op. cit., p. 66f.
5 Mayer, op. cit., p. 464.
6 Loc. cit.
The paradox which Mayer pointed out in Kierkegaard's character concerning marriage versus independence is hardly uncommon. However, the use of the paradox is possibly another method by which the interest of the reader is aroused. Furthermore, in employing the use of the incident in his background, Kierkegaard is able to say that he is perfectly aware of what love is and can therefore believably parallel a common human experience with an uncommon religious experience. His renunciation of love is a release which left him free to carry out that which he felt was his purpose and which could hardly fail to attract the attention of the reader; for who but a selfless and dedicated man would deny himself happiness for the sake of mankind? And would mankind listen as closely to one who did not deny himself for its sake? If Kierkegaard erred ethically in using the story of his affair with Regina as a method of attraction, he appealed to the nature of at least some readers. Here again, it would appear that in using his own paradox as an illustration, Kierkegaard found an attention arresting device.

Another event which influenced Kierkegaard's life was a prolonged attack made upon him in The Corsair, a Danish newspaper, charging that he was weak in character and that his philosophy was full of fallacies. According to Mayer, his contempt for society was intensified as a result of the attack. 7

In his mature years, Kierkegaard turned increasingly to religion. He wished to expose religious disintegration by showing that the Church

7 Mayer, loc. cit.
of Denmark did not live up to the standards of Christ, that its members were living a worldly life, and that its theology was stereotyped and rationalistic. "Essentially . . . Kierkegaard had only one thesis, that Christianity no longer exists." 8

He affirmed the majesty of God and considered man as a nothingness tortured by tensions and constant contradictions. He emphasized the personal relationship between man and God which transcends intellectual determinations and which can be grasped only through faith. 9

"But he knew his own limitations; in this lay his wisdom. To him truth was not an objective standard but an unending search, a subjective awareness. It was part of the Existentialist paradox." 10

In stating definitely and defiantly that Christianity no longer exists, Kierkegaard may be pointing out a non-paradoxical fact. The statement, however, does not necessarily eliminate any quality of paradox in his total writing. From a statement that appears not to be a paradox he builds a case which involves paradox and climaxes the case with an interpretation called the Absolute Paradox. But in saying that Christianity no longer exists, a previous existence is implied; and if Christianity did exist and can exist again it could not have been completely dead in the interval between or else it would never have really existed in the beginning. If it had been considered dead, something would have

9 Mayer, op. cit., p. 467.
10 Loc. cit.
to remain alive for the purpose of rejuvenation. Kierkegaard himself
points out a similar progression in the Philosophical Fragments in in-
terpreting the process of becoming a Christian, so it would appear that
the statement that Christianity no longer exists may well be a shock
treatment for the reader.

Notable in Kierkegaard's contribution to philosophic literature is
his delineation of various stages which characterize man's progress toward
fulfillment and perfection. The stages chronologically in existence are
aesthetic, ethical and religious. The aesthetic man is evidenced not only
by his search for temporal pleasure but also by his giving up the search
for enjoyment and becoming sceptical regarding pleasure. The ethical man
realizes that external goods are insignificant and concentrates on the
development of his inner capacities. The religious man realizes the
depth of the gulf that separates him from God. He is tortured by a
sense of guilt which arises mainly from a sense of inadequacy which can
be extended to humanity as a whole. Man contains two parts—one secular
and one spiritual; one devoted to the present and one which lives for the
future.11

The qualities of the secular or aesthetic and spiritual parts of
man are the basis of the arrangement of the whole authorship of Kierkegaard.
At the climax of his literary life he published The Point of View, which
clarified his purpose and method as an author and admitted the authorship
of all the books which had formerly been published under pseudonyms.

11 Miller, op. cit., p. 471 f.
Kierkegaard probably did not consider himself or anyone else totally capable of being ideally aesthetic, ethical or spiritual. Besides, in using the aesthetic and ethical stages as steps toward the spiritual state, they could hardly be discounted as lacking in value and being insignificant despite the indication that man is spiritually out of existence when he is in them. This problem, too, is involved in the process of becoming. Again by using apparently positive statements in definition, is Kierkegaard attracting attention to his total thesis? That is, even that which appears at first glance to be unparadoxical can be found to be paradoxical but by virtue of the apparent lack of paradox, the reader is given a positive reaction for a time. The reaction has essentially the same effect as the statement that Christianity no longer exists.
CHAPTER III

THE POINT OF VIEW

In introducing The Point of View Kierkegaard wrote, "In my career as an author, a point has now been reached where it is permissible to do what I feel a strong impulse to do and so regard as my duty—namely, to explain, once for all, as directly and frankly as possible . . . what I as an author declare myself to be."  

Kierkegaard admitted a duplicity in the whole authorship as to whether he was an aesthetic or a religious author and stated his intention of pointing out the duplicity. He discounted any supposition that he was an aesthetic author changed to a religious author since such an author would never have issued The Point of View at the time Either/Or was being republished. Either/Or demonstrated the duplicity of Kierkegaard's authorship through the championship of the aesthetic viewpoint on one hand and, conversely, the viewing of life as a moral process.

Here, Kierkegaard in explaining the arrangement of his authorship, leaves no room for doubt as to his purpose. But if he can separate the aesthetic life and the moral life so easily, it would seem that no confusion would be probable in explaining the problem of becoming a


Christian. Actually the paradox must remain in the separation of aesthetic and spiritual existence. If both did not exist in one man it would seem that he would be unfamiliar with one or the other and if both exist in one man, how can such a separation be possible? Kierkegaard points out the duplicity.

The duplicity started with the beginning of his authorship. Contemporaneous with Either/Or was Two Edifying Discourses, which was undeniably a religious work. After two years during which religious works only were published, an aesthetic article, The Crisis and A Crisis in the Life of an Actress, was published designed to eliminate any possibility of attempting to prove that the author changed from an aesthetic to a religious writer. "... for he was a religious author from the beginning and was aesthetically productive even at the last moment."3

The first group of writings represents aesthetic productivity, the last group is exclusively religious: between them, as the turning-point, lies the Concluding Postscript. This work concerns itself with and sets "the Problem," which is the problem of the whole authorship: how to become a Christian.4

The Concluding Unscientific Postscript was not classified as either aesthetic or religious. Although it was published under a pseudonym, Kierkegaard appended his name as editor. Following the Concluding Postscript only religious works under his own name were published. Then he published Inter et Inter, an aesthetic article by a pseudonym. "This," he said, "is calculated to make one conscious all at once of the

3 Kierkegaard, op. cit., p. 13.
4 Loc. cit.
The aesthetic ethical, religious relationship can not be otherwise than paradoxical. It is not likely that Kierkegaard failed to be aware of it. In writing the Point of View it may well be that he is using a literary device based on actuality of the paradox. That is, where the paradox of his authorship appears to be merely literary, the paradox remains undissolvable underneath, and although in the explanation the paradox seems to be ignored, it is possible that he expected it to become even more evident.

Kierkegaard in The Point of View admitted that a protestation by him that he was consistently a religious author should be enough but since he had little confidence in protestations with respect to literary productions he was inclined to take an objective view of his own work which he termed dialectical.

However, in Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Kierkegaard discounts objectivity in favor of subjectivity. Since his whole point of view is based on subjective awareness, is it possible for him to take an objective view toward his own writings? And in stating that he is inclined to take such a view is it possible that he is again forcing his reader to take notice of his point of view? It is possible that by inviting his reader to quarrel with his apparent inconsistencies, he further accomplishes his purpose—to attract the reader's attention. If this is the case, Kierkegaard's pretense uses the merely literary

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5 Ibid., p. 14
paradox to force the real paradox to the front where it cannot be put down as a dialectic argument only. Besides by ignoring the formal rules of reasoning he must be indicating a purpose for the deception. It is obvious that he is not ignorant of the rules. It is also to be considered that outright logical contradiction is not the only form of paradox. There are incompatibles that are not contradictories.

Since Kierkegaard has pointed out the ambiguity which was present from beginning to end, the thing which remains to be explained is the employment of aesthetics to introduce religion. That the aesthetic productions appear to have been used as a literary tool to attract attention to the religious work is evidenced by the statement: "I held out Either/Or to the world in my left hand, and in my right the Two Edifying Discourses but all, or as good as all, grasped with their right what I held in my left."  

He was aware, he said, that only a few understood the Two Edifying Discourses. In the preface to Two Edifying Discourses appeared his first dedication to his reader, 'the individual' which may have been an additional means used to bring his writings to the attention of more people by anticipating a subjective identification with Kierkegaard's 'individual.' This would indicate that Kierkegaard was capable of a technical deception for an end held to be good.

By the act of dedicating his work to 'the individual,' he was assured of more readers. If only 'the individual' alluded to by

6 Ibid., p. 20.
Kierkegaard possessed the capacity to understand his authorship there would have been no point in employing any deception at all. But by imparting a special quality to those who were supposed to be in accordance with him he drew more readers who would wish to be included in that category. Their reading of him would be given more purpose even though the purpose was superficial.

Kierkegaard confided that he was potentially as deeply under the influence of religion when he began Either/Or as he had ever been.

I was so deeply shaken [Reference to the affair with Regina] that I understood perfectly well that I could not possibly succeed in striking the comforting and secure via media in which most people pass their lives; I had either to cast myself into perdition and sensuality, or to choose the religious absolutely as the only thing—either the world in a measure that would be dreadful, or the cloister.7

As a further clarification of the aesthetic-religious approach, Kierkegaard referred to Christendom as a prodigious illusion. Christendom for Kierkegaard was the Christianity practiced in Denmark which he considered to be weak and passionless. "There is nothing," he said, "that requires such gentle handling as an illusion, if one wishes to dispel it."8 A religious writer must, therefore, get in touch with men aesthetically and approach an illusion, which can never be destroyed directly, from behind the person who is under an illusion. Instead of protesting that one is an extraordinary Christian he should attack Christendom by declaring that he is not a Christian at all.9 Kierkegaard used such an

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7 Ibid., p. 18.
8 Ibid., p. 25.
9 Ibid., p. 24 f.
approach in the Concluding Unscientific Postscript in which the pseudonymous author, Johannes Climacus, declared that he was no Christian. This appears to be another deception employed by Kierkegaard as a psychological technique.

The religious writer whose concern is how one is to become a Christian starts off rightly as an aesthetic writer. The harm is not great in pretending not to be a Christian as is the harm involved when one who is not a Christian pretends to be one.

"Life," Kierkegaard repeats, "is divided into two parts: the period of youth belongs to the aesthetical; the later age to religion." Stemming from this viewpoint is an error destructive to religiousness; that is, the idea that if one could remain young, one would not have any need for Christianity or religion. Such an idea may contribute to establish the illusion more firmly and the only help for it is to take steps to dispel the illusion. If a religious author is concerned with dealing with the illusion he must be simultaneously an aesthetic and a religious author. The religious works remain only a method of communication.

Although it is impossible for a person to be compelled to accept an opinion, a conviction or a belief, he can be compelled to take notice. "Compelling people to take notice and to judge is the Characteristic of

10 Ibid., p. 31.
11 Ibid., p. 31 f.
12 Ibid., p. 35.
genuine martyrdom.\textsuperscript{13}

This statement indicates that Kierkegaard felt that people could be compelled to take notice and consequently to judge. Perhaps his implied feeling of martyrdom was a result of his giving himself as well as his authorship to the world. In any case it appears that he felt that people must be compelled to take notice. Knowing this who can say to what ends he felt he could go in order to compel the attention?

Kierkegaard began his deception designed to cause people to take notice by accepting the other man's illusion.

\ldots the aesthetic work is a deception, and herein is to be found the deeper significance of the use of pseudonyms. \ldots One must not let oneself be deceived by the word 'deception.' One can deceive a person for the truth's sake and \ldots one can deceive a person into the truth. Indeed, it is only by this means \ldots that it is possible to bring into the truth one who is in an illusion.\textsuperscript{14}

As was formerly stated, the \textit{Concluding Unscientific Postscript} constituted the turning point in the authorship and presented the problem of becoming a Christian. In regard to the religious group included in the whole authorship, Kierkegaard assumed that no explanation was necessary thus establishing the point of view.\textsuperscript{15}

Kierkegaard carried his deception into his mode of existence. During the period preceding the publication of \textit{Either/Or} he made every effort to be seen every hour of the day. Copenhagen was convinced by his actions that he was an idler and a dawdler and entirely lacking in

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Loc. cit.}

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 39 f.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 41 f.
seriousness although brilliant and witty. With the completion of the _Concluding Postscript_, Kierkegaard changed his personal masquerade. According to his version of the affair of _The Corsair_, he deliberately exposed himself to caricature by the newspaper and became a laughingstock in Copenhagen intentionally. _The Corsair's_ attack benefited Kierkegaard's scheme for posing as a religious author for when he, as a religious author, was asked on what grounds he based his claim that he was right he would answer, "I prove it by the fact that I am persecuted; this is the truth, and I can prove it by the fact that I am derided."¹⁶

Again Kierkegaard has ignored the rules of formal reasoning in making the above statement. In addition, he has made another allusion to his martyrdom. It appears that he was more concerned with the effect produced by his statement upon the reader than the accuracy of his logic. If this is true it must be another deception.

Kierkegaard's self-imposed isolation appears to have stemmed from the period in which he accepted the urge which compelled him to produce his writings and to which he referred as the 'great earthquake.' However, his feeling of being an observer rather than a participant in human activity he felt was a part of him from childhood. "The thought goes very far back in my recollection," he said, "that in every generation there are two or three who are sacrificed for the others, are led by frightful sufferings to discover what redounds to the good of others."¹⁷ He

¹⁶ _Ibid._, p. 59.
¹⁷ _Ibid._, p. 79.
understood himself to be one of those singled out in his generation. He apparently knew of the exile which he would assume later at the time he experienced the 'great earthquake.' During that period he wrote, "The humorist, like a beast of prey, always walks alone."\(^{18}\)

If Kierkegaard was as miserable as he seems to be inclined to lead his reader to believe it appears that he genuinely enjoyed it. Did he use his melancholy to arouse the reader's sympathy and empathy? If this is the case is it not one of the most obvious and clever of his deceptions? The comedian who employs pathos is among the most favored of comedians. The reader who is sympathetic to the man if not to his words is very likely to read. Too, the reader who is laughing is still reading. If this is a device then it would reach those who were not necessarily in accord with him as well as those who were.

\(^{18}\) The Journals of Søren Kierkegaard, op. cit., p. 56.
CHAPTER IV

THE PARADOXES IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL FRAGMENTS

The Philosophical Fragments deals with the problem of Christianity with emphasis upon the relationship of man to God based upon the immediacy of the point in time when the relationship becomes apparent and undeniable. In the preface Kierkegaard makes the statement that the writing is a piece for its own sake with no pretension to share in the philosophical movement of the day or to fill any of the various roles customarily assigned in the philosophical connection. He approaches and explains the problem throughout by the use of paradoxes.

In saying that Philosophical Fragments is a piece for its own sake, Kierkegaard may be approaching the illusion from behind as he said one must in the Point of View. Certainly in dealing with the problem aesthetically as he admits doing, and by condoning the use of deception it is clear that he intended to put the practice to use. Therefore, the use of paradoxes in explaining the paradoxical relationship between man and God may well be a literary device. By his own statement we know that he considers himself a humorist. In paralleling the humorist to the beast of prey it could be interpreted that he is preying on Christendom by approaching the illusion from behind. The prodigious illusion is in the process of being dispelled by the use of prodigious humor which is gently applied in order to startle the reader into contemplation and consequently to realization. Such an interpretation leaves a question as to whether Kierkegaard considered that his paradoxes were actual.
Opinions have been advanced by some Kierkegaardian authorities that the use of paradoxes is an additional device used to attract attention to his work and an implication to that effect is made by Kierkegaard himself in his explanation of the aesthetic and religious authorship in the *Point of View*. Guido de Ruggiero, professor of philosophy at the University of Rome, suggested that Kierkegaard "aimed at disavowing the dialectic mediation of contraries by affirming the immediate unity of these contraries, the *coincidentia oppositorium*, the paradox."¹ The question of the use of paradoxes is not resolved, however, by assuming that the use of paradoxes is a device only.

In introducing the problem with which *Philosophical Fragments* is concerned Kierkegaard begins with a paradox involving the existence of Truth as something to be learned which evidently presupposes the non-existence of Truth and makes it the object of an inquiry. The question brings to light a paradox which is apparently indisputable.

... one cannot seek for what he knows, and it seems equally impossible for him to seek for what he does not know. For what a man knows he cannot seek, since he knows it; and what he does not know he cannot seek, since he does not even know for what to seek.²

Socrates eliminated the paradox by the doctrine of Recollection in which all learning and inquiry is interpreted as a kind of remembering. In such a situation a teacher is only an instrument in the accident of remembering. If instruction is offered on any other basis it removes

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rather than adds to any benefit which the learner may gain. "... for it has never yet been known to fail that one fool, when he goes astray, takes several others with him."^3

However, with understanding of what it means to learn the Truth, the source of the instruction is only of historic or possibly poetic concern. If the Truth is within one and comes to light through oneself it is known from eternity without awareness of it and does nothing to eliminate the paradox from the Kierkegaardian point of view.

The temporal point of departure is nothing; for as soon as I discover that I have known the Truth from eternity without being aware of it, the same instant this moment of occasion is hidden in the eternal, and so incorporated with it that I cannot even find it so to speak, even if I sought it; because in my eternal consciousness there is neither here nor there, but only an ubique et nusquam.^4

Kierkegaard seems to imply that he, in his authorship, becomes the poetic or aesthetic means for his reader to discover the Truth; that is, he is the purveyor of the Truth. The Kierkegaardian paradox apparently exists, nevertheless, but it is possible that the paradox is used in this manner to convince his reader that anyone possesses the key to the truth within himself and the realization is released by the application of thought provoked by the contemplation of the paradox. This relationship between the reader and Kierkegaard bears a relationship to the learner and Teacher in the approach to the Absolute Paradox.

In employing the Socratic doctrine of recollection, Kierkegaard

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3 Ibid., p. 7.
4 Ibid., p. 8.
strengthens the paradox concerned with the existence of Truth. He further enlarges upon the problem of the truth of Christianity in the Concluding Unscientific Postscript where he says concerning the objective problem of the Truth of Christianity:

The inquiring subject must be in one or the other of two situations. Either he is in faith convinced of the truth of Christianity, and in faith assured of his own relationship to it; ... Or the inquirer is ... not in an attitude of faith, but objectively in an attitude of contemplation, and hence not infinitely interested in the determination of the question.5

Kierkegaard employed many either/or comparisons in his authorship. The above example is one of them. The reader in applying the concepts to his own experience is likely to place himself in one category or the other. Each category leaves him vulnerable for further contemplation either for the purpose of clarifying his position in relation to Christianity or for strengthening his attitude of contemplation. The lack of middle ground concepts may clarify the apparently undissolvable quality of the paradox. Although the either/or assertions appear to be contradictory this does not necessarily mean that they are not true in fact. None of Kierkegaard's paradoxes appear to be disputable since they are contradictory but the application of a compromise would weaken the contradiction. Compromising, however, appears at first glance to be alien to Kierkegaard in relation to his reader. The reader is inclined to suspect that Kierkegaard was not in fact convinced of permanent contradiction in his either/or tenets.

The speculative and subjective approaches to Christianity are considered by Kierkegaard. The speculative approach to the problem has no presumptions, he says, except that Christianity is assumed as given. "From the speculative standpoint, Christianity is viewed as an historical phenomenon. The problem of its truth therefore becomes the problem of so interpenetrating it with thought, that Christianity at last reveals itself as the eternal truth."\(^6\)

The subjective approach is considered by Kierkegaard as the most decisive step in becoming a Christian. In becoming essentially subjective it is necessary to take the scope of the reflective presuppositions into account. The subject must interpenetrate the presuppositions, throw off objectivity, and realize how infinite a conception he has of the significance of the change from objectivity to subjectivity, its responsibility and its limits. "If the subject has not worked himself through and out of his objectivity, every appeal to another individual will be merely a misunderstanding."\(^7\)

In summing up the existence of Truth as something to be acquired, Kierkegaard states that: "It is subjectivity that Christianity is concerned with, and it is only in subjectivity that its truth exists, if it exists at all; objectively, Christianity has absolutely no existence."\(^8\)

The aesthetic, ethical and religious stages are proclaimed by

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\(^{6}\) Ibid., p. 49.
\(^{7}\) Ibid., p. 62.
\(^{8}\) Ibid., p. 116.
Kierkegaard to be the stages in the development of the religious man and the objective, speculative and subjective approaches appear to be a parallel. Perhaps the ethical and speculative stages are a form of compromise between the contradictory aesthetic and religious stages and the objective and subjective approaches.

Kierkegaard states that in subjectivity only is the existence of Truth possible. Subjectivity is reached through objectivity and speculation and objectivity and speculation are discarded when subjectivity is reached.

This evolves back to the original paradox concerning man's seeking of the Truth and the paradox seemingly remains actual in the speculative approach and questionable in the objective and speculative approaches in which the truth of Christianity is assumed.

In the process of becoming a Christian the moment in time during which the truth is discovered must have decisive significance so that it will be impossible to forget. Concerning the antecedent state, Kierkegaard uses the Socratic thought that at bottom everyone possesses truth but must be destitute of truth up to the moment he learns it. Actually the seeker cannot be described as a seeker because he does not know that he seeks for Truth. He can only be described as being in a state of error. The teacher cannot help the learner to recall the truth as long as he is in error but the teacher can be responsible for giving the learner the occasion to remember that he is in error. The teacher must bring the Truth to the learner as well as the condition necessary for understanding it which is like the capacity to inquire for it;
therefore, the condition contains the conditioned and the question implies the answer.

It is possible that the moment in time during which the truth is recognized is related to the ethical stage and the speculative approach and could be called a compromise between the contradictories of the learner in error and the learner in truth. Although the contradictories remain contradictory it is suspected that a relationship is possible with further contemplation. It seems that Kierkegaard in advancing contradictories softens them with explanations which leave the reader unsatisfied and still searching. Since the process occurs again and again with the middle category almost but not quite reasoning the contradictories into juxtaposition, it appears that Kierkegaard had a pattern behind the groupings which, regardless of whether the paradoxes are actual, is used to bring the problem to light.

In so far as the learner exists he is already created, and hence God must have endowed him with the condition for understanding the Truth... But in so far as the moment is to have decisive significance... the learner is destitute of this condition, and must therefore have been deprived of it. This deprivation cannot have been due to an act of God... nor to an accident...; it must therefore be due to himself.9

"Error is then not only outside the Truth, but polemic in its attitude toward it..."10 "The Teacher is then God himself, who in acting as an occasion prompts the learner to recall that he is in Error, and that by reason of his own guilt."11

9 S. K. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, op. cit., p. 10.
10 Loc. cit.
11 Loc. cit.
When the Teacher gives the learner who has brought upon himself a burden of guilt, the condition for understanding the truth as well as the truth, he takes away the wrath impending upon that of which the learner has made himself guilty and achieves an atonement.

Here appears another pattern in relationship with the foregoing stages in which the learner and the teacher are connected with the condition of guilt known to both. Upon becoming aware of the burden of guilt the learner approaches the position of the teacher while still remaining in his former position.

In continuing the teacher-learner relationship Kierkegaard points out:

Such a Teacher the learner will never be able to forget. For the moment he forgets him he sinks back again into himself, just as one who while in original possession of the condition forgot that God exists, and thereby sank into bondage.\(^\text{12}\)

The foregoing statement appears to be a truism rather than a paradox although it is paradoxical in character. It corresponds, however, to the other relationships in that the original stage is impossible to return to once a more advanced stage is reached.

The moment of truth which occurs at the time when a meeting is effected between the learner and the teacher is temporal and transient and necessarily decisive. The point that the learner becomes a disciple occurs at the onset of his realization of the moment. The moment is defined as a change which takes place within the learner like the transition from non-being to being which can be termed as 'new birth.'

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\(^\text{12}\) Ibid., p. 12.
... if the moment has decisive significance the breach is made, and man cannot return. He will take no pleasure in remembering what Recollection brings to his mind; still less will he be able in his own strength to bring God anew over to his side.  

By that token, after the moment has been attained, the question concerning the possibility of the learner sinking back again into himself is not a vital one unless the learner is able to hover on the brink of the moment for such a length of time that his progress is endangered and he begins a return to forgetting. A return would remove the learner's title of learner, however, and therefore would remove the paradox. Kierkegaard argues that a regression is impossible for as being born is thinkable to one who is born but not to one who is not born the same principle must also hold in the case of the new birth.  

It appears that the statement is inadequate since, although being born implies a state of non-being before the birth, the new birth indicates a state of being before the new birth. However, this may well be an oversimplification of the situation for the purpose of strengthening the parallel between this and the foregoing relationships. As an example, one who is subjective finds objectivity thinkable as a stage toward subjectivity but not as a stage to be returned to while one who is objective, if he thinks of subjectivity at all finds it unattainable. Non-being and new birth, then, are connected by birth and new birth is inseparable from the first two stages. Kierkegaard continues to leave the reader in a state of seeking but the pattern of his progressions

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13 [Ibid., p. 14.](#)

14 [Loc. cit.](#)
becomes more apparent. There appears to be a certain solidarity imparted by the regularity of the pattern which may be a device used to give the reader confidence that eventually the apparent insolubility of the paradox will be given a non-contradictory solution.

In further enlarging upon the problem of Christianity, Kierkegaard introduces God as teacher and Savior in what he refers to as an essay of the imagination. "... the disciple gives occasion for the teacher to understand himself, and the teacher gives occasion for the disciple to understand himself."\(^{15}\) Neither leaves any claim upon the other.

God, however, needs no disciple to understand himself. The thing that moves God, since he is not moved by some need, is love which finds it satisfaction from within rather than without. "The Moment makes its appearance when an eternal resolve comes into relation with an incommensurable occasion."\(^{16}\)

Again Kierkegaard takes advantage of a relationship of three. God and man are connected by love. Moved by love, God is eternally resolved to reveal himself. Love is his motive and the end for to have a motive without correspondence would be a contradiction.

For it is only in love that the unequal can be made equal, and it is only in equality or unity that an understanding can be effected, and without a perfect understanding the Teacher is not God, unless the obstacle comes wholly from the side of the learner, in his refusing to realize that which had been made possible for him.\(^{17}\)


There is, however, a kind of unhappy love which comes from the inability of the lovers to understand one another. The greater grief is the prerogative of the superior since he alone understands the misunderstanding.

The above quotation shows evidence that the paradox may be resolved. As in former examples, the disciple is ignorant or in error and through love, God reveals that man is in error. Man, finding the state of error inadequate, advances to equality with God. God understands the inequality just as the religious stage understand the aesthetic, the subjective man understands the objective, and the teacher understands the learner. In all cases the contradictories are brought into progression toward elevation by a quality of learning in the least of the group. Also in all cases, once an elevation has been effected the least has no desire to return to its former state. Thus the entity endowed with understanding is the most concerned if an equality cannot be effected.

In showing how an understanding between the teacher and the learner can be brought about, Kierkegaard advances the idea of the elevation of the learner by God, but discards it because of the possibility of the learner being deceived by the outward change of his existence. The idea that the union might be brought about by God's showing himself to the learner and receiving his worship is unsatisfactory because such a union could not satisfy the Teacher and possibly not the learner. Kierkegaard suggests that the only way that the union can be attempted is by descent and God, through love, desiring equality with the beloved descends to assume that equality. Such a solution requires greater
strength from the learner for "... it is indeed less terrible to fall to the ground when the mountains tremble at the voice of God, than to sit at table with him as an equal..."\footnote{18}

In the case of man and God coming together, man being unable to conceive of the relationship, is not able to approach the progression through reason and God, perceiving the enigmatic state of man, descends from the superior position to assist him. Thus it appears that God, like Kierkegaard, attacks the illusion from behind and after the disciple is goaded into speculation and the meaning of the truth by something inside him which he is unable to understand, he is gently guided into a position of equality by the descent of his superior. If this is the case it appears that the paradox has been served by the emotion of love which is the sole motive of the superior and in this instance, the learner, upon leaving his antecedent state understands the gulf between the contradictory and the greatness of the love which prompts the descent. The realization gives the inferior an idea of how important he is to the superior. As Kierkegaard later states, the inferior knows self love. A firm foundation is given to the reader by the conception of the man-God relationship. It is very likely that a conceivable relationship here is advanced in order to renew the reader's faith that there is actually an unparadoxical solution to the problem of the truth of Christianity. Kierkegaard seems to have had vast insight into the temperament of his reader. Possibly he would have lost many readers at this juncture in

\footnote{18 Ibid., p. 27}
his discourse if the contradictories had no means of merging. At the point where the reader might well be satiated with paradoxes, Kierkegaard shows a meeting point between the most important relationships. That the connective is love and apparently emotional is important. Knowing human nature he must have considered that it is easier to conceive of an emotion than to conceive of reason. In addition, the reader who must also be the learner is given comfort in knowing that the superior is willing to descend for his sake. It is interesting to note that in the relationship upon which depends the most strength from the inferior, he is given assurance of assistance. Kierkegaard has insured cooperation with God for his reader.

From the explanation of the only possible union between the learner and the teacher, Kierkegaard advances into the Absolute Paradox which he subheads as a 'metaphysical catchet.' Concerning the paradox he says "... the paradox is the source of the thinker's passion, and the thinker without a paradox is like a lover without feeling: a trifling mediocrity."19

Kierkegaard seems to have written the above statement with a gently humorous aspect. He does, however, bring the statement into the reader's grasp in that fashion. He probably expected the reader to consider that a lover without feeling would be unlikely to be a lover at all. Again there seems to be an inconsistency in his illustration which he probably did not overlook since he was admittedly a student of dialectic.

19 Ibid, p. 29.
The statement, however, appears to have a bearing upon the whole problem of the probability of the use of paradoxes as a mere literary technique. Although the paradox as a source of the thinker's passion appears to be actual since the thinker is likely to base thought upon conflict, the paradox as an end result in thought would result in only another paradox which might eventually become more unfortunate than the lover without feeling. Kierkegaard takes this into consideration by saying:

But the highest pitch of every passion is always to will its own downfall; and so it is the supreme passion of the Reason to seek a collision, though this collision must in one way or another prove its undoing. The supreme paradox of all thought is the attempt to discover something that thought cannot think. The passion is at bottom present in all thinking, even in the thinking of the individual, in so far as in thinking he participates in something transcending himself. 20

Knowing Kierkegaard's pattern of writing it may be that he uses the above illustrative paradox to return the reader to an attitude of thought. In the man-love-God relationship the reader may have become complacent in feeling that he will be taken care of spiritually if he only is receptive. The reader is jolted from his complacency by a new paradox which returns him to his attitude of contemplation by the introduction of a new element. However, in saying that the individual in thinking, participates in something transcending himself, Kierkegaard seems to be saying that after self-love learned from the last relationship, man has farther to go before the truth of Christianity can be known. Kierkegaard verbally beckons his reader to continue on the search

20 Kierkegaard, loc. cit.
by arousing him to contemplate further.

Man lives undisturbed, he says, until the paradox of self-love awakens within him in the form of love for another. He is so transformed by the love that he scarcely recognizes himself. Similarly the paradoxical passion of the Reason retroactively affects man and his self-knowledge so that one who thought he knew himself cannot ascertain what he really is.

This statement finishes the devastation of complacency that was begun by the above quotation.

The with which the reason collides is unknown and can be called God. No proof is possible. "For if God does not exist it would of course be impossible to prove it; and if he does exist it would be folly to attempt it."21

Kierkegaard states that it is difficult to prove that anything exists and therefore to reason from existence rather than toward existence is necessary.

This clarifies for the reader, the relationships which give him a prominent place in the search for truth. Kierkegaard draws upon the individual's wish to identify himself with his outward existence and then to transcend that existence through contemplation.

In the process of thinking, Kierkegaard continues, reason repeatedly comes into collision with the unknown which is the limit. The unknown is absolutely different and cannot be distinguished otherwise.

21 Ibid., p. 31.
Unless the unknown remains a mere limiting conception, the idea of difference is thrown into a state of confusion and will become many ideas of many differences. The unknown is then in a condition of dispersion and the reason may choose at pleasure from what is at hand.

Here a new relationship begins in which the contradictories are Reason and the Unknown.

It is, however, according to Kierkegaard, impossible to hold fast to a difference of this nature because it is, when done, an arbitrary act.

If no specific determination of difference can be held fast, because there is no distinguishing mark, like and unlike finally become identified with one another, thus sharing the fate of all such dialectical opposites. The unlikeness clings to the Reason and confounds it, so that the Reason no longer knows itself and quite consistently confuses itself with the unlikeness.  

The first sentence in the above quotation illustrates the rejection of opposites used in Kierkegaard's relationships. For example, the religious stage is the result of the aesthetic and ethical stages and is ultimately involved in both. The aesthetic stage has the potential of the religious stage within it and is inseparable from it in contradiction. In saying that holding to a difference is an arbitrary act does Kierkegaard tell his reader that the apparently paradoxical nature of his relationships only appears that way because of the way the reader looks at them? The reader and Kierkegaard become contradictories too as he probably planned it.

In introducing the Absolute Paradox Kierkegaard presents an analogy

22 Ibid., p. 36.
related to the life of Christ. He says that an individual lives whose appearance is precisely like that of other men. He grows up, marries, has an occupation by which he earns his livelihood, and as befits a man he makes provision for the future. For although living as do the birds of the air may be beautiful it is not lawful or practical and may lead to starvation if one has enough persistence or dependence upon the bounty of others.

This man is also God. How do I know? I cannot know it, for in order to know it I would have to know God, and the nature of the difference between God and man; and this I cannot know, because the Reason has reduced it to likeness with that from which it is unlike. Thus God becomes the most terrible of deceivers, because the Reason has deceived itself. The reason has brought God as near as possible, and yet he is as far away as ever.23

The man and God relationship which has been connected through love, is annihilated when man must begin to reason. Man, Kierkegaard seems to say, has progressed far in self-love, but at best he is still very imperfect and reason brings man to this realization. God is a deceiver and in proving to his reader that such a device can be used for the elevation of man, does Kierkegaard tell his reader that he, too, must deceive in order to aid him? Divine deceit is not questioned and Kierkegaard deceives for a divine purpose. A paradox in the authorship arises here, for since Kierkegaard stated that he was attacking the illusion from behind, could the reader have been deceived? In reading he challenges the attack of his illusion and gives himself to the process of dispelling the illusion. As in the relationships, the reader, once

23 Kierkegaard, loc. cit.
realizing that he is in error, becomes a Kierkegaardian disciple who is in turn divinely identified. Kierkegaard offers himself as a purveyor of Truth. However, in saying that he does not know God he is again identified with the reader as a learner faced with the attitude of reason. Here again is a technique which insures the reader's attention. By an apparently ambivalent identity, Kierkegaard keeps his reader in a state of contemplation which eliminates his dropping from the role of learner to a complacent acceptance of himself as either being unredeemably in a state of error or unquestionably in possession of the truth of Christianity.

If God is absolutely unlike man then man is absolutely unlike God, which is more than the Reason can be expected to understand. However, merely to obtain the knowledge that God is unlike him, Man needs the help of God, and learns that God is absolutely different from himself. The unlikeness must be explained by what man derives from himself, that is, sin. This paradox, when coupled with an additional one, introduces the Absolute Paradox. Man becomes aware that he is in error through the consciousness of sin, which is made evident to him through the help of the Teacher. The consciousness of sin cannot be taught to one man by another but only by God—or possibly the purveyor of God's teaching. In order to be man's Teacher, God proposed to make himself like the individual man so that he might understand him fully.

In the summary above, Kierkegaard clarifies the question for the sake of the reader. Too, he absolves himself from a divine identification by saying that the consciousness of sin cannot be taught to one man by
another. In pointing out that he is in possession of knowledge of the nature of the difference he admits to being farther advanced on the scale of learning than those whose illusions he is involved in dispelling, but at the same time he points out that he is nevertheless in league with those whom he teaches.

Kierkegaard, in proclaiming knowledge of the truth of Christianity and the process involved for those who learn it, seems to say that those who follow him will come closer to the truth. It should be noticed that he has never actually said that he is in possession of the truth but the implication is present that the truth will be revealed to those who are not in possession of it by one who is. This device is an excellent one in holding the attention of the reader. The attitude of suspense which is generated furthers the interest of the reader.

The Absolute Paradox, then, is proclaimed "... negatively by revealing the absolute unlikeness of sin, positively by proposing to do away with the absolute unlikeness in absolute likeness."24

Kierkegaard here shows that the Absolute Paradox is proclaimed by a paradox. The relationship, however, can be interpreted to move in the direction of the superior as did the objective, speculative and subjective relationship. That is, sin, which is unlike, is approached by that which is like and a rejection is effected. The unlikeness is reduced while the essential unlikeness is still retained. So Kierkegaard, while proposing a paradox which appears to be different, returns to the

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24 Ibid., p. 37.
relationship which he has consistently held. In seeming to be inconsti-
sistent he reveals a consistency thus again approaching the illusion
from behind and startling the reader into contemplation. Such a tech-
nique is surely planned.

But can such a paradox be conceived? Let us not be over-hasty in
replying; and since we strive merely to find the answer to a question,
and not as those who run a race, it may be well to remember that suc-
cess is to the accurate rather than to the swift. The Reason will
doubtless find it impossible to conceive it, could not of itself have
discovered it, and when it hears it announced will not be able to un-
derstand it, sensing merely that its downfall is threatened. In so
far the Reason will have much to urge against it; and yet we have on
the other hand seen that the Reason, in its paradoxical passion,
precisely desires its own downfall. But this is what the Paradox
also desires, and thus they are at bottom linked in understanding;
but this understanding is present only in the moment of passion.
Consider the analogy presented by love, though it is not a perfect
one. Self-love underlies love; but the paradoxical passion of self-
love when at its highest pitch wills precisely its own downfall.
This is also what love desires, so that these two are linked in
mutual understanding in the passion of the moment, and this passion
is love. Why should not the lover find this conceivable? But he who
in self-love shrinks from the touch of love can neither understand
it nor summon the courage to venture it, since it means his downfall.
Such is then the passion of love; self-love is indeed submerged but
not annihilated; it is taken captive and becomes love's spolia opima,
but may again come to life, and this is love's temptation. So also
with the Paradox in its relation to the Reason, only that the passion
in this case has another name; or rather, we must seek to find a name
for it. 25

The above quotation further illustrates the whole relationship
problem as advanced by Kierkegaard. That is, in issuing the contradictor-
ies, reason and the unknown, with reason desiring its own downfall, the
objective, speculative, subjective approach is used again. More abstract
in this instance, Reason, nevertheless, seeks to identify with the un-
known through a connective which understand both sides but which strives

25 Ibid., p. 37 f.
toward the unknown as a goal. Reason, therefore, seeks its downfall through identity with the unknown. The paradox, too, seeks downfall by striving for likeness. In saying that self-love is submerged but not annihilated by love, Kierkegaard must be showing his explanation of relationships which have gone before. Too he points out to his contemplative reader that even such hopelessly contradictory elements as reason and the unknown may become submerged in one another with progress toward the superior.

Kierkegaard further discusses the Absolute Paradox by saying that if the paradox and the Reason come together in a mutual understanding of their unlikeness their encounter will be happy, but if the encounter is not in understanding the relationship becomes unhappy and the Reason is offended. The offended consciousness, however, is not discovered from Reason but from the Paradox. It does not understand itself but is understood by the Paradox. Offense comes into being with the Paradox and the Moment occurs, upon which everything depends. That is, the Moment is the Paradox abbreviated. The offended consciousness is a misunderstanding of the Moment since it is directed at the Paradox. The offended consciousness holds aloof from the Paradox since the Paradox is the miracle but the discovery was made by the Paradox rather than the Reason. When the Reason is unable to understand the Paradox it is made evident by the Paradox.

The Paradox becomes the connective in this case and like the speculative approach understands the objective approach while seeking for the subjective approach, the paradox understand the reason, the reason
jumps to the paradox, if the encounter is a happy one, and Reason and Paradox united are prepared to leap to the third stage. If the understanding is not affected, the Reason is at fault and is actually still unprepared to be approached by the paradox.

Does Kierkegaard say to his reader at this point? "I have patiently brought you this far toward understanding the truth of Christianity. I am the purveyor of the truth of the Paradox and you are the Reason. If you are unable to go on with me I am not at fault but I will continue to offer assistance. But if you, the Reason, are offended and blame me, the purveyor, how can I go further until you are ready for a happy encounter?"

It seems to the writer that such an illusion clarifies the nature of the authorship and was made by Kierkegaard with intent and for a purpose. Not only is the nature of the authorship clarified but also the idea is evidenced that Kierkegaard is a martyr, and that the drive which caused him to begin his authorship was an intense one.

"All that the offended consciousness has to say about the Paradox it has learned from the Paradox, though it would like to pose as the discoverer, making use of an acoustic illusion."

Here, too, Kierkegaard humorously shows the ingratitude of the offended consciousness which prefers to hold a smug appraisal of its own value. This clarifies the ambivalent idea of contrary identity since Kierkegaard, rather than having a divine identity or a human

26 Ibid., p. 42.
identity becomes the instrument of the compromise and in linking the contradictions as a purveyor of the divine demonstration becomes part of each.

The Moment is further enlarged upon by Kierkegaard in a chapter "The Case of the Contemporary Disciple," which concerns the individual who lived during the life of Christ. All others are referred to as disciples at second hand.

God has made his appearance as Teacher and has assumed the form of a servant. His presence in human form, Kierkegaard feels, is essential to his teaching and is by itself the teaching. The love of the disciple is the one purpose of the Teacher. This high mission will be enough to attract the attention of the multitude, among whom the learner will undoubtedly be found.

The obvious relationship here is the man-God relationship joined by Christ who is love.

For the learner the knowledge that God's appearance in humble form is an occasion of the beginning of eternity. The learner who is the contemporary disciple, is contemporary with that historical phenomenon which refuses to be reduced to a moment of merely occasional significance but presents itself as an occasion for his eternal happiness.

The contemporary learner finds it easy to acquire adequate historical information, but with respect to the Teacher's birth he will be in the same position as the disciple at second hand. The only human being who is fully informed is the woman of whom he permitted himself to be born.

The true disciple, however, finds it inadequate to consider the
Teacher as an historical event or as a mere occasion by which he came to an understanding of himself. The relationship of owing all to the Teacher cannot be attained without Faith, whose object is the Paradox. "... the Paradox unites the contradictories, and is the historical made eternal and the eternal made historical."27

Here is the relationship again with Faith connecting the historical and being approached by the eternal in conjunction with the historical. The Socratic paradox is resolved here and is shown not to be absolute. But since Kierkegaard never professed to be an advocate of the doctrine of Recollection the paradox from the Kierkegaardian viewpoint is strengthened. Furthermore the reader is sure to be startled when the master of dialectic, Socrates, is shown to be in error by Kierkegaard.

Kierkegaard states that faith is neither a form of knowledge nor an act of will. In the absence of the Teacher, concrete evidences of his existence are unimportant and unessential. The learner becomes a believer or disciple when the Reason is set aside and he receives the condition in the Moment. This condition conditions the understanding of the eternal and is received in the Moment from the Teacher himself. Faith, then, Kierkegaard concludes, is as paradoxical as the Paradox and is a miracle too.

The learner and the believer are connected by the Moment which identifies with the Paradox and with Faith.

27 Ibid., p. 49.
The problem of the historical immediacy between the time of the contemporary disciple and the disciple at second hand is considered. In regard to the question of becoming, Kierkegaard advances the question, "How does that which comes into being change or what is the nature of the change involved in becoming?" If the subject of becoming does not remain unchanged in the process of becoming, it is not the subject which comes into being but some other thing. If a plan, in coming into being is changed in itself, it is not this plan that comes into being. If it comes into being unchanged, a question arises as to the nature of the change by which it comes into being. The change is a change in being rather than in essence and involves a change from not being to being.

The change involved is a transition from possibility to actuality.

Kierkegaard in explaining the change from possibility to actuality may be again pointing out a relationship in his relationships. That is, all change from the lesser of the contradictories gives them the quality of possibility which through change becomes actuality. The change involved is the connection of the possibilities toward the actualities by the intervention of a quality designed toward that connection. Here there seems to be an allusion again that Kierkegaard is a purveyor to connect the contradiction between possibility and actuality.

The necessary, therefore, cannot come into existence, since becoming is a change, and the necessary is always related to itself in the same manner. "Everything that comes into being proves precisely by coming into being that it is not necessary; for the necessary is the only thing
that cannot come into being, because the necessary is.*28 Nothing exists because it is necessary but the necessary is because it is necessary or because the necessary is. The necessary is absolutely different from the actual and the possible. God is the necessary being.

The change involved in becoming is an actual change; the transition takes place with freedom. Becoming is never necessary. It was not necessary before it came into being, for then it could not come into being; nor after it came into being, for then it has not come into being.29

In ruling out necessity as not coming into being Kierkegaard identifies becoming with the progression pointed out in the relationships. Freedom is advanced as the connective quality of becoming which becomes through a cause. Freedom, too, is a requisite of the connection of the contradictories in the relationships. Force is never a part of the relationships, just as force is not a part of the authorship of Kierkegaard.

All becoming, then, takes place with freedom and only through the operation of a cause. The illusion is that the becoming is made to seem necessary. Actually as the causes have themselves come into being they ultimately refer back to a free cause.

Everything that comes into being, Kierkegaard continues, is historical and that whose becoming is a simultaneous becoming, has no other history. The historical is the past. The eternal is the only existence that has no history.

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The learner is historical or comes into being and is possible; the believer is eternal and actual. All are connected by Faith in the Moment and the paradox is arbitrarily held or discarded by the learner as he advances and becomes a believer or remains stationary as a learner. Freedom is integrated in the connection and give the possible actuality. In introducing the concept of freedom, Kierkegaard again leaves the reader liable for his own advance but not for his relationship to the eternal. The arbitrariness of the paradox remains the choice of the reader, according to Kierkegaard.

Becoming may present the possibility of a second becoming within the first becoming. The historical becoming is such a reduplication and comes into being by the operation of a relatively free cause, which in turn points ultimately to an absolutely free cause.

"What has happened has happened, and cannot be undone; in this sense it does not admit of change." If the past is conceived of as necessary, this can happen only by virtue of forgetting that it has come into being.

The future has not yet happened. But it is not on that account less necessary than the past, since the past did not become necessary by coming into being, but on the contrary proved by coming into being that it was not necessary. If the past had become necessary, it would not be possible to infer the opposite about the future, but it would rather follow that the future was also necessary.

If necessity could gain a foothold at a single point, there would no longer be any distinguishing point between the past and the future.

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30 Ibid., p. 63.
31 Ibid., p. 63.
To predict the future and to understand the necessity of the past is the same thing.

The paradox, then, appears to be illustrated for the purpose of showing that the historical cannot exist except for the perception of Faith and once Faith has been attained, the historical is lost in the consequence of the eternal. Kierkegaard in relation to his reader again indicates that he is a stepping stone for the purpose of an eternal consequence.

Since nature has only an immediate existence, the essentially historical is always the past and has as past its own actuality for the fact that it has happened is certain and dependable. However, the fact that it has happened is the ground of an uncertainty by which the apprehension will always be prevented from assimilating the past. The past can be understood only in terms of this conflict between certainty and uncertainty which is the distinguishing mark of all that has come into being as well as of the past.

He concludes by saying that the direct form of the historical cannot exist for immediate sensation for either a contemporary or a successor. The historical fact which is the content of the hypothesis that God has been in existence, exists only for the apprehension of faith.

The Concluding Unscientific Postscript further enlarges on the historical question of Christianity. He states that the paradoxical character of Christianity uses time and the historical in relation to the eternal. The transition from historical account to eternal decision involves an attempt to create a quantitative transition to a qualitative
decision. He states also that the *Fragments* seek to show that there can be no direct transition from the historical to the eternal regardless of whether the historical is contemporary. The transition by which something historical and the relationship to it become decisive for an eternal happiness is a passing to another realm of thought, that is—a leap.

The leap referred to at this point and the Moment discussed in the *Fragments* seem to mean the same thing from all outward appearances. The historical and the eternal are connected by a leap, which fits into the pattern as did the Moment and Faith. A new realm of thought is reached discounting the historical beginning. In all of Kierkegaard's relationships, the contradictories have been contradictory and as the difference between Reason and the Unknown when held, become an arbitrary act, so the difference between the historical and the eternal may also be an arbitrary act. The occasion has been given through Kierkegaard as purveyor of the truth. It remains for the reader to act arbitrarily in one direction or the other.

The *Fragments* took its point of departure, Kierkegaard says in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, in the pagan consciousness in order to seek out experimentally an interpretation of existence which might truly be said to go farther than paganism. The difficulty in present Christianity stems from the fact that Christians are assumed to exist from childhood and baptism and are never really sure what it is to be a Christian. By assuming the pagan consciousness the learning is classified because "... it is easier to become a Christian when I am
not a Christian than to become a Christian when I am one."\(^{32}\)

This reaffirms Kierkegaard's assertion of deception which he declared earlier in the authorship. Furthermore it reaffirms his position of assuming the position of the learner in showing the progressions necessary in becoming a Christian. At the same time there is no question but that, since he is able to cast off the assumption of Christianity, he can also trace the development of the truth of it, if he has had it.

Kierkegaard follows the historical question in the *Philosophical Fragments* with a discussion of the disciple at second hand. Although the first generation seems to have advantage of an immediate certainty or of being nearer to the possibility of an exact and reliable account of what happened and of being nearer to the shock produced by the impact of the fact (referring to the existence of Christ) the advantage and the aroused attention are dialectical.

"The aroused attention is by no means partial to faith, as if faith followed from the attention by a simple consequence. The advantage is that a state of mind is induced in which the crucial nature of the decision confronting the individual becomes more clearly evident."\(^{33}\)

This, says Kierkegaard, is the only advantage of any account.

The last generation of secondary disciples, although far removed from the initial shock, has the consequences and the proof of probability afforded by the results to lean upon.

\(^{32}\) *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, op. cit., p. 327.

\(^{33}\) *Philosophical Fragments*, op. cit., p. 78.
But consequences founded on a paradox are humanly speaking built over a yawning chasm, and their total content, which can be transmitted to the individual only with the express understanding that they rest upon a paradox, are not to be appropriated as a settled state, for their entire value trembles in the balance.\textsuperscript{34}

Kierkegaard has said that the solution of the paradox is not important as long as the paradox is recognized. If the paradox is bridged by Faith nothing but the recognition of the paradox is necessary.

The last generation (of secondary disciples) has the advantage of a greater ease; but as soon as it discovers that this ease is precisely the danger which breeds the difficulty, this new difficulty will correspond to the difficulty of the fear confronting the first generation, and it will be gripped as primitively by awe and fear as the first generation of secondary disciples.\textsuperscript{35}

Kierkegaard says that everyone receives from God the condition which causes him to become a disciple. A contemporary, then, can only aid a successor by informing him that he has himself believed in the fact and related the content of the past. He thinks that everyone is endowed with possibility and freedom so that which he does with those elements is dependent upon him.

In a final conclusion Kierkegaard asserts that:

There is no disciple at second hand. The first and the last are essentially on the same plane, only that a later generation finds its occasion on the testimony of a contemporary generation, while the contemporary generation finds this occasion in its own immediate contemporaneity, and in so far owes nothing to any other generation.\textsuperscript{36}

In this declaration Kierkegaard connects the contemporary and secondary generations of disciples as the contradictories in the

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p. 82.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 83.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p. 88.
relationships have been connected. By this affirmation he again throws the whole problem of the truth of Christianity back upon the reader in an identity with the first generation of disciples. He is indicating again the nearness of man to God upon recognition of the paradox and discounting the importance of the solution, that is, the disciple is the one who embraces the Paradox in Faith and resolves the tension—but not the passion.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Kierkegaard, in attacking the faulty illusion of Christianity, has by his own admission employed the use of shock to dispel the illusion. By saying that Christianity no longer exists he is assured of an audience that wishes to hear more from the man who says he is not a Christian. In telling the reader that God, too, is a deceiver, Kierkegaard establishes a divine alibi for his own method of deceit which must be acceptable to the reader when he realizes that he has been deceived away from error and into the truth. In the Point of View he elucidates the arrangement of his whole authorship and explains his role as a deceiver by saying that people should be compelled to take notice. By giving the history of the paradoxical quality of his life, enlarging upon his dedication to 'the individual' and describing his mode of existence during the publication of his aesthetic works, he indicated that he was capable of deception as a deliberate technique.

The deceit which he admitted could hardly be termed as deceit after it was admitted; however, throughout the writing, instances have been shown which indicate that the method of deceit was carried farther than his admission and remained for the reader to discover, if he wished to. The additional deceit strengthened the paradoxical pattern of his writing.

In the summarization of Philosophical Fragments the problem involved in Christianity has been illustrated with emphasis upon the
paradoxical relationships. In using the paradox as a device Kierkegaard does not say that a solution or resolution is imperative. The learner is not asked to understand the Paradox but only to recognize it. The recognition takes place "... when the Reason and the Paradox encounter one another happily in the Moment, when the Reason sets itself aside and the Paradox bestows itself." The result is a happy passion called Faith.

The pattern of Kierkegaard's relationships is shown in the following diagram:

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Three relationships are added later.

Historical \rightarrow \text{Eternal}

\text{Learner} \quad \rightarrow \begin{array}{c}
\text{Faith} \\
\text{Moment} \\
\text{Freedom}
\end{array} \rightarrow \text{Believer}

\text{Possibility} \rightarrow \text{Actuality}

A final relationship which bears upon the total paradoxical relationship problem summarizes the role of Kierkegaard as purveyor of truth.

\text{Reader} \rightarrow \text{Kierkegaard} \quad \rightarrow \text{Christ} \\
\text{(authorship)}
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